

## POST WAR JEWISH PROBLEMS

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War has been defined as an attempt to resolve by means of violence the seemingly insoluble problem of the peace. War by its very destructions, produces a change in the environmental conditions and balance of social forces which makes a solution of the peace-time problems possible. Any consideration of post-war problems must, therefore, entail a survey of these problems as they existed prior to the war and the change in the circumstances brought about by the war. It is in the light of the new situation that we may intelligently discuss their solution. These general considerations prevail also with regard to the post-war problems of the Jewish people.

We employ the term "Jewish problems" in the plural rather than the singular because we assume, general opinion to the contrary, that there is no one single Jewish problem in the world but a series of such problems. Jews live under much varied conditions in different parts of the globe and, naturally, the problems of one Jewish community may differ

materially from those of another. They are all Jewish, of course, in the sense that they all involve Jews. They may also contain a common general factor, such as hostility on the part of the non-Jewish population or the failure of the Jews to integrate with the rest of the people. But this makes them no more one problem than the presence of a virus in both penumonia and lockjaw makes these one disease. While any classification of the assortment of Jewish problems will be arbitrary, they fall readily into four categories: The problems of the Jews of Europe, of Palestine, of the Soviet Union, and of the Western hemisphere and other parts of the world.

On the eve of World War II, there were approximately 9,500,000 Jews in Europe. Of these, the 3,000,000 Jews living in the Soviet Union, admittedly had no Jewish problem at all. That is, they suffered no discrimination or inequality whatsoever in their social, political, economic, or cultural life. They were completely integrated within their country. Theirs

was the rare experience of living in a land where anti-Semitism was a major offense against the State and becoming unknown among the younger generation. Economically, they were fully represented in every walk of Soviet life, from coal mining and hog raising to factory direction, scientific research, and creative art. Culturally, they enjoyed local autonomy wherever they formed a majority of the population, or wherever they could get together in sufficient numbers to warrant a school or cultural center in their own language. In addition there was the Jewish Autonomous Region of Biro Bidjan, which was to grow presently into a Jewish Republic that would give the Jews, in the words of President Kalinin, "all attributes of a nation."

The 3,000,000 Jews living in Poland found themselves at the opposite extreme. Their Jewish problem was most acute, fundamentally even worse than that of the Jews in Nazi-Germany. The plight of the German Jews was an artificial condition temporarily produced by a diabolical maniac and a murderous fascist clique, whereas the desperate situation of the Jews in Poland was rooted in the very foundation of the Polish state. The history of the Jews under the Polish republic



*A Jewish Farmer in the Ukraine*

is one long sad tale of discrimination, destitution, persecution and pogrom. The Jews of Poland constituted 9.5 percent of the total population of the country, and over three-quarters of them lived in cities and towns where they formed 27.3 percent of the total urban population. Yet their share in the civil service was only two-tenths of 1 percent and none at all in the 175,000 jobs on the state railways. When the Polish government took over the tobacco, oil, and timber industries, which were predominately in Jewish hands, it discharged all Jewish workers and employees, numbering in the tens of thousands, and made these State monopolies *Juden-rein*. While it denied Jews the State subsidies and cheap credits it extended to non-Jewish traders and manufacturers, permitting, often encouraging, Fascist campaigns to drive the Jews off the markets and town fairs, the Polish government squeezed out of the

Jewish 10 percent of the population 40 percent of its State budget.

The desperation of the Polish Jews at various times has been made known to a callous world. In December 1934, a Jewish deputy to the Polish Diet, Dr. Rautenstreich, declared in a speech in the Sejm that 60 percent of the Jews in the small towns of Poland were in dire need of charity, that one out of every four Jews in Warsaw was starving, that 50 percent of the Jews of Lemberg and 30 percent of the Jews of Lodz were short of food. A year later, at the first World Conference of Polish Jews Abroad, the government of Poland was charged with "conducting a carefully planned and persistent campaign to eliminate Jews from trade, industry, and handicraft." The situation of the Polish Jews was then summarized as follows: One third of the three million Jews



*Jewish peasant women in the Moldavian Soviet Republic selecting some new Yiddish text-books*

in Poland were unemployed and starving; 60 percent of the 200,000 Jewish workers and 47,000 other employees were unemployed and unable to benefit from unemployment insurance; the majority of the Jewish traders, constituting 38 percent of all the gainfully employed Jews, were receiving relief; 100,000 Jews in Poland were depended on public soup kitchens.

The following years, up to the outbreak of the war the situation of the Jews in Poland grew steadily worse, although this seems hardly conceivable. All the annual reviews of the events in Poland affecting the Jews for that period begin with that tragic cliché to the effect that the "opening of the year under review the situation of the Jews in Poland took an extremely grave turn for the worse." There were major pogroms, like that of Przytyc, which shocked the civilized



*Palestinian grape growers*

world, accustomed as it was to "bad news" about Jews in Poland. There were the broadcasts over the entire government radio system appealing to the populace to boycott Jewish shops as "the most sacred national duty." There were "ghetto benches" for Jewish students in the universities, even in academies founded by Jews. Student riots right on the campus caused death of some Jewish students and found larger numbers wounded. War came to Poland when a bill to prohibit *shebita* (The Jewish ritual slaughter of animals) had passed the house and was pending in the senate, and while the leader of the ruling party, General Stanislaw Sqwarczynski, announced he was introducing a bill to "reduce the number of Jews in the country and free its economic and cultural life from Jewish influence . . ."

What was it that made prewar Poland the classic land with an acute Jewish problem?

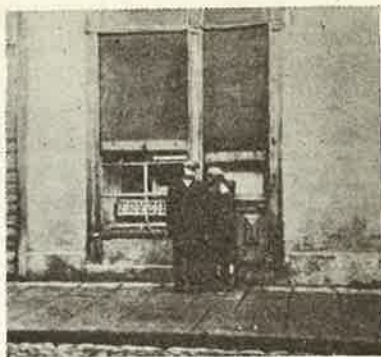
The key to this question lies in the analysis of those Polish elements that were the enemies of the Jews and of those who were their friends, for there were such also. The organized industrial workers of Poland were not hostile to the Jews. On the contrary, they came out to defend the Jews physically during the days of the Fascist

riots. Nor were the poor peasant of Poland opposed to the Jews. On the contrary, when the Fascists threatened to murder Jews who dared to come to the markets to which the peasants brought their produce, spokesmen for the poor peasants announced they would protect the Jews at the market and break leg and limb of their would-be molesters. On the other hand, it was the unholy trinity of large land holder, emerging middle class, and military junta that was responsible for Polish anti-Semitism. These are the basic elements of Fascism everywhere.

The pattern is familiar. The base is provided by a remnant of feudal gentry, still owning most of the best land, keeping the peasants landless and destitute—thereby, also, preventing the growth of a healthy home market for the evolving middle class and national industry. Allied with the landed gentry is its own victim, the middle class, blinded to the situation by its own orientation on property and vain hope of "making" the upper class. Like the gentry, the middle class is also hard pressed by the onset of modern conditions, more serious in its own case because of its late arrival on the economic scene. Capitalism already reached, even in this backward coun-

try, the cartelization stage, which limits the opportunities for the middle class person to rise to the top, while the development of co-operatives and state services narrows the base of the middle class at the bottom. Backed financially by the super-capitalists fearing the upsurge of economic democracy, these two classes join with the military to reach out for the control of the state and adventure abroad. The Jews are the first victim of this new alignment both because they are a useful pawn in their power politics and because their property and economic positions are the only reward the new alignment can throw to the middle class. To the extent to which these forces are hard pressed, and in consequence ruthless, to that extent becomes the position of the Jews in their midst untenable.

Thus we arrive at the core of the acute Jewish problem in Poland as it existed at the outbreak of the war. Basically, it was not a Jewish problem at all but a part of the larger problem of social economics in Poland. It was not the presence of the Jews in Poland that created an acute Jewish problem for the Polish State, as Joseph Beck, Poland's last Nazified foreign minister insisted in his call upon the great powers to relieve



*German Jews forced to wear the 'Yellow Triangle'*

Poland of its Jews. Rather it was the persistence in power in Poland of the Becks and their continuance of an impossible economic system that created the Jewish problem as the symptom of the acute general Polish problem. Not only the Jews but the Poles as well had no future in pre-war Poland.

The condition of the remaining 3,500,000 Jews in Europe, on the eve of the war, varied somewhere on the line between the zero degree of Jewish problem in the Soviet Union and 100% acute Jewish problem of Poland. The direction and the exact point on the line depended upon the general economic health of the particular country. The country that was not free of the relics of feudalism, whose capitalism was still a positive force in the life of the people, practicing a policy of

live and let live, that country was least troubled with a Jewish problem. The converse held equally true.

Close to a million and a half Jews in Europe lived, prior to the war, in a string of countries in which the Jewish problem had been reduced to a minimum. The ages old, inbred racial prejudice still persisted but it found expression in social snobism or in decadent pseudo-philosophy rather than in political action or economic discrimination. Economically, the Jews had their place in the general social pattern of their native land, which afforded them the same comfort and security as the rest of their social class. Accustomed to be "not accepted," realizing the role which belonging to the same church plays in social intercourse, the Jews in those countries could submit to the social barriers without much hurt, particularly since these were breaking down gradually, as the increasing number of mixed marriages seemed to indicate. The Jews could also take in their stride the literary fulminations against their race, or their placé in history, by the erratic literateurs. After all, these reached only an insignificant number of readers. Besides, before the court of Intellect, Jews had nothing to fear.

Far more serious was the annoyance of the lunatic fringe, the various anti-social elements that saw in attacks upon Jews an immediate return on their nuisance value. At the bottom of the social ladder, these were the hoodlums who might with the drunken cry of "Christ Killer" snatch an article off a Jewish pushcart or grab a bottle from the counter of a Jewish liquor store. At the top, it might be the worthy scion of an aristocratic family, trying to affect an imitation of a Hitler or Mussolini and using the Hitlerite method to build up a personal following around an easily aroused hate—a hatred for Jews. Occasionally a juncture of these two elements, the top and bottom, was effected, causing a temporary flare of excitement, which soon fizzled out. Such ventures in those countries failed for the simple reason that there was no pressing local need for them. The ruling capitalist class had no need to stoop to these methods; at the same time there was not enough discontent around to be gathered into fascist movement focused on the Jews.

This section of Europe with the least amount of Jewish problem consisted of two groups of countries. One group contained the most advanced states of the Continent, with an

old liberal tradition and largest extent of democracy, like England, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia. To the other group countries rather backward, in comparison, but with a sounder agrarian base and less social stress, like Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, and Italy, Spain and Portugal, belong here primarily because their Jewish communities were so insignificant in number that their peoples were hardly aware of their presence.

Mosley's Fascists in England pasted swastikas on Jewish homes and painted a sign "kill the Jews" on the wall of a synagogue. But the Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, the Primate of the Church of England, a number of outstanding Englishmen, including J. L. Garvin, the editor of the Nazi appeasing organ, *The London Observer*, formally repudiated anti-Semitism or any other form of racial discrimination "in the name of the vast majority of Christian English people" and promised to combat anti-Jewish manifestation "by all power at their command." Hitler-fed Rexists, utilizing the Flemish problem, caused a Nazi flare-up in Belgium. But at the very zenith of Hitler's power, shortly before the outbreak of the



*A section of the Ghetto wall in Warsaw*

war, the Rexists suffered overwhelming defeat at the polls, while the premier of Belgium reassured the Jews that his country will adhere to its tradition of tolerance and democracy. Both Holland and France, hot beds of Nazi intrigue and immense propoganda just before the war, had been carrying through decrees forbidding defamation and slander of religious and racial minorities when the war came. Similar reminders of sanity, and of considerable courage, appeared even in countries less advanced. As late as April 1939, Bulgaria took stern measures to suppress anti-Jewish agitation as elsewhere spearheaded by German influence, bringing the perpetrators of anti-Jewish disturbance to just trial.

Considering the over-all picture: the Jewish experience in Europe throughout the centuries, the imperfections of the none too perfect world, and the social injustices prevailing generally, the Jews of these seventeen countries may be regarded as subjected to the least amount of Jewish problem. Their concern was not with whatever grievance they may have had against their own countries but with the peril of contagion from Naziland.

The remaining over two million Jews of Europe are easily divided in three distinct groups: some 750,000 who lived in the pre-Hitlerite Germany and Austria; 1,100,000 in Roumania and Hungary, and some 250,000 in the Baltic countries. Of the latter little need be said here. Their countries joined the Soviet Union and the fate of the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Esthonian Jews is the same as that of the rest of Soviet Jewry. In other words, this quarter of a million Jews passed over into that part of Europe in which there is no Jewish problem. A few facts about their pre-war condition must be stated, however, for the benefit of those who still bemoan the loss of independence by these Baltic states.

The 100,000 Jews of Latvia suffered no political anti-Semi-

tism to speak of, but the economic policy of the Latvian government was such that left the Latvian Jews without any sort of a livelihood. One could not quarrel with that government for taking over all industry as state property and declaring practically all commerce a state monopoly. But one could well object to the failure of that government to make room within its economic system for the 5% of its population that happened to be Jews. What would have happened to the Latvian Jews, most of them already unemployed and impoverished, if that country had not joined the Soviet Union, one can only conjecture.

The 150,000 Jews of Lithuania, on the other hand, were definitely on the way to the fate of their brethren in Germany when the war came. In 1939 the official organ of the government, *Lietuvos Aidas*, called for the establishment of ghetto bathing beaches for Jews. The official organ of the Chamber of Labor, *Darbas*, urged the adoption of Nuremberg Laws for Jews, particularly prohibiting Jews from employing non-Jewish female domestics, in order to "protect the Lithuanian honor." The official organ of the Traders' and Artisans' Union, *Werslas*, agitated vehemently for economic

boycott of Jews. Anti-Jewish riots occurred frequently, one of these in the month of June, shortly before the outbreak of the war, set fire to two synagogues and a number of Jewish houses, leaving fifty Jewish families homeless.

One can understand the enthusiasm of the Jews in the Baltic lands when the Red Army marched into their countries.

The condition of the Jews in pre-war Hungary and Roumania was of the same nature as that of the Jews of Poland, except to varying degrees. In both these countries the Jews constituted the greater part of the middle class, the commercial and professional elements, and the middlemen between the rural districts and urban centers. In both countries, the primitive, impoverished peasantry was incapable of carrying the social, political superstructure that was loaded on its shoulders. The rising non-Jewish middle class in both, seeking to displace the Jews in their economic positions, was the spearhead of the anti-Jewish policy.

There was, however, a major difference in the degree of adversity between these two Jewish communities: The Jews of Hungary were emancipated in



*Wanderers*

1868 and had since become well integrated in the general madgyar population. They had the fields of industry and commerce practically free for themselves, inasmuch as the Hungarian middle class had looked down upon trade and commerce and preferred to stay in their position of Imperial officialdom of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Jewish problem may, thus, be said to begin, at least in its serious phase, with the separation of Hungary from the Danubian Empire, and its consequent loss of Transylvania, which disinherited the Hungarian middle class. It took years for the storm to gather. The rise of the Nazis to power in Germany accelerated the process, but it did not reach the critical stage until the outbreak of the war. With the German occupation of Austria, the fate of the Jews of Hungary took the same turn as that of the

Jews of Germany on Hitler's coming to power.

In Roumania, on the other hand, the Jews never fully enjoyed their rights of citizenship and equality under the law. Twice these rights were imbedded in the very foundation of the Roumanian state by the great powers which determined its fate, once by the treaty of Berlin in 1878 and again at the Peace Conference of Versaille in 1919. But Roumania always found some subterfuge to deprive the Jews of their constitutional rights. Inasmuch as the economic situation of Roumania generally resembled that of Poland, the position of the Roumanian Jews was more like that of the Jews in Poland, than the position of any other Jewry in Europe. One of the last acts of the Roumanian government before the war was the disenfranchisement of 300,000 Jews, over a third of its Jewish population, declaring them "aliens" and subjecting them to an Alien Control Law which closed to them most of the economic pursuits in the land. What a relief it must have been to the 300,000 Bessarabian Jews of Roumania to pass under the Soviet regime. In Bessarabia the Roumanian government banned the works of Mendele Mochor Seforim and

Sholom Aleichem as subversive.

Little need be said here about the Jewish problem of Greater Germany prior to the war. The sad facts are only too generally known. A few remarks are necessary, however, to correct the picture of pre-Hitlerite German Jewry as often drawn. It may be news to some people that 36.2% of the half million Jews of Germany were wage earners, laborers and white collar workers; that the city of Berlin with four and one half million population had only 160,000 Jews; that one third of the Jews of Berlin had an annual income of no more than 1200 marks, and the income of 31% of the rest was no more than 2400 marks a year; and that while there was a preponderance of Jews in two professions (10% for the medical profession and 13% for the legal in the entire country and considerably more in the city of Berlin) the status of these professions in Berlin was hardly critical and certainly no worse than in other continental cities where there were not so many Jews in them. The condition of the Jews in other German cities was even sounder, assuming that it is not unsound to be part of a large, prosperous middle class.

There was no actual Jewish

problem in the Germany of the Weimar Republic, and no social basis for the Hitlerite madness, as far as they were concerned. German Jewry was the innocent victim of a situation in which they had no part.

The Jewish problem in Austria, on the other hand, had a basis in the desperate situation of that state as it was left after the Peace of Versailles. Vienna, a city of 2,000,000, geared to head an empire of some sixty million people, was left with a hinterland of only a little more than double its own population. Without a larger economic orbit, pre-war Austria was an impossible state. Caught in a trap, Vienna, the city that contained 96% of the 200,000 Jews of Austria, began devouring itself, and its first victim were the Jews. But a far greater part of the middle class than the Viennese Jews constituted, had to be eliminated before life in Vienna could be rationalized in accordance with the new situation.

A summary of the Jewish problem in Europe as it existed before World War II shows, then, that one half of the Jews of Europe either had no Jewish problem or had one that was so minor as to permit them a free, fairly secure and decent life. The other half found itself in varying degrees of Jewish problems. In each case, the



*"Victims of a Pogrom"—painting Minkowsky, famous Jewish-Polish artist.*

degree of Jewish problem was in direct ratio to the general economic instability of the country, its social strain and Fascist ferment. The solution of the Jewish problem in these countries after the war must therefore be sought in the nature of their general economic condition with which they will emerge at the establishment of the peace.

On the eve of the war, Palestine was another country troubled by an acute Jewish problem. There the problem was mainly political, but of such a serious nature that Moshe Shertak, head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, characterized it as "perhaps the most decisive turning point since we were drawn away from Palestine."

Between the Balfour Declaration, issued in 1917, and the outbreak of the war, nearly 450,000 Jews entered the country, raising the total Jew-

ish population of Palestine to over 500,000. During the same period Jews invested close to half a billion dollars of public and private money in improving the land, establishing colonies and industrial enterprises. In the words of another Zionist leader, Emanuel Newman, the Jews "took a neglected and derelict country, a mere carcass of a country . . . and transmitted it by their labor, sweat and blood into something new: a thriving, modern, progressive, semi-industrial country." Yet Palestine has been a troubled land during most of the past twenty years.

The land in which the Prophet Isaiah dreamed of peace among the natives, and where the founder of Christianity preached good will to man, enjoyed little of the blessings of peace and brotherhood itself. There has been continuous friction between its two constituent nationalities, Jews and Arabs. And the objective historian will have to lay the blame for the disturbance to the door of the Arabs. The agitation of the 1920s culminated in the bloody Arab pogrom of Jews of 1929. The 1930s had three years of terror and bloodshed to which only the war put an end. In the year ending June 30, 1939, 1,967 persons were killed and 1,643 wounded in

the Arab riots against the Jews and the English.

The cause of the Arab disturbances was, again, political rather than economic. Economically, the Palestinian Arabs were the gainers, not the losers, by the influx of Jews into the country. Within the same period, the number of Arabs in Palestine increased nearly 70% and their death rate decreased by 60%; the area of their cultivated land nearly doubled and the value of their industrial establishments more than quadrupled. This progress, unprecedented and unequalled in any other part of the Arab world for this period, is to be credited directly to the development of the country by the incoming Jews. It was so admitted in the Royal Commission Report of 1939. Nor could the Arabs justly complain that they were being crowded out by the Jews. Only 50% of the cultivable land of Palestine was actually in cultivation, and the Jews, constituting 33% of the total population, held only 5.8% of the land of the country.

The political Jewish problem of Palestine derives from a number of causes, chief among which were the game of power politics in the Near East and the hesitant, equivocal British policy with regard to the implementation of the Balfour Dec-

laration. This wavering policy, always tipped to the Arab side, swung clear over in 1939, practically repudiating the Balfour Declaration, in the MacDonal White Paper issued on May 17 of that year. This Paper limited the Jewish immigration into Palestine to 10,000 a year for the ensuing five years, plus a bonus of 25,000 Jewish admissions in consideration of the Jewish tragedy in Europe. After March 1944 Jewish immigration into Palestine would be disallowed absolutely "unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it." The Paper further granted the High Commissioner "general powers to prohibit and regulate transfers of land," which closed the door to further Jewish coloniza-



*A Yemenite Jew in Palestine*  
(painting)

tion, and provided for an independent government by the majority in Palestine at the end of ten years.

In other words, the new policy forcibly freezed the Jewish population of Palestine in its present status of a minority of about 33% and then turns the country over to the majority. That it puts an end to the Jewish aspirations in Palestine is evident. That it is a clear violation of the Balfour Declaration was admitted by Winston Churchill in a speech in the British Parliament, on June 19, 1939, in which he said: "There is much in the White Paper which is alien to the



*A Jew of Jerusalem, born in Bukhara*

spirit of the Balfour Declaration. . . I should feel personally embarrassed in the most acute manner if I lent myself, by silence or inaction, to what I must regard as an act of repudiation." In addition, the White Paper subject the 550,000 Jews now in Palestine to the domination of intolerant, undemocratic and hostile elements, of which an Arab Palestinian government is likely to consist.

What will be said here of the Jewish problem in the United States holds good for some other countries in the Western Hemisphere and other parts of the world—with variations, of course, into which we cannot enter here. The problem consisted in an increasingly virulent form of anti-Semitic agitation fostered by reactionary elements, most of which were directly connected with the international Nazi propaganda machine.

In the United States anti-Semitism has gone through, in quick succession, a whole chain of historical stages. It began as a medieval religious prejudice because of the refusal of the Jews to accept Jesus as their Messiah. As this motive began to lose its potency, anti-Semitism assumed the form of social snobism. One could have nothing against the Jewish religion,



*After the pogrom in Czestochowa, Poland, 1937*

or against the Jews generally, that is in a business way, but one could not associate with them socially, could one? This social snobism carried over in those economic endeavors which bear a social aspect as well, as in the practice of and study for certain professions. More recently, anti-Semitism emerged in some parts of the land in the same base, crude, savage form as it is promoted by the Nazis.

On the whole, anti-Semitism has never been regarded here as "not respectable." Among the upper social class, it may not be good form to invite too many Jews, or even any of them, to a party at the country home, or to live among too many Jewish neighbors. But it is also bad form, among these same circles, to associate openly with professional anti-Semites or to express publicly anti-Jewish

prejudice. No college would go on record that it has a quota for Jewish students, and no decent firm would bluntly tell the Jewish applicant that it was rejecting him because he was a Jew. Until recently, and to a large extent common, anti-Semitism in the United States is a manifestation of the lunatic fringe and the unsocial elements.

Only twice in recent history has violent anti-Semitic agitation in this country come from what one might call a respectable source, and both from the city of Detroit. Once it was the propaganda carried on in his newspaper by an ignorant, egotistical, and queer industrialist, who had it in for bankers and Bolsheviks, when some one sold him the idea that the Jews were both at the same time. Pressed before the court of law and public opinion, he repented and, on other occasions, came out openly against anti-Semitism and other forms of racial prejudice. But some of his lieutenants carry on the same work



*A cheder in Vilna, before the war*



*Roumania, 1936, Jewish children driven from their homes*

from the same stand. The second time it was the mad fulminations of a Catholic priest, the head of a church of prominence, an editor of a popular Catholic journal, and a radio speaker of a large following. It was the activity of this priest, Rev. Charles Coughlin, and the ramifications of his movement, that constituted the acuteness of the Jewish problem in this country at the outbreak of the war.

In 1939, if one listened to the ravings of Father Charles Coughlin over the radio; heard the insulting, obscene outcries against the Jews on the street corners of New York by the vendors of his *Social Justice*; saw the Christian Fronters beat up Jews in the side streets and pasting *Buy Christian* stickers on building walls; followed the equally savage, raucous attacks on Jews by the Major General

George Van Horn Mosely (Ret.) in Philadelphia, Father Edward Lodge Curran, President of the International Catholic Truth Society and of *The Tablet*, in Brooklyn, and the host of other mendicants of wild hate and their numerous organizations in many parts of the country—one might have well imagined himself as being in Germany seven years earlier, on the eve of Hitler's rise to power.

There were no objective social or economic irritants in the relationship between the Jews and non-Jews in the country to warrant this agitation. The charges brought against the American Jews by their detractors were copied out of old, foreign sources—from the *Protocols of Zion* to the *Volkischer Beobachter*—bearing no relation to the American scene. An exhaustive study of the position of the Jews in America made



*Boycott of Jews in Berlin*

by the editors of *Fortune* a couple of years earlier had proven as a myth the charge of Jewish control of American industry, finance, press, theater, radio, or any other phase of American life. In those fields of endeavor in which there was a preponderance of Jews—like in the manufacture of clothing or retail trade—no complaints were discernible from non-Jews, whether in the trade, or on the outside trying to get in, or as consumers and customers.

Neither could it be said that the upsurge of anti-Semitic activity in the country reflected the mood of the general American public. A poll conducted at the end of 1935 by the National Conference of Jews and Christians showed less anti-Semitism in the polled communities in that year than there had been at the beginning of the depression. Some time later a poll taken by the editors of *Fortune* indicated that 54.6% of the American people thought that Germany would be worse off without her Jews than with them, while 31.4% "did not know," that is, were indifferent to the problem. Only 14% thought that Germany might be better off. In 1939, the very year of seething anti-Semitic imitation of Nazism here, a Gallup poll showed that 94% of the American people were



opposed to the Nazi persecution of the Jews. At the same time 65% of the American public approved a boycott of German goods.

How, then, can one explain the mounting wave of anti-Semitism in this country at the outbreak of the war?

The explanation is to be found in a statement made—of all people—by Congressman Martin Dies. Summarizing his Committee's investigation of the anti-Semitic activities in this country, he said: "The examination of the key witnesses in this plot to foment anti-Semitism has convinced me that the real goal of the instigators of the plot was to influence the American people to a point where they would succumb to a military dictatorship." The "Semite" in the anti-Semitic movement was, in fact, only a cloak to cover up their real target, democracy. The anti-Semitic movement in the United States was thus the spearhead of a Fascist movement, aided and sponsored by Hitler, as subsequent investigation was to prove. More outspoken and reckless than others, Father Coughlin let the cat out of the bag by declaring for a "Christian corporate system of government in the United States."

Could this be the reason why the Catholic hierarchy in this

country was so "helpless" against Coughlin? Despite the expressed disavowal and disapproval of Father Coughlin's antics by Cardinal Mundelein of Chicago, the Right Reverend Msgr. John A. Ryan, director of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and other prominent members of the Faith, Coughlin carried on until he was about to be put away for fraud and treason. The hierarchy could do nothing about Coughlin, it was said, inasmuch as the Catholic priest is his own master, subject only to the Pope of Rome. Nevertheless, when another Catholic priest did something out of his line of priestly function—went to the Soviet Union and discussed the Polish situation with Stalin—he was unceremoniously and immediately put away in a convent by his superior and was forbidden to say or write a word about it. But this is a matter for the Catholic conscience.

The inescapable conclusion is, thus, that the Jewish problem in the United States at the outbreak of the war was a problem of the rise of reaction and Fascism—due perhaps to the approach of the presidential elections here and the war in Europe.

Five years of war, the bloodiest war in history, have wrought tremendous changes in the en-

tire complex situation which we call the Jewish problem.

The greatest change was effected in the subject of the Jewish problem—the Jews. Here was a most tragic, horrible change. Over one third of Europe's 8,500,000 Jews were physically destroyed—murdered in cold blood, tortured to death, snuffed out by all the fiendish Nazi design of annihilation, or caused to die as a result of being deliberately subjected to starvation, exposure, and epidemic. About ten percent of that number fell in combat with Nazism, fighting with their national armies, while these existed, in the underground partisan line of duty, and in the revolts of the ghettos. This systematic planned slaughter exterminated from 20 to 60% of the total Jewish population in the European countries. Only a few of the grim tales will be told here.

There were 525,000 Jews in Germany when Hitler came to power in 1933. Since then 290,000 have managed to escape to other parts of the world. Another 90,000 may still survive in several Nazi-occupied countries. About 150,000 have met their death, directly and indirectly, at the hands of the Hitlerite murderers. Only 5000 Jews were left in Germany, as of eight months ago. How

many of them remain alive today is, of course, not known. That is the end of a most enlightened prosperous and progressive Jewish community that had given the world some of its greatest men and to Germany most of her Nobel prize winners. Still, the fate of the German Jews was not the worst, since so many of them had escaped before the outbreak of the war. Of the 3,000,000 Jews in Poland, 1,600,000 had been annihilated by the end of 1943. How many more have suffered their fate since, we do not know as yet. There may be no more than three millions Jews in Europe left altogether, outside those in the Soviet Union.

Another radical change in the Jewish situation in Europe is the absolute pauperization of those Jews as still remain on the Nazi-occupied continent. Not only the real, industrial and commercial properties of the Jews were confiscated by the Nazis in every country that fell under their rule but the personal property of the Jews as well—their money in bank or pocket, their tools if they were artisans, their clothes, down to their linen and bedding. They have also been dispossessed of whatever positions they had occupied in their localities previous to the arrival

of the Nazis. Only temporarily were some of them left to pursue their artisanship or trade in order to keep the economy of the town going. Pretty soon they were taken away and sent out as slave gangs on road construction and other war work which eliminated them from the economic pattern of their country. This was not the case with the non-Jewish population of the same town or city. Even in Poland where the Nazi rule was harshest, the urgency of the war compelled the Nazis to keep the peasant tilling his soil and the worker at his bench. In fact, the Nazis forced an increase of 18% in the cultivated area of Poland; and despite the deliberate destruction and co-ordination of Polish industry, there were as many industrial workers in Poland in 1942 as there were before the war, which number must have been increasing with the removal of Nazi industries Eastward due to the extensive bombing of their Western industrial centers.

The soil in which the Jewish problem of Europe was rooted has likewise been fundamentally affected by the course of the war. The critical, impossible social economic conditions of the countries suffering, in consequence, from an acute Jewish problem have not been



*Laboratory in Palestine*

entirely eliminated by the war, but they were pretty much cut up and thrown in confusion, calling for final disposition along with the general terms of the peace. Nobody could envisage today the new Poland reconstructed on the lines of the old, rotten economic foundation. In fact, the struggle about the Polish Government in Exile and the issue of the Eastern borders of the new Poland are but the political foam of an economic storm, the struggle over the economic basis of the new Poland. Something of the same nature is taking place also in the other countries of Europe which were badly in need of social reconstruction at the time of the outbreak of the war.

With the elimination of the conditions making for an acute Jewish problem, at least the acuteness of the Jewish problem will also disappear.

The war has, in addition, brought about a change in the alignment of the major political forces which is conducive to the easing, if not elimination, of the Jewish problem in Europe. Nazi Germany, the sworn deadly enemy of the Jewish people, is no longer the dominant power on the continent, forcing its Fascistic policies upon the rest of Europe and calling forth emulation on part of her neighbors—particularly in the treatment of the Jews. Already and even more so in the future, the Soviet Union is the most influential power in Europe, setting her example to the rest of the continent in many respects, and among these also the example of the solution of the Jewish problem. The alliance between the United States and Great Britain with the Soviet Union will further reinforce the progressive attitude toward the Jews and make possible the eradication of the major ills of the Jews in Europe.

As a struggle against Nazi-fascism and for a free democratic world, the war could not but make conditions more favorable to the improvement of

the situation of the Jews everywhere. Even among the ignorant and prejudiced, the prestige of the general Nazi ideology—and along with it its racial theories—fell along and in proportion with the fall of the might of the Nazi arms. The exigencies of the war called for the suppression of all Nazi sponsored activities. In the United States, the noisy, audacious, barbaric anti-Semitism of 1939 has disappeared, its leaders with the regretful omission of Father Coughlin, are, at this writing, on trial for treason, and the prosecution by the Federal government definitely identifies their anti-Semitism with Nazism and treason. The current anti-Semitic movement in this country is a last hour attempt by the isolationists and higher up reactionaries to muddle the waters for the Presidential election. Despite its vast financial resources, the 1944 edition of American anti-Semitism does not compare with its predecessor of 1939. Today it has to contend not only with a more enlightened public but also with an organized effort against it on the part of the progressive labor movement that is becoming so influential in our political life.

In the Soviet Union the war has brought about the inclusion of new lands with some 2,000,-

000 Jews among their population. One third of the Jews of Europe, outside Russia, turned their back upon persecution and Jewish problems and joined their free and happier brethren under the flag of the Soviets. But the war also found almost as many Soviet Jews in the territories soon to be overrun by the Nazi beasts. The Soviet government gave them preference in the general evacuation of the local population, in the knowledge that they would be the first to be murdered by the Hitlerite savages. About 70% of these Jews were evacuated into the interior of the Soviet Union; some 600,000 remained behind, whose tragic fate has so shocked the civilized world.

In Palestine the war served to accelerate the economic development of the country, both in the domain of agriculture and in the field of industry—Jewish industrial production increased from \$32,000,000 in 1937 to \$80,000,000 in 1942. Nearly 200 of the new industrial establishments were engaged directly in war work. About 50,000 Jewish refugees, including 4000 children, entered the country since the outbreak of the war. The political situation, however, remained as bad, if not worse. The White Paper went into effect, as scheduled, despite almost universal



*Lecture Room in Palestine*

protest. At this writing, there are rumors that the British policy is swinging again from the repudiation of the Balfour Declaration as implied in the White Paper to an older project of dividing Palestine between the Jews and Arabs—a proposal that has once been offered and rejected by both Jews and Arabs.

The end of the war will find considerably fewer Jews in the world whose problems will demand solution, but their problems will be more difficult to solve. This will be so despite the more favorable political climate that will prevail. So long as President Franklin D. Roosevelt will sit at the Peace Conference; so long as the Soviet Union will have a say in the

disposition of the peace, Jews have nothing to fear for their freedom and human rights, in so far as these can be safeguarded by international covenant and political statute. Unfortunately political pattern does not always cover the economic sphere and some phases of our living still remain in a social no man's land.

At the end of the war we shall have approximately 13,000,000 Jews in the world. About three-quarters of them will be found in the two leading countries of the new age, the United States and the Soviet Union. Another million or so will be living in other parts of the world outside Europe. Some 2,500,000 Jews may still survive in Europe, and their rehabilitation will constitute the acute Jewish problem of the Post War period, although it should not prove too formidable since it would concern only one-sixth of world Jewry.

The problem of the 4,000,000 Jews in the Soviet Union will be of the same general nature as that of the rest of the Soviet people—rehabilitation and reconstruction. But two additional elements will complicate the reconstruction problem of the Soviet Jews. One will be a matter of policy and planning. Since 70% of the Soviet Jews have been uprooted and

evacuated, along with the rest of the population from their old homes, the question will naturally arise: Are they all to be returned to their respective localities, or shall most of them be concentrated in compact masses at a few places in the Soviet Union, particularly where they are already established in large numbers as in Eastern Siberia, Birobidjan, and Uzbekistan? Similarly, are the evacuated Jewish colonists of the Crimea to be returned to their former collective farms or should they be settled in the above named regions, alongside the Jewish colonists there? Many factors enter the situation, particularly the human factor that one will be more easily rehabilitated and will do a better job in reconstruction if he comes back to his old home. Still, there is an opportunity to "gather the remnants of Israel" in the Soviet Union in a compact mass on a contiguous territory which would make possible a complete national life.

Other problems will be concerned with Jewish refugees, both those who are in the Soviet Union now and those who may want to go there after the war. Will those Jews in the Soviet Union today who are not Soviet citizens be blanketed into citizenship, permitted to

emigrate if they so choose, helped in this effort if they do? Will the Soviet Union open its doors to those Jews in Eastern Europe who would prefer to live under the Soviet flag, or to join their brethren in a Jewish Autonomous region or republic? In any case, the Jews in the Soviet Union both Soviet citizens and aliens, will be in need of our aid in the difficult process of reconstruction, even as Soviet Russia as a whole will need such outside aid.

The Jews of the United States will come out of the war in a more favorable position both economically and politically. Under the requirements of the war, many young Jews of the white collar professions, of the selling and teaching staffs, have learned new industrial trades, mostly quite technical, in which they were not represented before. They have grown accustomed to their new vocations and the vast majority of them will remain in those trades. As a result, the American Jews will be more diffused over the entire economy of the country. The mixing of hundreds of thousands of Jewish young men and women in the various military services with other Americans of different race and creed will no doubt help to break down the barriers between Jews and non-

Jews and make for more tolerance generally. The proven identification of the anti-Semitic elements in this country with the enemies of labor and democracy will gain the Jews active allies in their struggle against the incipient American Fascism digging itself in behind the cloak of mere Jew-hatred. Nevertheless, a Jewish problem in America will remain, in a form that was very aptly stated by the editors of *Fortune*, to wit:

"Granted, that the Jews do not come within gunshot of running America and that their numbers are no longer rapidly increasing and that there is no color of reason for expecting successful anti-Semitism here. Granted, the ability of the American people to suffer Klan propaganda and the propaganda of the Nazis and still maintain common sense and basic decency. Granted, that there is strong reason therefore for believing that Fascism can be defeated in this country. Granted all this, it still remains true that the future of the Jew in America is puzzling. Can this universal stranger be absorbed in the country which has absorbed every other European stock? Can he live happily and in peace if he is not absorbed? The answer must be guesses. Upper class Spanish and Ger-

man Jews *have* been pretty well absorbed. There are, however, numerous Jews who look upon the loss of Jewish identity as a kind of social suicide. If those groups, Jewish and non-Jewish, who wish the identity and distinction of the Jews preserved are able to carry their point then the only hope for the Jews in America is mutual toleration and respect. Since, however, toleration and mutual respect are also the only hope of all who wish to preserve or reestablish democratic institutions in this country the Jews in America will have numerous allies. . . ."

The post war problem of the Jews of Palestine will consist in the first order in the abolition of the White Paper and the assurance of open door to Jewish immigration to the full absorbing capacity of the country. In as much as the saying goes that every Jew coming to Palestine brings his own "absorbing capacity" in his suitcase, there would be quite a large immigration into the country. Whether this can be attained under the British mandate is an open question. A suggested way out is for Palestine to pass from the authority of the British mandate to that of a trusteeship of the United Nations, which would not be involved in

Near Eastern problems or Moslem politics.

Second, the removal of all governmental handicaps in the industrial development of Palestine. The idea that is gaining favor in some important British quarters that Palestine must give up all hope of becoming an industrial country may have been motivated by hostility to Zionism, but it is doing poor service to the Palestinian Arab as well. Despite its lack of the basic natural resources of coal and iron, Palestine is not lacking in other factors that are conducive to industrialization. The deposits of the Dead Sea have already laid a foundation for a chemical industry. Proximity to the Egyptian cotton market and the talents and experience in the field of textiles of some of its immigrants makes possible an extensive textile industry. There already are the beginnings of a machine tool industry. The absence of coal can be compensated for by the availability of oil piped to Haifa. Then there is the Jordan River Valley Project along the lines of our own TVA, which would bring sea water from the Mediterranean into the valley of the Jordan, thereby releasing the fresh water of the Jordan for the irrigation of some 300,000 acres of inarable land and utilizing the

fall of 1200 feet of the surface of the valley for hydro-electric power. But all this is contingent on the policies of the Mandatory Power and British politics in the Near East.

The most serious problem, as already indicated, will be confronted in the rehabilitation of the more than two million Jews who, we hope, will remain in Europe at the close of the war. The difficulty lies in the fact that they have been uprooted from their localities and tortured, extirpated from the economic system of the continent, browbeaten and tortured, and left penniless—poor, half-starved, broken humans harassed by a pack of hungry wolves. Take the case of the Belgian Jew deported by Hitler. He was born somewhere in Russia, Poland, or Roumania. For a number of years he lived in Belgium and began to regard himself as a Belgian. He was dispossessed by the Nazis, robbed of everything he had, shipped out to the Eastern front where he is being run down as a slave. What country is he to return to after the war? Will he find a place for himself in the post war Belgium? Who is to finance his repatriation or his start in life?

The case of the Polish or Roumanian or Slovenian Jew is simple but no less precarious.

His homeland was none too friendly to him even before the war came. It did not take too much effort on the part of Hitler to rekindle the embers of anti-Semitism in those countries, where the local population, itself victimized by the Nazis, still participated in the Nazi organized pogroms on their fellow Nazi victims, the Jews of their communities. Can the Polish Jew, or the Roumanian Jew, wherever he may now be, return to his native land? Will he want to? Will he find a place there in the hard years of post war adjustment?

The magnitude of the problem calls for commensurate effort. The problem of the Jews in Nazi Europe today is Nazi made. It is as much a part of the international situation as the war itself. In all justice, it should be an international responsibility, perhaps an International Commission appointed by a Council of the United Nations, should tackle it. In any case, the Nazis who caused all the grief at least should make good the damage that can be made good. They can't bring back to life the millions of Jews whom they murdered in all their heinous manner. They can pay back the loot they took from the Jews (estimates run as high as six and a half billion dollars). With such a fund—

raised perhaps through a capital levy on the Junkers and Magnates who brought the Nazis into power and worked well with them all these years—the reconstruction of European Jewry could be undertaken, but not without a firm political and humanitarian base. Such a base calls for freedom of choice for the European Jew whether to remain where he is, to go back to his native land, or to his adopted country. It also calls for the elimination of those conditions which made his life miserable before the war as well as since the war—the curse of anti-Semitism. The war for freedom and democracy will not have been won, nor the cause of humanity served, if anti-Semi-

tism will not be declared an international crime, the ban of which is to become part of the several constitutions of the states that suffer from it, and if the same international commission which will keep guard that there should be no resurgence of Fascism will also watch for manifestations of anti-Semitism, which is only another phase of Fascism.

All this is hardly possible unless we shall have won the peace as well as the war. It is conceivable only in case of the establishment of a progressive peace, which in turn is contingent on the close co-operation and sincere friendship between our country, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union.



*B. Z. Goldberg*