

THE
Jewish Veteran

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FEBRUARY



1937

ATTENTION!

Commanders and Comrades of All Units

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LEARN FROM US!

What The Fate of German Jewry Teaches World Jewry

By A BERLIN JEW

LET me preface these lines by emphasising that the Jewish problem in Germany is pre-eminently a moral one. We are to be defamed, we are to be demoralised and, once we are demoralised, this result is to prove and demonstrate retrospectively that the contentions about Jewish immorality and Jewish criminality were right and justified. The people were to be shown, by living example, a cowardly Jew, humbled and degraded, declassed and demoralised, through being deprived of all civic rights. In such a guise he is to be presented, first to the German people and then to the entire world. Possibly this will succeed, and such a danger the Anti-Defamation League has recognised and appreciated. The very name by which it calls itself points to the sore spot.

The National Socialist upheaval of 1933 found German Jewry economically saturated. The masses enjoyed a fair measure of well-being, the upper classes might even be called wealthy. Moreover, a century of assimilation and a long and hard, but successful, struggle for equality of rights lay behind them. All these causes combined to deprive great numbers of German Jews of their Jewish ideals and essentially Jewish qualities. Not only that; the withholding of equality of rights had bred a type of Jew who wanted to give an appearance of being something he was not, rather than to be proudly and quietly what he was, and who lived his entire life casting a longing eye on the non-Jew. This type was guided, not by the law of his forefathers, but by the opinion of those others he wished to resemble. His healthy Jewish instincts had relaxed, and when the shock came, the German Jew was as much nonplussed as he was taken by surprise. All of a sudden, he had lost the ground beneath his feet; he was like a man suspended over an abyss and trying to regain his foothold. To keep his post, to safeguard his position—that was, in the first phase, the order of the day.

He did not understand what world Jewry seems to have understood immediately—especially where Jewry was centred in accumulated settlements—that the blow of the German rulers was a blow against the Jewry of the entire world, which would, naturally, begin to defend itself at once. Hence at that time in Germany the declarations of patriotic feeling by its leaders, hence the telegrams of warning sent abroad, hence the passionate efforts to obtain at least a modified treatment of the combatants at home and to ensure the discontinuance of the boycott of Germany abroad. All this happened, not only out of fear or by order of the ruling powers, but also because in those first days of the revolution, the German-Jewish leaders were honestly convinced that whatever the foreign Jews did by way of energetic defence against the German attacks was done amiss and could only make

matters worse; and in fact it did aggravate them.

For this attitude more than one excuse may be adduced. Anyone walking along the Berlin streets on the notorious boycott day of April 1st, 1933—it was an irony of fate that the date fell upon a Sabbath—and not only seeing the faces of those among the miserable storekeepers, who, for the first time, were forced to observe their own Sabbath, but also looking into the eyes of the Jewish passers-by, must have recognised at once how heavy a blow was falling on to the heads of the German Jews. Yesterday still the eyes of well-off, middle-class citizens; to-day these eyes had suddenly aged and closely resembled the eyes of those fugitive pogrom victims passing in their hundreds through Berlin in 1904, after the dread days of Kishinev and Homel, and begging to be conveyed onwards. This is more than a sentimental reflection, it was a very real fact. Where is the people that in similar circumstances could have preserved its full moral dignity?

Now, how does the problem present itself to-day after almost four years of economic strangulation, of social isolation and moral defamation? Generally speaking, it may be said to the credit of German Jewry that in its visible bearing at least it has recovered itself and is reacting with reserve and dignity to whatever happens. This attitude is being supported by a secret, but distinctly growing, feeling of sympathy in widening circles of the German population. In many minds impotent animosity against the rulers unites with a distinct feeling of compassion for the outlawed minority. These veiled signs of sympathy, it is true, are not strong enough to raise any hope of improving the situation, but still they are a certain consolation.

Nevertheless, it is astonishing to have to establish again the fact that suffering and danger have the effect of demoralising us in so far as we are becoming less and less able to look beyond our own personal suffering and to recognise distinctly what the actual facts of the matter are. Everyone thinks first and foremost of his own particular fate and fortune—sometimes, alas! in the literal sense of the latter word; and many a man's thoughts are governed, to the exclu-

In this frank self-analysis of German Jewry after four years of Nazism, the author, a prominent leader of German Jewry, shows how world Jewry must be guided by what has befallen the Jews of Germany.

THE EDITOR

sion of everything else, by the idea of how best to save something out of the wreck.

That explains why, to this day, the boycott against Germany is viewed not only with critical doubt but with hopeless despair. Even in leading Jewish circles it is considered an act of madness.

We, in Germany, recognise to-day quite distinctly that there is no future in store for young Jews in this country, hopeless as it is for the Jews and not only for the Jews; so we try to transplant them into other countries. Also we make desperate efforts to save, within the narrow limits left by the financial laws and regulations whatever can be saved of our capital. But we do not all appreciate that in fact the honour and dignity of the Jewish people are at stake—in fact, if the problem were to be raised in this form within Germany, it would but cause a shaking of heads and find an entire lack of understanding.

It is, of course, very difficult for us who live in the land of tribulation to tell our Jewish brethren abroad: "Never mind us! Act as if we German Jews did not exist at all! Do not consider us and our weal and woe!" Still, that would be the only dignified attitude which would show that in spite of all we have to undergo, in spite of the awful isolation we are forced to live in, we know and recognise clearly what is the pivot round which everything turns—the whole of Jewry and all the Judasim in the world. Against this was the blow aimed, and we in Germany have but parried it. It is most painful, but unfortunately only too true, that this instinct for totality, this sense of honour and dignity of world Jewry as a whole has greatly deteriorated in us German Jews. Traditional Jewry and Zionism are the last pillars of such a way of thinking; for the assimilated, the very Germanised Jewish circles, these are lost ideas. Only the youth, and fortunately the youth also of these assimilated Jews, has awakened; and though its future life may no longer be lived in this country, surely going abroad, it will become because, and not in spite of, the shock it has had to suffer, the bearer of a moral and spiritual regeneration which may prove a blessing for the entire people.

The history of our people teaches us that we Jews have always shown a particular tendency to react to suffering, not only in a moral, but also in a religious sense. Thus the question arises: Did the events of 1933 and the tribulations of the last few years affect or enrich the religious life of the German Jew in any way? By a superficial observer the question we have raised would easily be answered in the affirmative: all over the country the Synagogues have become, not only better filled, but, in many cases, overcrowded. Young rabbis have, by their courageous sermons, achieved an extraordinary measure of success and

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Dividends of Hitlerism

WE have now passed the fourth anniversary of Hitler's advent to power. It was on January 10, 1933 that the late President Paul von Hindenburg turned over the chancellorship to the man with the Charley Chaplin mustache, the former Austrian house-painter. From that fatal day Germany has been to all intents and purpose the private estate of the Nazi party and those whose bidding it does.

In four years of government by terror, intimidation and hate the greatest and most notorious gang of political cut-throats known to modern history succeeded in making themselves the complete and unchallenged masters of Germany. Today every liberty and right once cherished by the German people is under the booted heel of this swastika-pocked and goose-stepping clique. The Jews were the first victims of Hitlerism but labor, the church, women, education, science, literature, the arts, the press—every phase of life and culture—have felt the crushing and deadening hand of Nazism.

When Hitler and his satellites became the supreme rulers of Germany through the so-called Reichstag election of March, 1933, and the later suppression of all other political parties, the Fuehrer asked and received four years of unquestioned power from the German people. During that period he pledged himself to bring work and peace to the German masses. He promised to restore the morale of the German people and to make Germany a mighty nation. And he also promised to rid Germany of the Jews and Jewish influence.

Only one of these promises has been kept. The Jews have been disfranchised politically, uprooted and hounded economically, ostracized socially, destroyed culturally. They have been branded officially as pariahs and doomed to a slow death in Germany or exile. But Hitler's other promises remain only promises.

Instead of work he has given Germany a brutal terror, concentration camps, a barbaric legal code, a devilishly cunning and effective spy system, the revival of the ex-

ecutioner's axe, the threat of famine, a lowered standard of living, forced labor, shoddy substitutes for food and clothing. Instead of peace Hitler has turned Germany into a vast armed camp. Men, women and children have been harnessed to the Nazi War machine which threatens the peace of the world. Funds urgently needed for butter, wheat, meat, fruit, clothing, new schools have been diverted into the most ambitious military program and squandered on a tremendous world-wide campaign of propaganda. The promise to restore the morale of Germany has been kept by blood purges, the destruction of treaties, the fomenting of revolts in friendly countries, the bullying of smaller nations, diplomatic bluffs and bragging. These have been the achievements of four years of Hitler.

In 1933 Germany was poor but respected. Today Germany is poorer but also the most hated nation on earth. Terror, hunger, and war—these are the prospects for Germany in Hitler's five years. These are the dividends of four years of Hitlerism.

A National Emergency

IN times of war the resources of the nation are put at the government's command without stint. That is as it should be. In dealing with an enemy unified and coordinated action is essential. It matters not whether the enemy be an army or a natural disaster. The catastrophic floods which have inundated the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys and left hundreds of thousands homeless and destitute can only be fought effectively and

with hope of success if the entire nation helps as it would in the case of a war.

For that reason we urge every comrade, no matter where he lives, to remember that in helping the flood victims he is helping in the fight against a natural enemy which is as grave a menace as a foreign army. In the struggle with the angry and torrential flood waters we can all help, some with money, some with contributions of food and clothing, some with service. But whatever form our aid may take, let us remember that help is urgently needed. Let it be said that J.W.V., whose record of achievement is so glorious in other national emergencies, did not fail in this one.

Brotherhood Day

To emphasize cooperation among Protestants, Catholics and Jews as American citizens and to present a united front against current totalitarianisms and the importation of foreign propaganda of hatred and strife the National Conference of Jews and Christians is sponsoring Brotherhood Day throughout the nation on February 20 and 21. Observances of this occasion will be held in more than 1,000 communities. It is to be hoped that this significant annual undertaking, which has the endorsement of President Roosevelt, will find an echo during the coming year in the development of new and united efforts to keep America free from the bigotries and cruelties which characterize life in so many parts of the world today. We urge all J.W.V. posts to take part in Brotherhood Day celebrations in their communities.

