

The Allied Countries and the Jews

H. G. (Hyman Gerson) Enelow



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Obvious typographical errors have been corrected. For a complete list, please see the [end of this document](#).



BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Aspects of the Bible

The Jewish Life
The Synagogue in Modern Life
The Varied Beauty of the Psalms
The Effects of Religion
The Faith of Israel



**THE ALLIED COUNTRIES
AND THE JEWS**

**THE
ALLIED COUNTRIES
AND THE JEWS**

**A Series of Addresses by
Rabbi H.G. Enelow, D.D.**

**TEMPLE EMANU-EL
New York
1918**

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations."—*Deuteronomy*.

"The dense web of the fortunes of man is woven without a void."—*Lord Acton*.

"They, hearing History speak, of what men were, And have become, are wise."—*George Meredith*.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface	11
I. France and the Jews	13
October 6, 1917	
II. England and the Jews	23
October 20, 1917	
III. Russia and the Jews	37
November 3, 1917	
IV. Italy and the Jews	49
November 17, 1917	
V. Palestine and the Jews	63
December 1, 1917	
VI. America and the Jews	77
December 15, 1917	
VII. The War, the Jew, and the Future	89
December 29, 1917	

The addresses collected in this little book were delivered at the Sabbath morning Services of Temple Emanu-El during the autumn and early winter of 1917-18. I tried to give a bird's eye view of the relation of the Jews to the several countries with which America is now associated in the War for the defense of democracy. Also, I tried to point out how intimately the advance of democracy has been connected with the improvement of the lot of the Jew. Forming part of Divine Services, the addresses had to be short, but I hope they contained enough to illumine the subject and to stimulate thought, if not further study, as well as patriotic action.

In the present form, the substance is offered of the spoken addresses. The address on Russia may seem more hopeful than the situation today would warrant. Right now, unfortunately, chaos reigns in Russia, and the Jews are said to suffer terribly. Though Trotzky is reported to have renounced all affiliation with the Jews, or any particular interest in them, his changes of fortune are likely to react upon the people from which he sprang. None the less, we must not despair. In the end, Democracy must win in Russia, and find a way of living together and working together for the numerous racial and religious groups which form her vast population.

I wish to express my thanks to the Board of Trustees of Temple Emanu-El for their kindness in publishing these addresses and for generously providing a special number of copies for distribution among Jewish men in our Army and Navy.

H.G.E.

Washington's Birthday, 1918.



I

FRANCE AND THE JEWS^{ToC}

Every American is now more than ever interested in Europe, and especially in those countries with which we are associated in the War. France, in particular, claims our attention. It is for this reason that as Jews we cannot help being interested in the relation of France to the Jewish people. Many of our sons soon will find themselves on French soil to take part in the liberation of France, which now means part of the defense of our own Republic. Not a few of our women, also, will be there—are there already, engaged in work of relief and restoration. It is but proper that we should recall what connection has existed between the Jew and France.

France has played an important part in Jewish history. There have been Jews in France from earliest times, perhaps from the very beginning of the Christian era. About the middle of the fifth century we know definitely that there was a considerable number of Jews in France and that they lived on terms of friendship with the rest of the population. When Hilary, bishop of Arles, died in the year 449, Jews as well as Christians wept at his funeral, the Jews chanting Psalms in Hebrew. From that early age on, France has been a most important factor in Jewish history.

The conditions of life for the Jew have not been the same there always. There is the usual story of vacillation and misfortune. France also has had her periods of persecution and expulsion for the Jews—particularly when she consisted of small provinces and factions. There was the usual story of malign charges and disputations, and Hebrew books now and then were confiscated and burnt as containing attacks on Christianity. The public burning of the Talmud at Paris, in the year 1242, the several expulsions during the fourteenth century, culminating in the expulsion of 1394—just about a century before the expulsion from Spain—are among the tragic incidents of medieval Jewish history. France did not escape the religious fanaticism which formed one of the dark features of the middle ages.

But all in all, the Jews have had a glorious history in France, crowned by the fact that she was the first country in Europe to give full civil and political rights to the Jews, as she did during the Revolution, on September 28th, 1791. France thus inaugurated a new era in Jewish history. Indeed, she thus brought about the modern rebirth of the Jew—the Jew's full entry into modern life. Therefore, when it is said that every man has two countries—his own and France, we may justly apply it in particular to the modern Jew.

Nor was the leadership of France in the modern emancipation of the Jew an accident. It was part of the liberal spirit which has found varied expression in France, and which could not ignore the Jew and the maltreatment that was meted out to him all over Europe.

When Montesquieu wrote his great work, *The Spirit of the Laws*, in the year 1748, he did not forget all the services that the Jews had rendered to civilization, nor did he fail to deplore the outrageous way the Jews were dealt with. The Christians, he affirmed, were treating their Jewish neighbors in a more inhuman way than the Japanese of those days treated the Christians. Readers of Montesquieu could not

help remembering that remonstrance, and it is quite likely that Louis XVI was inspired by it to the abolition of the Jewish poll-tax, as well as to the appointment of a special commission, under the presidency of Malesherbes, for the study of Jewish conditions, with a view to their improvement.

But it is not commonly known that about forty years before Montesquieu issued his book, there appeared in France an epoch-making work, of which the leading Jewish historian, Graetz, has well said that it rendered an incalculable service to Judaism.

This work was the *History of the Religion of the Jews*, by Jacques Basnage de Beauval, a celebrated scholar and writer, published in the years 1707-11. It marked the first attempt to write a complete history of the Jews from the time of Christ to modern times, and was designed by the author as a continuation of the historical work of Josephus.

It was particularly noteworthy coming from a Christian theologian, seeing that the conventional Christian view was (and often still is) that the Jewish religion really ceased with the coming of Jesus. Christianity was supposed to have abolished and eliminated Judaism. Yet Basnage realized that the contrary was true. Judaism was not dead. The Jews were still alive.

For five years he gave himself to the task of collecting material, and he produced a work which, whatever its shortcomings, was remarkable as the first of its kind, aside from the enormous amount of scholarship that went into its composition. But there was more than scholarship in the work; behind it was a realization of the marvel of Jewish history and resentment of the brutality with which the Jew was treated. Let no one wonder, said the author, if we denounce certain charges made against the Jew. "In the course of the centuries people have developed a spirit of cruelty and barbarism toward the Jews. They have been accused of being the cause of all calamities and charged with all kinds of crimes which never entered their minds. Everywhere they have been mobbed and massacred. Nevertheless, by a miracle of Providence, they still exist today everywhere. The bush of Moses, encircled by flames, has always burnt without being consumed."

The liberal spirit of Montesquieu and Basnage found new expression, and, we may say its culmination, in the men of the Revolution. Mirabeau, who in Berlin came in contact with Mendelssohn and got to know Dohm's famous work on the Civil Improvement of the Jews, issued in 1781, wrote a warm plea for the emancipation of the Jews, under the title of *Mendelssohn and the Political Improvement of the Jews*. His plea was supported by Gregoire, a priest, and Duport, a Jacobin member of the National Assembly, and it finally resulted in the Assembly's abrogation of Jewish disabilities, and the invitation to the Jews to take the oath of citizenship.

Thus, on September 28th, 1791, the Jews of France were liberated, and the Jews of the world celebrated the beginning of a new era of freedom and of the opportunities that are bound up with freedom.

In the spiritual history of the Jew, also, France has played an illustrious part. In the middle ages there was no country where there was so large a number of brilliant and erudite scholars, and so energetic an activity, as in the numerous Jewish communities of France. North and South rivaled each other. Some of the most influential Jewish teachers of all times came from these French schools.

Think, for instance, of R. Gershom, called the Light of the Exile, in the eleventh century, who, though he founded a school at Mayence, came from Metz, and continued to draw disciples from many parts of France. He was one of the chief organizers of medieval Jewish life. He was the first to prohibit polygamy among Western Jews.

Then think of Rashi—the greatest of biblical exegetes and commentators.

At Vitry, on the Marne, was produced the most important work on the Jewish liturgy, known as *Mahzor Vitry*. R. Moses of Coucy compiled the most popular work on religious ordinances, the *Sepher Mitzwoth ha-gadol*.

Thus, we might go on and name the illustrious talmudists, and commentators, and philosophers of the Jews in France. Though each possessed his own characteristics and merits, we may justly say that the rabbis of France as a class were distinguished for that clarity of thought, directness of expression, and simple piety which we associate with France.

The Provence, too, was the centre of the great translators, who turned the classics of Arabic Jewish learning into Hebrew, and thus made them accessible to those parts of Europe unfamiliar with Arabic. Indeed, to this day, thanks to these achievements, the spiritual life of Israel the world over is, consciously or no, under the influence of France.

When we think of this record, we shall not wonder that the Jews of France are devoted to their country and prominent in its affairs. It was this very prominence of the Jews that led some base people to embrace anti-Semitism, and resulted in the Dreyfus scandal some years ago. But nothing shows the character of France so clearly as her readiness to right a wrong. In the Dreyfus case, too, she made *amende honorable*, and today Captain Dreyfus, the martyr of Devils Island, Major Dreyfus, as he is now, is actively working for the salvation of his country.

One good result of the War has been the cessation of anti-Semitism in France. This is demonstrated by such a book as M. Maurice Barrès's *Les diverses familles spirituelles la France*. Formerly, M. Barrès, president of the League of Patriots, as well as one of the most brilliant writers of France, was an anti-Semite. But now that is all over. One of his most sympathetic chapters is on the Jews—on their loyalty and devotion, and he dwells with admiration on the famous incident of Rabbi Bloch of Lyons, who, in the early days of the War, died on the battlefield while offering a crucifix to a dying Catholic soldier, being struck by an enemy's shell. "Here," he says, "fraternity finds its perfect expression. The aged rabbi offering to the dying soldier the immortal sign of Christ on the cross, this is a picture which will not perish." Nor will it perish!

A long history—full of heroism and honor—links the Jew with France. Let us hope that the future may add to this splendor, and that France will ever remain the exemplar of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and that she will continue to play an important part in the spiritual as well as the secular life of Israel!



II

ENGLAND AND THE JEWS [ToC](#)

Among the allied countries none is more influential than England. It is perfectly natural, therefore, that the name of England should be on everybody's lips, and that as Jews we should be particularly interested in the relation that has existed between England and the Jews.

For years there has been no country in the world whose Jewish population had enjoyed a position of such great power and prosperity, and such perfect recognition, as Great Britain. Ever since the middle of the nineteenth century has this been the case. The Jews of England have occupied positions of honor in their own country and its colonies, and time and again their influence has made it possible for them to come to the rescue of their fellow-Jews in other parts of the world, as happened, for instance, at the time of the blood accusation in Damascus, in 1840, when Moses Montefiore, with the support of the English government, saved not only the Jewish community of that far-off city, but also the honor of Israel the world over.

For over half a century the Jews have enjoyed such a condition of confidence and happiness in England. Only the other day I ran across in a German-Jewish journal of the year 1866—Samson Raphael Hirsch's *Jeshurun*—a glowing account of the induction of a Jew into the office of Lord Mayor of London. It referred to Benjamin Philips, who was the second Jew to attain that honor. The writer was greatly impressed with the marvelous pomp and grandeur of the occasion, but what struck him above all was this: that though the newspapers for days had discussed the event, not one of them singled out the fact that the new Lord Mayor was a Jew. Such perfect naturalization of the Jew obtained already in the year 1865, though it was only five years after the complete removal of Jewish disabilities in England. So much more a surprise might it be to learn by what a slow and laborious process the Jew won his recognition in England, how many centuries the struggle for his emancipation consumed, and that there was a time when the Jews of England suffered humiliation and persecution unsurpassed in any other part of the world.

As we take a bird's eye view of Israel's history in England, we see at once that it falls into three distinct periods.

There is the first period, lasting from the arrival of the first Jewish settlers who followed William the Conqueror from the Continent, to the expulsion. Who would believe today that there was a time when England expelled all her Jews? Yet, this is what happened in the year 1290. Moreover, when it did happen it came as a release and a blessing, seeing that for more than a century before the expulsion the life of the Jew in England was one drawn-out story of persecution and every form of misery. It was a century during which the Jews of England suffered the worst consequences of feudalism, when they formed the prey and the sport of kings and priests alike, and when they added to history some of the most tragic chapters of martyrdom for the sake of faith. It was a century which began, after a period of comparative security and happiness, with the attack upon the Jews of London and the provinces, at the time of the Coronation of Richard I, because the archbishop took umbrage at the temerity of some Jewish

delegates to the ceremony who ventured within the purlieus of the cathedral or the palace; and with the self-immolation, in the year 1190, of the whole community of York in the tower of that city—one of the most heroic incidents in all history. The expulsion thus closed mercifully the first period of Jewish history in England.

Then follows the period of the re-admission, in the middle of the seventeenth century, under the leadership of Cromwell and Menasseh ben Israel, though one is not to believe that in the interval there were no Jews in England, for there surely were, as recent research has shown.

Finally, we have the third period, which began with the gradual removal of Jewish disabilities in the nineteenth century. During this period we witness the Jews of England taking full part in the life of their country and reaching that present-day position which opportunity and complete recognition and integration in the national life have put within their power.

If today the Jews of England form so integral a part of their country, and if they are so whole-heartedly and single-mindedly devoted to its welfare, it is not merely because they feel that they have wrought and fought enough for their patrimony, but also because they are conscious of their long association with England and her civilization, and of the fact that their beginnings on English soil go back to earliest times, to the very time that the Normans came to their shores and William the Conqueror invited the Jew to follow him to his new domain.

Yet it would be an error to suppose that the emancipation and the attainments of the Jews in England were due to mere accident. Rather have they been due to certain characteristics of the English people, and to those tendencies and qualities of English civilization which have made it so distinguished and potent in the world. The rise of the Jew in England may have been slow, but it has been sure, and it came because it was inevitable under the conditions that have served to make England herself great and strong and free. It is these facts we must consider if we would understand the ascendancy of the Jew in England.

First of all, there is the fact of England's democracy. It has often been observed that in no country is democracy more widespread and secure than in England. One thing is certainly true, namely, that England has led in the democratization of the world.

And nothing is more potent a lesson of history than that the Jew has always been benefited by true democracy. There have been autocrats who have been kind to the Jews, and there have been times when democracy has betrayed the Jew; but these are exceptions. As a rule, the cause of Israel in the world has gone hand in hand with the progress of democracy—of true democracy. Democracy has been an invariable aid to the Jew, and not because (as practical politicians assume sometimes) its government depends on votes, and Jews might command votes; not at all, but rather because under the protection and in the atmosphere of democracy it is easiest for principles to be promulgated and for ideals to penetrate. When we fight for the cause of democracy, when our sons are preparing to shed their blood for it, when we are asking for the support of it with our wealth and our work, let us remember that we are fighting also for the cause of Israel in the world.

That is why the great movement for democratic freedom and justice in England was bound to make for the recognition and liberation of the Jewish soul. That is why Cromwell became a champion of the re-admission of the Jews to England, and namely, of their re-admission on the most honorable terms, and not,

as some of his associates would have it, surreptitiously and half-heartedly. Nay, that is why, some forty years before Cromwell's effort, in the year 1614, when Leonard Busher wrote his noteworthy tract on "*Liberty of Conscience*", he demanded that such liberty be extended to all alike, including the Jews. That is why, two centuries later, Thomas B. Macauley could not help pleading for the removal of the disabilities of the Jews, as he did in 1830 and 1834 supporting the noble efforts of Lord Holland and Robert Grant. That is why Gladstone, at first opposed to Jewish emancipation, could not help coming over to the more liberal view. It was impossible for the democratic conscience to affirm itself and for the democratic consciousness to grow in England, without freedom being granted, and justice being done, to the Jew, seeing it is for freedom and justice that democracy stands.

Another fact is England's interest in commerce. It is well known that commerce has helped make England great. Now, the Jew throughout the ages of his history in Europe has been one of the most important factors in commerce. Everybody knows what historic conditions served to bring about this result. The fact is that the Jew became perhaps the most important commercial factor of Europe, which was responsible both for his prosperity and persecution.

England has seldom failed to recognize this side of the Jew's importance. This is why he was first asked to come to England. This is why he was so often traded about by the feudal kings. This is why they hated to see him go even when they mocked and mobbed him. This is chiefly why Cromwell wanted him to return, and it is fear of his commercial power that often arrayed against him his opponents. Often short-sighted Englishmen were afraid that by giving equality and rights to the Jews, they would make it possible for the latter, by their commercial talent, to overwhelm the rest of the population and to absorb all the wealth of Britain. It was even feared that the Jews would buy up St. Paul's Cathedral and turn it into a synagogue! "You say they are the meanest and most despised of all people," exclaimed Cromwell, at the Conference on the Re-admission of the Jews. "So be it! But in that case what becomes of your fears? Can you really be afraid that this contemptible and despised people should be able to prevail in trade and credit over the merchants of England, the noblest and most esteemed merchants of the whole world?"

Cromwell's indignant question has been justified by history. Now, years after their complete emancipation, the Jews have not yet appropriated all the wealth of England, they have not yet dispossessed the rest of Britain's population, nor yet has St. Paul's been turned into a synagogue. At any rate, England's interest in commerce has contributed greatly to the ascendancy of her Jewish subjects.

Finally, there is the remarkable kinship between the English spirit and the spirit of Israel.

Leroy-Beaulieu, in his celebrated book *Israel among the Nations*, has pointed out that the claim of such kinship is made for many nations in regard to Israel. But surely it is not without reason that some one has called England the Israel of Europe. There is no modern country that has been saturated more thoroughly with the spirit of Israel than England.

No country, for one thing, has been so completely influenced by the Bible. The English translation of the Bible is an English classic, as well as Jewish. Insofar as the Puritans molded English civilization, it meant the introduction of a strong and unmistakable Hebrew influence. It is in England that Biblical learning, of a devout and constructive kind, has flourished as nowhere else, there that a society for the diffusion of the Scriptures first was founded, there that most has been done for the exploration of Palestine, there that some of the finest collections of Hebrew books and manuscripts are found (in the British Museum and in the Bodleian Library at Oxford), and there that even rabbinical learning has found

its most earnest and sympathetic devotees among non-Jews.

It would take us far afield to trace the relationship between the English spirit and that of Israel. But we cannot think of it without realizing why some people should believe that the English in reality are descendants of the Ten Tribes, why the integration of Israel in English life should have become so complete, and why the Jew should finally have found such appreciation and happiness in England.

How about the future? What effect has the War had on the position of the Jew in England?

It is whispered here and there that the War had created an increase of anti-Semitism in England. This is impossible. It is true that in the early days of the War some sensation-mongers tried to cast aspersions on the Jews. It is true, also, that in those days a serious problem was created by the presence of many Russian Jews who would not fight for the old government of Russia, thus giving rise to some slurs upon the patriotism of the Jews. No less true it is that some few fanatical journalists seem to regard this as a good time for creating strife and spreading anti-Jewish prejudice. But the futility of such an enterprise is self-evident.

The Jews of England are as loyal as the most loyal. Their best sons were among the first volunteers and martyrs. Their ablest men are serving in all sorts of positions of trust and leadership, and are occupying posts of supreme responsibility both at home and abroad. Nay more, each and every one of them, however lowly and obscure, is ready to die for England and her cause. These facts speak for themselves, with a voice louder than fanaticism and bigotry.

As long as England remains true to herself—to her democratic spirit, to her spirit of enterprise and fair-play, to her spirit of Freedom and Righteousness, as long as she remains true to that genius for democracy that has animated her for centuries, that has kept on asserting itself within her against all handicaps and impediments, that has kept on moving her toward the democratic goal often in spite of herself,—as long, I say, as England remains true to democracy, so long will Israel be safe and happy under her flag!



III

RUSSIA AND THE JEWS [ToC](#)

The ascendancy of Russia as a power making for democracy is one of the miracles of the present War. Who could have foreseen five years ago that the country suffering under the most despotic autocracy of modern times would so suddenly become the champion of a most radical democracy? Yet, this is what is actually happening today. Notwithstanding the vacillations and frightful uncertainties that still beset Russia, she seems destined to play an enormous part in the future definition and direction of democracy, and the world may yet learn many a lesson from her. This is one of the miracles of the War. Under these circumstances, we, as Jews, must be doubly interested in the story of the relation that has existed between Russia and the Jews.

Only yesterday the name of Russia was the synonym of nothing so much as Jewish suffering. Persecution has been the well-nigh universal lot of the Jew. In even the freest and fairest countries he has had to endure outlawry and disability. But in no other country was he called upon to bear persecution so continuous and variegated as in old-time Russia. There all the persecutions of the past seemed to gain repetition and culmination. Wherever the Jew turned, he found himself hedged in by restrictions and humiliations. His dwelling, his education, his occupations—everything was under the ban. For centuries he was driven from pillar to post and forced to drink the cup of calamity to the very dregs.

When we think of all the misery that the Russian Jew had to undergo, we cannot but marvel that he should have been able to survive it all, and thus to belie the prediction of that arch-enemy, Pobiedonostseff, that as a result of the laws against them, one third of the Jews of Russia would emigrate, one third would be baptized, and the rest would perish. Thank Heaven, the contrary has come to pass: Pobiedonostseff and his kind are gone, the autocracy is dead, and the Jew of Russia is still there, with a new era before him, destined, let us hope, to surpass in grandeur and glory any that has gone before.

When we consider the story of those horrible persecutions, we find that the chief excuse for them was the charge that the Jew was not a true Russian, but a stranger. Yet, this charge was fundamentally false. It is only necessary to think of the Jew's history, to realize that he is as little a stranger in Russia as any other part of the population.

The Jew's beginnings in many parts of Russia go back to the very earliest times—in some instances beyond the records of history. It is true that a large part of her Jewish population Russia acquired in the year 1772, and subsequent years, as a result of the division of Poland. But in other parts of Russia, the presence of Jews is of much more ancient date.

In Kieff, the mother of cities to the Russian, Jews were settled as far back as the eighth or ninth century—some holding that they came there with the Khazars, who are supposed to have founded Kieff. In the centuries following the Jews worked and traded and flourished there and held important official positions, so much so that by the sixteenth century Kieff became a centre of Jewish learning, with the

motto: "From Kieff shall go forth the law."

As for the Crimea—the beautiful province to which the deposed Czar was so eager to be sent—its Jewish settlements date back to Hellenic days, when the Greeks began to found commercial centres on the shores of the Black Sea, and Jews from the Byzantine Empire, as well as from Persia and the Caucasus, came along with them, establishing communities with synagogues and cemeteries and other institutions, as we know from recently discovered inscriptions, which go back to the first century.

Similarly, we have early accounts of Jews going and coming in Novgorod and Moscow—Jews speaking the Slavic dialect and antedating by many years those from Western Europe who came to Russia as a result of persecutions in Germany and elsewhere, and who brought with them their German speech. When we examine these records, we can see how ancient is the lineage of the Jew in Russia and how groundless, as well as vicious, was the theory of those who maintained that the Jew of Russia had to be repressed and oppressed for the reason that he was a stranger in the land.

There has never been a more complete, nor a more wonderful, transformation than the one wrought by the Russian Revolution in the condition of the Jew. One of the first consequences of the Revolution was the abolition of Jewish disabilities, the specific abrogation of all Jewish restrictions, the repudiation of all the laws and regulations against them that centuries had accumulated—the instant recognition of the Jew. It is nothing short of marvellous to think that today Jews are found in the highest positions in Russia—in the Senate, which means their Supreme Court, in the police administration, in the army, and on most responsible commissions to foreign lands. Magic could have wrought no more marvellous change.

Yet, it would be wrong to think that all this has no connection with the previous life and conduct of the Jew of Russia. On the contrary, the student of the history of the Russian Jew cannot help recognizing the intimate relation between the life and the achievements of the Russian Jew in the past and the recognition that has come to him at the very dawn of the new age. Here, too, there has been no exception to the normal operation of historic law.

If the Jew of Russia has been adopted so promptly and so fully into the new-born Russian democracy, it is because in the past he has shown his mettle, because his whole record has demonstrated his civic worth, and because his character and his attainments even under the worst possible conditions demonstrated what he was capable of being and doing once he was given that boon of recognition and opportunity which it is the aim of democracy to bring to all men.

This the Jew of Russia has shown, first of all, by his spiritual life. The Russian poet Pushkin has said that glass is shattered by blows, but iron is thus made the stronger. This saying has been properly applied to the effect of persecution upon the character of the Russian Jew.

Nothing is more remarkable than the spiritual history of the Jew in Russia. The Russian Jew has been proud of his Judaism, and devoted to it. Nowhere else do we find from the very beginning so great a readiness to propagate his ideas. It is remarkable that in Russia, of all countries, we find the Jewish influence reaching out the farthest into the non-Jewish world.

Nestor, the old Russian chronicler, relates that in the tenth century the Jews came to Kieff in order to convert to their religion the Grand Duke Vladimir. As a matter of fact, the Khazars, a people living in southern Russia, did become Jews in the eighth century, and remained such for a couple of centuries. In

the sixteenth century the Judaistic sect sprang up in Novgorod and spread to the very monasteries of Moscow, and in one form or another, in spite of many efforts to suppress it, it has not ceased to this very day. Perhaps it is this persistence of the Jewish spirit and spread of Jewish influence that made the autocracy fear the Jew as a menace to Christianity.

Even more important, however, has been the spiritual life of the Jewish community itself. It has thrived despite persecution. It has created centres of learning, scholars, saints, and above all masses of learned and saintly men and women, which both in number and character have never been surpassed in the whole heroic range of Jewish history. It is this spiritual life of the Jew of Russia—devout, loyal, God-intoxicated—that could not help but excite the admiration, and ultimately to gain the recognition, of the world.

Then, there is the contribution that the Jew has made to the life and civilization of Russia and of other countries. One of the charges of his enemies was that the Jew of Russia was not a useful subject—that he was a menace to his neighbors. In vain writers and statesmen of enlightenment sought to expose the falsehood of this charge; in vain they insisted that whatever was wrong with the Jew was due to the restrictions and discriminations that were placed upon him; in vain did such men as Count Uvarov, as far back as the year 1841, and Alexander Stroganov, in 1858, demand the creation of educational facilities, and even complete emancipation, for the Jews in their interest as well as for the common good. The dread and the tyranny of the autocracy could not be overcome.

Fortunately, the Jew did not allow himself to be wholly crushed by these calumnies and calamities. He went on using his powers to the utmost. He grasped education where-ever he could find it. He became an important factor in the literary, in the artistic, in the musical, in the commercial and industrial life of Russia—producing an Antokolsky, Rubinstein, a Frug, the Polyakoffs and the Ginzburgs, and no end of others, to say nothing of the vast new Hebrew literature he has created, including the names of such genuine poets as Lebenson, Gordon, and Byalik, while the rest of the world has been so vastly enriched by the work of Russian Jewish exiles that it is no exaggeration to say that they have covered the face of the earth with the fruits of their spirit.

Nor must we forget the ineradicable patriotism of the Russian Jew. Often under the old régime people asked how it was possible for the Jew of Russia to be patriotic. The answer is that no matter what made it possible, the Jew of Russia was patriotic. Though he may have had grievances against the autocracy and its agents, he loved his country none the less and in war and in peace he was there to show it.

As far back as the Russian War of Liberation, in 1812, the Jew so distinguished himself in the Russian army, that he evoked the praise and satisfaction of Alexander I, who was fortified thereby in his good intentions toward the Jew; unfortunately thwarted later on by hostile influences and religious apprehensions.

Similar patriotism the Jews have shown on all other occasions, including the present War. As for the fight for liberty and the Russian revolutionary movement, the Jews have played a leading part in it, shrinking not from its severities and hardships, and this they have done not only for their own sake, but for the common good.

Thus, we can see that the vindication and recognition of the Jew of Russia today are not without their roots in the life of yesterday. They are the efflorescence of his spiritual life—of his contribution to the life of his country and other countries—of his inalienable patriotism. "The Revolution," Kerensky has said, "is the expiation of the past and its sins." It may well form such an expiation to the Jew!

How about the future? It would be idle to deny that the peril is not yet past. The Jew of Russia is not yet out of the woods. But neither is Russia as a whole. As long as reaction and anarchy threaten, there is danger for the Jew. But in this regard the Jew of Russia must take his chance with the rest. His fate is bound up with the complete triumph of democracy in Russia—democracy founded on self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and service, toward the firm establishing of which she is still struggling. If we would help the Jew, we must do what we can toward the help of Russian democracy. Let democracy triumph in Russia, and it will mean the triumph of the Jew!



IV

ITALY AND THE JEWS^{ToC}

Within the last few days our attention has been focused upon Italy, because of the reverses which have befallen her army, so soon after its notable heroic achievements. Knowing the innate courage and heroism of the Italians, we must hope that their military misfortunes are only temporary. Meantime, this situation serves to increase our interest in the relation that has existed between Italy and the Jews—a question which our association with her in the present world-struggle has brought to the fore.

It is well to remember that the Jewish community of Italy is the oldest Jewish community of Europe. Moreover, if the origin of the Jews in other countries is shrouded in mist, this is not the case here. The full light of history illumines the earliest period of Jewish life in Italy.

In Talmudic literature we read of the journeys of famous rabbis to Rome and of their activities there; in the New Testament we hear of the Jews of Italy, and of their synagogues, which formed the scene of activity for the founders of the new faith; in Philo, the great Jewish writer of the first century, we have a description of the Jewish community of Rome in the days of Augustus, with references to their communal life and religious observances. Similarly, there is an allusion to the Jews, their number and their influence, at Rome, in one of Cicero's famous orations.

All this teaches us in unmistakable language that even before the beginning of the Christian era, Jews in considerable numbers established themselves in the capital of the Roman empire, and that before long they attained to a position of marked prosperity and power, thanks not only to their own industry and intelligence, but also to the good-will of some of the emperors. When Caesar died, it is said, the Jews kept vigil at his tomb for three nights.

But the history of the Jews in Italy is remarkable not only for its antiquity. It is remarkable also for its uninterrupted glory and magnificence. Italy, it has been said, is the one country in which there has never been such a thing as Jewish persecution on a large scale. In England and in France there were periods when the Jews were banished. In Italy they were spared such a wholesale calamity.

This is not to say that the Jews of Italy were not called upon time and again to face hardship and misery. This is not to say that now and then one city or another did not try to expel them. Nor is this meant to cover up the fact that in Rome, from the year 1555 to the year 1848, the Jews were made to live in a ghetto, which contributed beyond measure to their material and spiritual degradation. In Italy, as everywhere else, the Jews had more than their share of sorrow and misery to endure, owing to the fanaticism of popes and the vacillation of the masses. But the one thing that never did occur was a wholesale expulsion of the Jews from all her domain, similar to the one from England in 1290, from France in 1393, and from Spain in 1492.

As a result, the history of the Jews of Italy affords today a record of uninterrupted activity and glory, extending over more than the entire period of Christian history. In every century of Italian Jewish history,

we find men and movements of importance, bearing witness to the energy of the Jew and to the opportunities for its exercise. And this long period of the past is worthily crowned by the position that the Jews occupy in the Italy of today. Though their number is small, there being but about forty thousand of them in Italy, their influence is striking, seeing that in every sphere they have risen to exalted positions, unsurpassed, in this respect, if equalled, by their brethren in any other part of the world.

When we try to account for this, various facts have to be considered. First, there is the condition of the country. Then, the character of the people. And, finally, the part of the Jew himself.

For hundreds of years Italy was broken up into many independent towns and rival principalities, competing and contending with one another, which frequently proved to the advantage of the Jew, who, when driven from one part, found refuge in another. Then, the Italians have always been known for their love of liberty and justice, of education and enlightenment, in addition to being a pre-eminently practical and commercial people. This, in its turn, could not help but make them hospitable to the Jews.

But all this would not have availed to make the history of Israel in Italy illustrious were it not for the Jews themselves and for what they have accomplished in various spheres. It is these latter things particularly that we must consider in a survey of the Jew's history in Italy.

There is, first of all, the part of the Jew in the commerce of Italy, as well as in her industries.

This we may name first, because history makes it quite clear that the Jews were first welcomed and appreciated in Rome and her dependencies and neighbor-cities because of their commercial ingenuity and enterprise. Well, there is good reason for believing that as far back as Augustus, the Jews had begun to play an important part as commercial factors between Italy and other countries.

In the middle ages, however, they became the commonly recognized bankers of Italy, particularly in the southern parts, so much so that in some cases the Jews were even compelled to maintain banks and in some instances their doing so was made part of diplomatic treaties between cities, as when Venice making an alliance with Ravenna, in the fifteenth century, it was stipulated by Ravenna that the Jews should conduct a bank there, and in one case, at least, on record, in Gubbio, a Jew was paid a salary by the city for maintaining a bank. In this way the Jews were expected to contribute to the trade of the town and the relief of the needy, though in the course of time they were called usurers for engaging in this sort of business, and it was made the cause of propaganda against them, and of persecution.

Nor is it fair to suppose that the Jews of Italy were merely engaged in money-lending and commerce. History tells us that they were also largely represented in the various trades and industries. The dye-making industry formed one of the chief occupations of the Jews of Italy in the thirteenth century. In Sicily, documents relate, almost all iron workers were Jews. In Sardinia there were among the Jews so many blacksmiths, locksmiths, weavers, and silversmiths that Ferdinand the Catholic felt impelled to make a law against their plying their noisy trades on Christian holidays.

It is hard for some people to get away from the notion that the Jew is nothing but a merchant. No matter how much they hear of tens of thousands of Jews engaged in various trades, to the extent of having trade unions of their own, they still cling to their preposterous notion that the Jews are a people of merchants only, (though every now and then they will change their tune and charge all Jews with being socialists, which certainly is not the special characteristic of merchants).

It is equally wrong to assume that in the Italy of the past, the Jews were only bankers and merchants; no,

they were also artisans, engaged in all kinds of trades, including agriculture, and as such they were of vast importance to their country.

If the Jews of Italy are said to have invented the letter of credit, thanks to Jewish immigrants in Lombardy possessing valuable interests in other countries from which they had been expelled, and thus to have added an important instrument to the conduct of commerce, they were no less conspicuous in the diverse manual occupations. And the Italians, knowing the value of commerce and the crafts, stood ready to appreciate the worth of the Jew.

No less remarkable has been the spiritual history of the Jews of Italy. Macauley depicts the Italians as possessing a spirit so proud and fine as to make them equally eminent in the active and the contemplative life. Even if this description did not happen to apply to all Jews, it certainly would be applicable to the Jews of Italy. What would all their distinction in the industrial and commercial life have signified if they had failed to maintain their spiritual ideals? As a matter of fact, it is herein that the Jews of Italy have been especially fortunate.

From the very beginning to this day, as a French writer has put it, the fire has never died out upon their altars. They were always among the leaders in Jewish learning and loyalty. Their rabbis were among the most famous in the world. Some of their works are among the great classics of Jewish scholarship—such as the *Arukh*, the great Talmudic cyclopedia of Rabbi Nathan of Rome, or the *Malmad*, the popular homiletic work of Rabbi Jacob Anatoli, or the *Mesiloth Yesharim*, the celebrated ethical treatise Hayyim David Luzzatto. Some of their poets are among the most famous and permanent, like the satirist Immanuel of Rome, said to have been the friend of Dante.

Perhaps nothing testifies so clearly to the intellectual and spiritual energy of the Italian Jews as the promptness with which they adopted the art of printing and the vast number of Hebrew books they issued soon after the invention of the art. The first Hebrew printed works appeared in 1475-76, and in the sixteenth century Ferrara, Bologna, Naples, Cremona, Mantua, became veritable centres for the publication of Hebrew Bibles, the Talmud, the Zohar, and other rabbinic works. It is interesting to note that the first Spanish translation of the Old Testament appeared in Ferrara, and was the work of a Jewish exile, who by the maltreatment of Spain was not estranged from the love of her language.

Moreover, the culture of the Jews of Italy even centuries ago had something that was lacking among their contemporaries elsewhere—it had breadth, resulting from contact with a cultivated and enlightened people. Some of the foremost rabbis were also physicians, and were sought as such by popes, princes, cardinals, and other men of distinction.

Frequently, we find Jewish scholars acting as teachers and translators for eminent Christian scholars and patrons of learning, as, for instance, Jacob Anatoli, Leo Modena, Elijah Levita, and others.

This breadth of culture is the reason why some of their finest works were written in Italian, such as *The Dialogues of Love* by Leo Hebreo, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and several of the religious and ethical treatises of such celebrated scholars as Leo Modena, Samuel David Luzzatto, and Elia Benamozegh. For breadth, as well as versatility, the products of Israel's spiritual genius in Italy have never been excelled.

Finally, one cannot study the history of the Jew in Italy without realizing the depth and ardor of his patriotism. "From the lowest to the highest," an Italian writer has said, "the Italian is always a patriot."

This certainly may be affirmed of the Italian Jew. He has always stood for Italy, and been ready to defend her with his blood.

When in the year 536, Belizar, the commander of Justinian I, besieged Naples, it was the Jews who opposed the surrender of the city, and offered not only to participate in the defense, but to support the population with money during the siege. To them was assigned the defense of the most dangerous section of the city, facing the sea, and when the city was captured they were made to pay most severely for their patriotism. And the example of those heroic patriots was followed repeatedly by the Jews of Italy. It is such patriotism that made them defenders of Rome when Louis Napoleon sent an army corps against it in behalf of the Pope, and such patriotism that made them take such a prominent part, under Cavour and Mazzini and Garibaldi, in the days of the Risorgimento, in the struggle that led finally to the emancipation and unification of Italy.

No wonder, then, that Italy had no sooner won her liberty and unity than she paid due tribute to the patriotism of her Jewish citizens and gave them that complete emancipation to which their whole history had entitled them and for which even some of the most eminent non-Jews had pleaded for many a day—non-Jews whose spirit of justice and freedom was sublimely symbolized by that noble priest, Father Ambrosoli, who, in the Passover night of 1848, when the walls of the ghetto were demolished, was seen amid the crowd, holding under his cloak a crucifix, which he was ready to uplift as an emblem of love and brotherhood in case of any hostile demonstration against the Jews.

What good use the Jew of Italy has made of his new-found liberty, the record of the years since 1870 tells eloquently! In the sciences, in the arts, in philosophy, in public service—as diplomats and ministers of State—in every sphere, the Jews of Italy have become an honor to themselves as well as to their country.

In Rome you may see today a beautiful new Temple erected on the ruins of the old ghetto. In the vestibule there is a tablet commemorating its dedication, in the presence of the King of Italy, and reciting the fact of its erection on the spot where formerly stood the walls of the ghetto. When I saw it several years ago, I was deeply impressed with the beauty of the structure and the loyalty that reared it among those squalid but historic surroundings.

This Temple is a symbol. It is a symbol of the ancient character of the Italian Jewry. It is a symbol of its loyalty. But above all, it is a symbol of the liberty and happiness that the advance of democracy has brought to the Jew of Italy, as well as of other lands. It inspires us with the hope that so long as Italy remains true to the cause of democracy, which is the cause of justice and enlightenment, so long will the Jew be free and safe and happy within her borders!



V

PALESTINE AND THE JEWS^{ToC}

One could not read without a thrill the news of the recent advance of the British army in Palestine. The Holy Land thus is gradually passing under the control of the Allies, and its destiny is growing of particular moment to everybody interested in the outcome of the War. To the Jew, however, this becomes a particular occasion for a consideration of the relation of Palestine to the Jews.

In the study of the past of the Jewish people, we come across different countries that have played an important part in Jewish history. In France, in England, in Russia, in Italy, in Spain—in all these countries are imbedded important parts and periods of Jewish history. But no country can compare to Palestine in this respect.

In a way, Israel and Palestine are inseparable. They are synonymous. In the Hebrew tongue, Palestine is called the Land of Israel, the name Palestine having been first used by Philo and Josephus, and by the Romans, and really being derived from the Philistines, who, in ancient times, fought against the Jews for the possession of this fertile and beautiful country.

It is true that after the destruction of the Jewish State by the Romans, in the year 70, and especially after the failure of the last struggle for independence under Rabbi Akiba and Bar Kochba, the number of Jews in Palestine decreased, and their part in it grew less and less significant.

It is true that for centuries Palestine was almost emptied of Jewish inhabitants, and such as were left were reduced to a life of penury and desolation. It is also true that in the course of history Palestine has changed masters frequently, having been in the possession of the various Canaanite tribes before the coming of Israel, and since the fall of the Jewish State passing through the hands of Romans, Christians, and Turks. Yet, on the other hand, it is no less true that the classic period of Jewish history is associated with the name of Palestine, just as the classic period of Palestine is indissolubly bound up with the name of Israel.

Archeologists may unearth in Palestine remnants of a civilization that antedated by centuries, perhaps by thousands of years, the coming of the Hebrews, and historians may trace the fate of Palestine since the banishment of the Jews, from Titus to the Turks; but the most glorious and most important section of the story of Palestine is the period of its occupation by Israel. Similarly, we may relate and rejoice in Israel's achievements the world over, and in the wonderful capacity the Jew has shown in all countries for growth and grandeur; yet none can deny that the paramount period of Jewish history coincides with the Jew's life in Palestine—where his character developed, where his prophets taught, and where the consciousness of his unity and eternal purpose took possession of his soul.

"Is there not something," asks Mr. Watts-Dunton, "in the very soil upon which we are born, in the very atmosphere above it, that aids in molding our characters, if not our destinies?" In the case of Israel this question must be answered in the affirmative. Historians agree that the character of Palestine had much to do with the molding of the character of the Jewish people and directing its destiny. Such diverse scholars

as Solomon Judah Rapoport, the celebrated rabbi of Prague, and Miss Ellen Churchill Semple, the eminent American representative of Anthropologic geography, agree in this view. It is for this reason that we have a right to say, with the ancient rabbis, that Palestine and Israel are inseparable.

Moreover, it is an error to assume that when the Jews were forced to leave Palestine, first by the Romans, and then by the various foes of Israel who seized it, it ceased to play a part in their lives. There are those who believe that in the life of human beings two sentiments, or forces, mean a great deal more than the actualities of the moment, namely, memory and hope. How often do not these two—memory and hope—mean more to us than the experience of the present?

This is what happened to the Jew in regard to Palestine after he was driven from its purlieus. He kept on clinging to it, as both his most cherished memory and most precious hope. It was the favorite theme of his meditations. It was the central subject of his prayers. It was the inspiration of his Muse. Never poet wrote more fervid poems of love than those the medieval poets of Israel addressed to Zion.

Throughout the ages Palestine continued to form the heart of Jewish theology and optimism. Time and again Rabbis of piety and prominence sought to make it anew the centre of religious scholarship and spiritual authority, as did Rabbi Joseph Caro in the sixteenth century, and though they failed, they personified the Jews undying love for the Holy Land.

It is this profound and indestructible love that Judah Halevi voiced in that elegy of wondrous beauty and pathos, which burst from his soul when, as an aged man, having left behind him all that was dear to him in his native Spain, he journeyed, in the year 1140, to Zion, to behold her desolated beauty and to kiss the dust of her stones. And this love has been shared by Jews everywhere throughout the ages.

"The cradle of our lives," says Mr. Watts-Dunton, "draws us to itself wherever we go." This has certainly been true of Israel. The cradle of his history, Palestine, has drawn him to itself, wherever he went. It remained his dream, the land of mystic love and longing, and as such it was even more beautiful, more precious in his eyes than when his in reality.

It is remarkable, however, that in recent years the dream again has begun to turn into a reality. After a forsaking of hundreds of years, with but scant interruption, Palestine again has become a centre of Jewish habitation and happiness. The story of this renewal is one of the most stirring, and most romantic, in the variegated history of the Jew.

For these many centuries the Jew had dreamed and prayed for Palestine. It had been the theme of his reveries. But it was forty years ago that men arose and decided that the time had come for making the dream come true. In different quarters the plan was advanced for settling Jews on the soil of Palestine, in order thus to restore the ancient land and also to help solve the problem of Jewish persecution and distress. It is noteworthy that among the pioneers of this plan were not only Jews, but also Christians, such as Warder Cresson, the first American consul in Jerusalem, who became a convert to Judaism, and Laurence Oliphant, the English philanthropist, who was unofficially supported by Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury.

The persecutions in Russia and Rumania emphasized the need of some radical measure for the improvement of the Jewish situation. Thus, in 1870, we see the beginning of a new Jewish colonization in Palestine by the founding of an agricultural school, Mikweh Israel, which is followed in 1878 by the founding of the colony Petah Tikwa, and in 1882 by the colony Rishon Le-Zion.

The men who founded these colonies were real pioneers; they had the ideals and the courage and the

self-sacrifice of real pioneers, and no one can read their story without marveling at their endurance and achievements. It was their valiant struggle that led to the organization of the Hoveve Zion Societies in Russia and England and other countries. It also gained for them the support of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, and particularly the devoted and generous assistance of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, whose munificence saved the movement in its most critical period. As a result, numerous sections of the Holy Land have been reclaimed from the waste of centuries, and there were before the War prosperous Jewish colonies in Judea, in Galilee, and beyond the Jordan, noted for the bounty and variety of their products, as well as for the health and happiness of their inhabitants.

It is customary nowadays to give credit for all this renewal of Palestine to the Zionists. Nor does it matter particularly as to who gets the credit. But it is an historic fact that Dr. Herzl conceived the idea of a Jewish State some twenty-five years after the first Jewish Agricultural School had been founded in Palestine and Jewish colonization had begun. And it is further an historic fact that Dr. Herzl and his followers for years opposed the continuation of the colonizing activity, seeing that their plan was political and they insisted that unless the Jews first got a Charter to Palestine, they must not go on with the reclamation and improvement of the land.

However, it would lead us too far afield to pursue this phase of the subject. Suffice to say that it was the political emphasis of the Zionists, coupled with the anti-religious attitude of some of their leaders, that served to create friction in Israel and to alienate for the time being from the movement for the reclamation of Palestine some of the most devoted lovers of the Holy Land.

Latterly, however, the practical work was taken up anew, and it is thanks to this work, promoted partly by some prominent men both here and in Europe who are not at all votaries of political Zionism, that Palestine has witnessed such a physical and spiritual renewal at the hands of the Jewish people.

What the War, with its ravages, has done to the new life of Palestine, we do not know as yet. But it is natural to ask what the future of Palestine shall be. The British army is now going forward in Palestine, thus bringing to an end the Turkish rule which began just four hundred years ago, when Selim I conquered Egypt and Syria. It is impossible to ignore the important rôle that Palestine is destined to play in the future. Its industrial and commercial possibilities are enormous. Now, as ever, it is on the highway connecting Europe with Asia and Africa. With the increasing importance of the East, the value of Palestine is bound to grow.

But there is one essential condition: Palestine needs a population. And there can be no doubt that none would form so fitting a population for Palestine as Jews eager to go there and eager to restore the sacred soil.

It is in this light that we ought to view Mr. Balfour's recent declaration. If it proves possible, under solemn guarantees of the nations, to permit Jews to settle in Palestine, and to live there in security, we may be sure that many Jews will flock thither, and that they will consecrate all their energies to the restoration of the land so dear to every true Jewish heart. And thus Palestine would not only become again an important factor in Jewish life; it would become again a centre of material and spiritual riches, a land flowing as of old with milk and honey, and a stronghold of Justice and Righteousness, which are the core of Democracy.

For that end, however, we ought to put a stop to disputes about Zionism and anti-Zionism. Particularly, ought we to put a stop to such controversies carried on in the name of Reform Judaism. Reform Judaism is

not bound up with anti-Zionism, or anti-Palestinism. Certainly Reform Judaism is not, and never can be, opposed to the restoration of Palestine. Some prominent Reform rabbis have been sincere believers in even the restoration of the Jewish State in Palestine, as, for instance, Samuel Hirsch, one of the most radical of Reform rabbis, who as far back as 1842, in his addresses on "The Messianic Doctrine of the Jews," dwelt on that belief as an essential part of Jewish conviction and hope.

Some others have refrained from engaging in controversy with the Zionists, though whenever necessary they have not failed to maintain against them these three essential propositions: first, that we dare not mortgage the Jewish future to a Jewish State in Palestine; secondly, that there is no such thing possible as a Jewish people without Judaism; and, thirdly, that it is wrong to assume that Judaism cannot flourish outside of Palestine. But all this has nothing to do with the restoration of Palestine and making it a centre for Israel and humanity, if we can do it.

Let us, therefore, for once realize that Israel is greater than Zionism, and Palestine more important than parties. Let us unite for the common good! It is because of divisions and disputations, the rabbis tell us, Jerusalem was lost; let us not permit a similar cause to keep us from restoring it—I don't mean as the capital of a Jewish State, but as a centre of Jewish energy and revival. Let us work toward Jewish unification, which, the rabbis believe, must precede redemption. And thus let us help secure for Palestine also the benefits of that democracy, that rule of liberty and justice, that cause of human liberation and opportunity, to the triumph of which America has pledged so nobly her life and her strength.

VI

AMERICA AND THE JEWS [ToC](#)

America has often been described as the land of opportunity and of unlimited possibilities. This is one reason why since our entry into the War, the eyes of the whole world have been fixed upon us. It is certainly true that to no group of people has America proved more truly a land of opportunity than to the Jews. A mere survey of the American period of Jewish history is sufficient to convince us of this, and such a survey is especially appropriate at present when the history of the world is being recast and remade, and the future destiny of both America and the Jew is a subject of frequent discussion.

In no other country do we find the strands of Jewish history so intimately and continually interwoven with the general fabric as here in America. This is due partly to the newness of the country and the early arrival of Jewish settlers. Even in the study of Palestine, we find that there was a time when it contained no Jewish inhabitants, and various strata of civilization already had disappeared when the Jews took possession. As for America, however, the Jew's activity is co-extensive with the history of her civilization.

I shall not dwell here on the well-known fact that Jews were associated with Columbus in his voyage of discovery, that Jews supported his enterprise financially and scientifically, and that a Marrano Jew is said to have been the first member of Columbus's crew to step on the soil of the New World. But it is certain that from the very days of the discovery, Jews became frequent on the American continent, first in South and Central America, and later on in North America.

The finding of the New World offered timely compensation for the expulsion from Spain, and Israel lost no time in transferring his genius for enterprise and continuity, both material and spiritual, to the new field so providentially opened.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, we see the beginnings of Jewish migration to North America, owing primarily to vicissitudes of war in South America, and as that was the time when English civilization began to establish itself here, the form of civilization destined to remain permanent, we can see with what right we may speak of the continuity of Jewish history in our Republic.

It is true that the number of Jews at first was small, but before long their influence and service transcended their proportions. During the Revolution, there were only about two thousand Jews in the Colonies; yet, some of them had become so prominent, that their help was not inconsiderable, and in several instances of conspicuous and unforgettable merit. We know, for example, that Washington had an aide who was a Jew, Isaac Franks, that one of the earliest officers of our Navy was a Jew, Uriah Levy, and that a Jew, Haym Salomon, an immigrant from Poland, helped the Revolution financially, aside from what similar help he extended to some of the heroes of the Revolution individually, thus rendering it easier for them to do their share of the common task. Aside from what these instances may mean in themselves, they are important for the light they throw on the rapidity with which Jewish settlers made their way in this country, on the completeness of their civil and political assimilation, and on their public prominence in the early days of American history.

What progress the Jew has made in America since those days, he who runs may read. On the material side, she certainly has become a land of promise to millions of Jews. Gradually the Jewish population has grown to its present dimensions. During the nineteenth century the original immigration from mainly Sephardic sources, with an admixture from Poland, was supplemented by a wave of migration from German provinces. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, finally, the intense persecutions in Eastern Europe poured enormous waves of migration onto these shores. As a result of these successive movements of people, unprecedented in some respects in human history, millions of Jews have settled in our Republic, and, on the material side at least, it has become to them a veritable land of promise.

In all departments of life the Jew has prospered. It may be questioned whether ever in the past he has been blessed with such success. While it is erroneous to assume, as some people do, that all Jews are rich, or that the richest men are Jews (assumptions which are contradicted by facts), it is true that nowhere else have the Jewish people been given such an unhampered opportunity for advancement and such an unrestricted field of work and usefulness.

As a result, Jews are found in every sphere of work, in every honorable and useful occupation. In commerce, in the liberal and practical professions, in all the various forms of industry, the American Jew is found, and many have achieved eminent success. No longer can it be said, as they were wont to say of old, that the Jew is nothing but a usurer or a trader. In America hundreds of thousands of Jews work with their hands, there are numerous trade unions entirely composed of Jews, and nothing is more significant in this regard than that the President of the American Federation of Labor for years has been a Jew (at least, a man born a Jew).

It used to be said that the Jew will not be a farmer. Even if elsewhere the Jew had not disproved this assertion, he has done so on American soil, where numerous Jewish families have settled on farms and demonstrated their fitness to succeed even under adverse conditions.

What America has done for the material progress of millions of Jews is one of the marvels of history—a marvel augmented by the moral transformation which has accompanied the process. Men, who for generations had been hounded and haunted by persecution, who had been engrafted with all the moral evils of persecution, who had been humiliated and all but crushed—millions of such men by the liberty and humanity of America have been freed from the old chains, purged of the old stains, turned into free, strong, courageous, self-reliant, and self-respecting human beings. For this transformation we can never be sufficiently thankful, as it must ever continue to excite the admiration and the wonder of the world.

But the spiritual achievements of the Jew in America have been no less significant.

Now and then on this score we hear laments. Material progress, we are told, has occurred in American Israel at the expense of his spiritual life, and lurid pictures are drawn of our spiritual estate. It is even maintained that there is no hope for us spiritually in America, and that for this purpose we must turn our eyes to other parts.

Let us not forget, however, that spiritual pessimism is nothing new, whether among Jews or non-Jews. There have always been men who have thought their own time and place to be the worst-off spiritually in history. The student of history and literature finds many such resemblances through the centuries, and there is nothing said about our present-day spiritual and moral degeneration that might not be paralleled in the literature of previous generations, to which we sometimes look back as the very embodiment of virtue and spirituality.

But pessimism apart—nor is self-criticism altogether undesirable—we may say that spiritually also the Jew in America has achieved no mean things. The very fact that we have succeeded in transplanting Judaism to this country, so different from the Old World, is an achievement of importance. And the transplanting has been rapid. There have been losses, quite naturally, but there have been gains, too, and, whatever is said to the contrary, there is an intense and manifold Jewish activity in this country today unsurpassed anywhere else, though perhaps only the historian of the future will acknowledge it, just as our historians today laud the glories of the past.

When we think of our educational institutions, of our Rabbinical colleges, of our historical associations, of our synagogues, of such an achievement as the Jewish Encyclopedia and its counterpart in the Hebrew language, and many other enterprises, we cannot help but wonder that in so short a time the Jews of America should have done as much as they have in the spiritual sphere, particularly when we recall that the last half-century was a period of scepticism and materialism, which put all Religion on the defensive, and which made the course of Judaism in this country, and the process of re-adjustment, so much more difficult than it might have been.

It is this spiritual and material advance of the American Jew that has made it possible for him time and again to come to the rescue of his fellow-Jews in other countries. It would take us too far afield to go into detail. But no survey of the connection of America with the Jew is adequate without at least a reminder of how America championed the rights of her Jewish citizens in Switzerland and Russia, and of how she intervened in behalf of persecuted Jews in Damascus and in Morocco, in Rumania and in Russia.

When the history of the emancipation of the Jews is written, a place of honor surely will be accorded to the help rendered by America, through some of her foremost and most humane statesmen, from Theodore Fay to John Hay, and through the energy and self-sacrifice of her Jewish citizens.

Nor would our survey be sufficient without a reference to the patriotism of the American Jew. If the patriotism of the Jew has been proved in every country, nowhere has it been more ardent and ready than here. We know the early story of Asser Levy who insisted on his right to stand guard like every other citizen of New Amsterdam, rather than be exempted and taxed. He is the patriotic prototype of the American Jew in every age and crisis, in peace and in war. Whoever doubts the patriotism of the American Jew, does not know him. And never was the Jew of America more ready than today to do his patriotic duty, to make all the sacrifices demanded by the hour, to stand guard for the Republic and for Democracy. This he has shown already, and is going to continue to show, as the War goes on.

A word about the future. Now and then questions are asked about the future of the Jew in America. Will he live on? Will he continue in his present fortunate condition? We hear murmurs about a nascent anti-Semitism, and what not. To all these questions there is but one answer: It depends upon ourselves! Let us think of the noble words of George Washington in his reply to the address presented to him by the Jewish community of Newport in the year 1790. "It is no more," he said, "that toleration is spoken of, as if it were by the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support."

The Jew has nothing to fear from anti-Semitism in America. It amounts to nothing, except in so far as we help create it. What counts is our own life and what we do for the maintenance of democracy in

America and elsewhere. As long as we do our duty, as long as we remain true to the best moral and spiritual traditions of the Jew, as long as we stand for the noblest ideals of citizenship, and as long as America remains what her founders designed and dreamed her to be—the home and the hope of democracy—so long the Jew will be safe for America and America will be safe for the Jew!



VII

THE WAR, THE JEW, AND THE FUTURE [ToC](#)

One of the chief benefits of the study of the past is that it throws light on the problems of the present and helps us to forecast the future. This is why during the terrible struggle that has been going on, so many of us have turned to the records of history for help and direction. It is no less true of our Jewish history. When we engage in a survey of it, and especially in a study of its course in the allied countries, it is not merely for the purpose of refreshing our memories of what happened in days gone by, but also in order to learn what we might expect to happen in the future and to be fortified in our duty today. "Universal History," says Lord Acton, "is not a rope of sand but a continuous development; not a burden on memory, but an illumination of the soul."

The survey of the course of Jewish history convinces us, first of all, that nothing has been so helpful and profitable to the Jew as the progress of democracy. From of old Jewish progress and democracy have gone hand in hand. Every now and then we hear people complain that the Jew is not democratic. This has as much truth in it as the off-hand charge that the Jew is not patriotic or not idealistic. It is a generality unsupported by the facts.

Much more true it is to say that the genius of Judaism has from the first been essentially democratic, and that it expressed itself in democratic institutions and personalities even in remote antiquity, when the world at large was predominantly aristocratic. The Decalogue was a democratic code. The Torah was democratic in form and ideal. And no group of men ever were more representative of democracy in every way—in origin, conduct, and purpose—than the Jewish prophets.

No one can consider these fundamental facts of Jewish history, and what followed from them, without realizing the justice of the affirmation that the Jewish genius has been essentially democratic and that it has made important contributions to the advance of democracy in the world.

On the other hand, the progress of democracy has made everywhere for the advancement and appreciation of the Jew; and this is one of the most valuable and encouraging lessons we gain from a study of the past. In France, in England, in Italy, in Russia, in America—everywhere the promotion of the democratic spirit and law are followed, sooner or later, often promptly, by removal of Jewish disabilities and recognition of the rights and powers of the Jew. A country, or a leader, could not be democratic and fail sooner or later to acknowledge what was due to the Jew. This is why all champions of democracy were advocates of the rights of the Jews—Montesquieu and Mirabeau, Cromwell and Macauley, Cavour and Mazzini, Uvaroff and Milyukoff, Washington, and every other pioneer and hero of democracy. Gladstone in his early days was opposed to the removal of Jewish disabilities, but as a liberal, he was certain finally to turn to the right view, the only view compatible with the ideals of justice and liberty, which are at the core of every democratic feeling and force.

What follows? It follows as the night the day that the Jew has a perfect right to look to democracy for a further vindication of his rights and his place in the world—to hope that the more certain and secure the future of democracy in the world, the more certain and secure shall be the future of the Jew. Some superficial and servile people may contend that it does not matter what kind of government a country has, or under what kind of government we live; the student of history knows that it does matter, that the difference is vital, and if not apparent at any particular moment, certainly clear as the sun in the course of time.

Triumphant democracy will lead to full recognition of the citizenship of the Jew in every country. Apart from basic principles, what the Jew has done during the War cannot fail to earn for him such citizen recognition and complete incorporation in the several nations that are now fighting for life and liberty. The Jew has always been a patriot, but his patriotic devotion, service, and self-sacrifice shown in the present War has never been surpassed and in point of magnitude and scope never equaled. The effect of it will be the abatement of anti-Jewish prejudice and suspicion, increased respect for the Jew, and complete recognition of his position and rights as a citizen everywhere.

Maurice Barrès, a former anti-Semite, has called attention to this effect that the War has already had in France; but it is destined to produce the same effect in every country in which the end of the War will make for the triumph of democracy.

Democracy, however, means not only recognition, but also responsibility, duty as well as rights, service as well as privilege. Jewish history teaches nothing so clearly as that the Jew has persisted not so much because of what the world has done for him, as because of what he has done for the world. The Jew has served. Through light and gloom, amid flood and flame, in days happy or adverse, the Jew has served. He has toiled for mankind. *Ebed Adonay*—God's servant, he was called by the ancient Prophet; and such he has been—God's servant among men, with whose bruises others were healed, and by whose afflictions others were taught and ennobled.

This is why when Democracy finally arose and demanded the freedom of the Jew, there could be no doubt as to his merit and his right. And in the future, too, the Jew will have to continue to serve and to bestow upon the world those benefits for which he was created.

It is foolish to think that the Jew's problem can be solved in terms merely of happiness and comfort for himself. Not for that was he created. It can be solved in terms only of service—of service to the world! The Jew will never be able to run away from recognition of this fact, which is of the very essence of his soul and his existence.

With the coming of his complete recognition as citizen, will come the increased spiritual responsibility of the Jew. Not only will he have to take part in the political and economic reshaping of the world. He will have to justify his spiritual isolation or separateness. He will be called upon to make his Religion, his peculiar spiritual ideal, count in that spiritual and religious reconstruction which the world will need after the War.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Has the Jew's Religion nothing to contribute to the healing of mankind's spiritual wounds? If so, the days of his Religion are numbered. But if it has, as we proclaim it has, then the Jew will have his part to play, and his duty to perform, when upon the coming of peace mankind starts to set up again the fallen tabernacles—enters upon the process of religious and spiritual reconstruction.

And this duty and part the Jew will have not in one corner only—not in one only secluded, far-off spot, but everywhere, in the midst of the world, amid the storm and stress of the world's life, amid the agony of

human suffering and need, where every other Religion will be at work, and men will be engaged in the momentous tasks of rebuilding and rejuvenation.

There are those who indulge in the sweet, idyllic dream of the Jew departing from the common strife of mankind and betaking himself to Zion, and there, amid bucolic surroundings, developing into a spiritual entity the like of which has never been on land or sea. A pleasant dream, this! But history is against it. History shows that although the classical period of the Jew lay in Palestine, since then the Jewish genius has flourished and produced its best fruits in lands other than Palestine.

It is idle to expect reproductions of classical periods. The very contact with the rest of the world, the very friction with other men's thoughts, the very variety of environment, has made for the vitality and versatility of Israel's genius. And in the future, also, it is in the world at large that the Jew will be called upon to serve, and to prove his capacity and his commission as a factor in the spiritual advancement and the moral up-building of the human race.

This is not to say that there may not or shall not be a new centre of Jewish life and glory in the old land of Israel's fathers, in Palestine. On the contrary, we all pray there may be! Every loyal Jewish heart is bound to Palestine, and no true Jew but wants to see it restored and renewed as a place of beauty and of joy. If upon the close of the War, Jews, under proper guarantees, are allowed to settle in Palestine as a matter of right and not merely as a favor, let us hope that those who migrate there, directed by necessity or idealism, will find their heart's desire and will develop a life of which the world and the Jew might be justly proud. Toward the securing of such safeguards we ought all to work together. It must form one of the fruits of the War.

But to think that the resettlement or reconstruction of Palestine is going to dispose of the universal Jewish problem, is a chimera. We need but think of the difficulties that will surround the new settlement, difficulties of a political and religious, as well as of an economic, character—of the small number of Jews the country will be able to absorb, of the many years it will take before Palestine can support in comfort as many as even a million Jews—we need but think of the large number of Jews who do not believe in the formation of a separate Jewish nation, to realize that they who assume that the creation of a new centre, and particularly of a Jewish State, in Palestine would wholly solve the Jewish problem, feed on flowers of phantasy.

The Jew's place is in the world at large, the world now engaged in the most momentous struggle of history, and in the world at large he will have to show that capacity for service which will justify his past and make his future secure and glorious!

In such a spirit let us dedicate ourselves to the defense of democracy and the championship of Judaism. In such a spirit let us bear the burdens of the War. Many of our dear ones are engaged in the actual combat. Let us take pride in their sacrifices! Let us call those blessed who shall outlive this combat and be allowed a part in the reconstruction of the future. May they help in the promotion of democracy, in the perpetuation of Judaism, in the advancement of those forces of liberty, justice, and brotherhood which are destined some day to bring peace and joy and good-will to the world!

Typographical errors corrected in text:

Page 40: povince replaced with province

Page 41: restrictons replaced with restrictions



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