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WHERE DOES THE JEW STAND?

Enemies on all Sides of Him—Foes in His Own Ranks—What will the Outcome Be?

By Max Nordau.

(Perhaps the most stirring address delivered at the Tenth Zionist Congress was that of Max Nordau, the eminent Jewish thinker and writer. The address is herewith printed in full. It is a striking analysis of conditions as Dr. Nordau sees them.)

The Jewish people is today experiencing the most gloomy days of its history in the diaspora. All our sentinels give us but one report: "Foes on every hand!" The plague of anti-Semitism, which everywhere always had an endemic hold, is at present marching round the whole earth as if it were an epidemic. Jew-hatred which even in the short intervals of deceptive quiet is never completely extinguished, is now breaking forth everywhere into white flame. Even in the lands where we are best off, we need merely put our ear to the ground in order to hear, beneath the thin superficies of official, constitutional equality of all citizens, the roaring of the wild waters of Judeophobia. In the most emancipated land of the world, in the land of the greatest social justice, in the United States of North America, the President is compelled personally to administer the sharp rap over the knuckles to a colonel because, in approved fashion, he refused to admit to commissioned rank a fully qualified young man on the express and blunt ground that he was a Jew.

I could cite similar incidents from many other countries, even those where Jews are Ministers and Commanding Generals. I refrain. Such narratives tell us nothing new, and among non-Jews I have no desire to arouse the impression of craven, effeminate whimpering which carefully collects every small excuse for complaint, and in tearful wails anent this or that injury indulges in a species of self-torture. The little pin-pricks, which are maliciously if surreptitiously inflicted upon us, the moral insults which we can evade by proud reserve, by perpetual self-restraint, by caution in our social behavior and ambitions, we can afford to ignore with little loss of dignity and little real injury.

But what are we to do in those lands where no concealment is made of official prejudice against us, where no attempt is made to perform the comedy of constitutional equality?

There, with the wild energy of the thirst for blood our complete annihilation is striven for. "The breed must be rooted out!" is the dominant idea which determines all the Government measures against our unhappy brethren. The treatment to which they are subjected is summarily characterized by the *mot d'ordre* that the Jews must be "outlawed and degraded." But these expressions are far too weak. A cultured child of the twentieth century would never attribute to outlawry the terrible significance which it actually has in the lands concerned. The Jews are not only not to have any civil rights; they are actually denied even human rights, nay, even the rights accorded to the very animals for the safeguarding of which Animal Protection Societies are everywhere active. The Jew is exposed to the four winds of heaven. He may be abused, robbed, pillaged, even murdered without there being any protection for him under the law or on the part of the authorities. If he defends himself, then this expression of the purest instinct of self-protection is punished as the most violent revolution.

The Jew must humbly allow himself to be plundered, and meekly present his throat to the knife of the assassins. If the criminals are officials there is neither prosecutor or judge. If they are private persons, then, as a result of a kind of automatism of the State institutions which work in a certain way if they are put in motion, and in obedience to the driving power of their own mechanism, they are condemned, it is true, but only to be immediately pardoned. Even if no violence is used against the Jews, there is, at least, extorted from them a capriciously calculated and elastically expanded ransom, the exaction of which keeps them, with all the apparatus of the most refined terrorism, in a perpetual state of fear and trembling, in the face of the possibilities borne by each succeeding hour, which to the great satisfaction of their torturers, preys upon the brain and nervous system of their victims. That is the real meaning of the word outlawry, which to the unaccustomed ear of a civilized member of society does not, at first, sound too terrible.

"Proletarianisation" of the Masses.

A similar state of affairs prevails in regard to the so-called "proletarianisation" of the Jewish masses. By

"proletarianisation" is understood simply the degradation of individuals and groups to lower strata of society, their conversion into dependent laborers without any economic security for the morrow, their exclusion from higher vocations and superior education, with the resulting inner moral satisfaction and external honor and material success. Of a "proletarianisation" in this sense in regard to the treatment of the Jewish masses there can be no question. They are excluded from all higher vocations; they are deprived of every form of education—that is true. But they are not converted into laborers; on the contrary, they are prevented from becoming laborers by being prohibited from residing in almost every industrial district where they might be employed and by their exclusion, in places where they are tolerated, from almost every industrial occupation. Things have gone so far that today there are millions of Jews who desire nothing better than to become laborers, but even that is not possible to them. They may become pariahs in culture and mental development, pariahs in loss of dignity and general corruption; but proletarians in the modern economic sense of the word, they may not become.

What is aimed at is not mere outlawry, not mere "proletarianisation," but dishonor, brutalization, slow asphyxiation. A crime is being committed against millions of innocent men which even in a history so rich in massacres finds no precedent. Where the conquerors of antiquity slaughtered whole populations and drove them into slavery, more blood flowed. But these misdeeds, which were the brutal misuse of victories, took place in the excitement of conflict and keen hostility. They did not possess the horror of a slow, persistent, deliberate, cold-blooded strangulation nor any advantage for the murderers beyond the diabolical satisfaction in the horror committed. The slaughter of the Albigenses did not affect as many as a twentieth to today's victims of Jew-hatred. The exile of the Jews from England by Edward I., from France by Philip the Splendid, from the Rhine Provinces at the time of the black death, from Spain by the Catholic king, was a tolerable measure with quite a weak admixture of mercy and conscience compared with this methodical murder by the deliberate withdrawal of the air of life.

Moreover, to the hunted Jews of former days, places of refuge were open—the English in France, the French in Lorraine and Germany, the German in the Poland of Casimir the Great, the Spanish in the Turkey of Sultan Selim. Today the Jews are

not openly cast forth, their prosecutors prefer to let them gradually perish on the spot. If, however, they seek by flight *en masse* to save themselves from this persistent martyrdom no door of escape is open for them from their intolerable misery. Every frontier gleams with bayonets, the points of which are directed against their breasts. Everywhere they tumble upon trenches and barriers. Today there is not a single land hospitable to the poorest of the poor and even the educated, the not completely poverty-stricken have the greatest difficulty in finding an entry anywhere. It can be said that the scenes of the persecution of the Jews today are becoming more and more a gaol in which they are immured.

We light upon the shameless lie of modern civilization, we surprise the orators, the tub thumpers—the official and ministerial ones even more than the private ones—with their mouths full of "progress," of "evolution," of "human dignity," of "justice!" How they rattle about our ears like beating hail, the lofty, inflated and bombastic words "social sympathy," "brotherly love," "human citizenship!" Solemn peace congresses are held, at which declarations are delivered against war, and long arbitration treaties are concluded by dozens for its prevention, while a great philanthropist has built for them a splendid palace. Vast millions are contributed in every land for the foundation of hero funds for the reward of brave deeds in the service of humanity.

In numerous great cities rich libraries are founded for the spread of culture. Very fine! Very beautiful! But the virtuous Governments which work with such noble zeal for the spread of eternal peace acquiesce in the downfall of six million creatures—acquiesce, and no-one, except the victims, raise a voice against it, although this is an incomparably greater crime than any war, for no war has ever yet destroyed six million human lives. The administration of hero funds and the distribution of the interest is laid in the hands of authorities who favor the massacre of Jews even if they do not themselves directly instigate them, and in the libraries founded by great philanthropists eager students read with passionate energy the ritual murder histories written by idiots, lunatics and rogues in ancient and modern times.

Hypocrisy of the Nations.

If one appeals to the wretched hypocrites of "humanity," of "progress," of "justice," shows them the crime committed against our brethren, and asks them how they can quietly look on at this wholesale oppression, they wearily shrug their shoulders and murmur something like: "We