

“The Jewish Question still exists. It would be useless to deny it The Jewish Question exists wherever Jews live in perceptible numbers. Where it does not exist, it is carried by Jews in the course of their migrations. We naturally move to those places where we are not persecuted, and there our presence produces persecution The unfortunate Jews are now carrying anti-Semitism into England; they have already introduced it into America.”

—Theodore Herzl, “A Jewish State,” p. 4.

The Jewish Question Fact or Fancy?

The chief difficulty in writing about the Jewish Question is the supersensitiveness of Jews and non-Jews concerning the whole matter. There is a vague feeling that even to openly use the word Jew, or to expose it nakedly to print, is somehow improper. Polite evasions like Hebrew and Semite, both of which are subject to the criticism of inaccuracy, are timidly essayed, and people pick their way gingerly as if the whole subject were forbidden, until some courageous Jewish thinker comes straight out with the good old word Jew, and then the constraint is relieved and the air cleared. The word Jew is not an epithet; it is a name, ancient and honorable, with significance for every period of human history, past, present and to come.

There is extreme sensitiveness about the public discussion of the Jewish Question on the part of Gentiles. They would prefer to keep it in the hazy borderlands of their thought, shrouded in silence. Their heritage of tolerance has something to do with their attitude, but perhaps their instinctive sense of the difficulty involved has more to do with it. The principal public Gentile pronouncements upon the Jewish Question are in the manner of the truckling politician or the pleasant after-dinner speaker; the great Jewish names in philosophy, medicine, literature, music and finance are named over, the energy, ability and thrift of the race are dwelt upon, and everyone goes home feeling that a difficult place has been rather neatly negotiated. But nothing is changed thereby. The Jew is not changed. The Gentile is not changed. The Jew still remains the enigma of the world.

Gentile sensitiveness on this point is best expressed by the desire for silence—“ Why discuss it at all?” is the attitude. Such an attitude is itself a proof that there is a problem which we would evade if we could. “ Why discuss it at all?” —the keen thinker clearly sees in the implications of such a question, the existence of a problem whose discussion or suppression will not always be within the choice of easy-going minds.

Is there a Jewish Question in Russia? Unquestionably, in its most virulent form. Is it necessary to meet that Question in Russia? Undoubtedly, meet it from every angle along which light and healing may come.

Well, the percentage of the Jewish population of Russia is just one per cent more than it is in the United States. The majority of the Jews themselves are not less well-behaved in Russia than they are here; they lived under restrictions which do not exist here; yet in Russia their genius has enabled them to attain a degree of power which has completely baffled the Russian mind.

Whether you go to Rumania, Russia, Austria or Germany, or anywhere else that the Jewish Question has come to the forefront as a vital issue, you will discover that the principal cause is the outworking of the Jewish genius to achieve the power of control.

Here in the United States it is the fact of this remarkable minority—a sparse Jewish ingredient of three per cent in a nation of 110,000,000—attaining in 50 years a degree of control that would be impossible to a ten times larger group of any other race, that creates the Jewish Question here. Three per cent of any other people would scarcely occasion comment, because we could not meet with a representative of them wherever we went in high places—in the innermost secrecy of the councils of the Big Four at Versailles; in the supreme court; in the councils of the White House; in the vast dispositions of world finance—wherever there is power to get or use. Yet we meet the Jew everywhere in the upper circles, literally everywhere there is power. He has the brains, the initiative, the penetrative vision which almost automatically project him to the top, and as a consequence he is more marked than any other race.

And that is where the Jewish Question begins. It begins in very simple terms—How does the Jew so habitually and so resistlessly gravitate to the highest places? What puts him there? Why is he put there? What does he do there? What does the fact of his being there mean to the world?

That is the Jewish Question in its origin. From these points it goes on to others, and whether the trend becomes pro-Jewish or anti-Semitic depends on the amount of prejudice brought to the inquiry, and whether it becomes pro-Humanity depends on the amount of insight and intelligence.

The use of the word Humanity in connection with the word Jew usually throws a side-meaning which may not be intended. In this connection it is usually understood that the humanity ought to be shown toward the Jew. There is just as great an obligation upon the Jew to show his humanity toward the whole race. The Jew has been too long accustomed to think of himself as exclusively the claimant on the humanitarianism of society; society has a large claim against him that he cease his exclusiveness, that he cease exploiting the world, that he cease making Jewish groups the end and all of his gains, and that he begin to fulfill, in a sense his exclusiveness has never yet enabled him to fulfill, the ancient prophecy that through him all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

The Jew cannot go on forever filling the role of suppliant for the world's humanitarianism; he must himself show that quality to a society which seriously suspects his higher and more powerful groups of exploiting it with a pitiless rapacity which in its wide-flung and long drawn-out distress may be described as an economic pogrom against a rather helpless humanity. For it is true that society is as helpless before the well-organized extortions of certain financial groups, as huddled groups of Russian Jews were helpless against the anti-Semitic mob. And as in Russia, so in America, it is the poor Jew who suffers for the delinquencies of the rich exploiter of his race.

This series of articles is already being met by an organized barrage by mail and wire and voice, every single item of which carries the wail of persecution. One would think that a heartless and horrible attack were being made on a most pitiable and helpless people—until one looks at the

letterheads of the magnates who write, and at the financial ratings of those who protest, and at the membership of the organizations whose responsible heads hysterically demand retraction. And always in the background there is the threat of boycott, a threat which has practically sealed up the columns of every publication in America against even the mildest discussion of the Jewish Question.

The Jewish Question in America cannot be concealed forever by threats against publications, nor by the propagandist publication of matter extremely and invariably favorable to everything Jewish. It is here and it cannot be twisted into something else by the adroit use of propaganda, nor can it be forever silenced by threats. The Jews of the United States can best serve themselves and their fellow-Jews all over the world by letting drop their far too ready cry of “ anti-Semitism,” by adopting a franker tone than that which befits a helpless victim, and by seeing what the Jewish Question is and how it behooves every Jew who loves his people to help solve it.

There has been used in this series the term “ International Jew.” It is susceptible of two interpretations: one, the Jew wherever he may be; the other, the Jew who exercises international control. The real contention of the world is with the latter and his satellites, whether Jew or Gentile.

Now, this international type of Jew, this grasper after world-control, this actual possessor and wielder of world-control is a very unfortunate connection for his race to have. The most unfortunate thing about the international Jew, from the standpoint of the ordinary Jew, is that the international type is also a Jew. And the significance of this is that the type does not grow anywhere else than on a Jewish stem. There is no other racial nor national type which puts forth this kind of person. It is not merely that there are a few Jews among international financial controllers; it is that these world controllers are exclusively Jews. That is the phenomenon which creates an unfortunate situation for those Jews who are not and never shall be world-controllers, who are the plain people of the Jewish race. If world-control were mixed, like the control, say, of the biscuit business, then the occasional Jews we might find in those higher financial altitudes would not constitute the problem at all; the problem would then be limited to the existence of world-control in the hands of a few men, of whatever race or lineage they might be. But since world-control is an ambition which has only been achieved by Jews, and not by any of the methods usually adopted by would-be world conquerors, it becomes inevitable that the question should center in that remarkable race.

This brings another difficulty: in discussing this group of world-controllers under the name of Jews (and they are Jews), it is not always possible to stop and distinguish the group of Jews that is meant. The candid reader can usually determine that, but the Jew who is in a state of mind to be injured is sometimes pained by reading as a charge against himself what was intended for the upper group. “ Then why not discuss the upper group as financiers and not as Jews?” may be asked. Because they are Jews. It is not to the point to insist that in any list of rich men there are more Gentiles than Jews; we are not talking about merely rich men who have, many of them, gained their riches by serving a System, we are talking about those who Control—and it is perfectly apparent that merely to be rich is not to control. The world-controlling Jew has riches, but he also has something much more powerful than that.

The international Jew, as already defined, rules not because he is rich, but because in a most marked degree he possesses the commercial and masterful genius of his race, and avails himself of a racial loyalty and solidarity the like of which exists in no other human group. In other words, transfer today the world-control of the international Jew to the hands of the highest commercially talented group of Gentiles, and the whole fabric of world-control would eventually fall to pieces, because the Gentile lacks a certain quality, be it human or divine, be it natural or acquired, that the Jew possesses.

This, of course, the modern Jew denies. There is a new position taken by the modernists among the Jews which constitutes a denial that the Jew differs from any other man except in the matter of religion. “Jew” they say is not a racial designation, but a religious designation like “Episcopalian,” “Catholic,” “Presbyterian.” This is the argument used in newspaper offices in the Jews’ protests against giving the Jewish designation to those of their people who are implicated in crime—“You don’t give the religious classification of other people who are arrested,” the editor is told, “why should you do it with Jews?” The appeal to religious tolerance always wins, and is sometimes useful in diverting attention from other things.

Well, if the Jews are only religiously differentiated from the rest of the world, the phenomenon grows stranger still. For the rest of the world is interested less in the Jew’s religion than in anything else that concerns him. There is really nothing in his religion to differentiate the Jew from the rest of mankind, as far as the moral content of that religion is concerned, and if there were he would have overcome that by the fact that his Jewish religion supplies the moral structure for both of the other great religions. Moreover, it is stated that there are among English speaking nations 2,000,000 Jews who acknowledge their race and not their religion, while 1,000,000 are classed as agnostic—are these any less Jews than the others? The world does not think so. The authoritative students of human differences do not think so. An Irishman who grows indifferent to the Church is still an Irishman, and it would seem to be equally true that a Jew who grows indifferent to the Synagogue is still a Jew. He at least feels that he is, and so does the non-Jew.

A still more serious challenge would arise if this contention of the modernists were true, for it would necessitate the explanation of these world-controlling Jews by their religion. We should have to say, “They excel through their religion,” and then the problem would turn on the religion whose practice should bring such power and prosperity to its devotees. But another fact would intervene, namely, that these world-controlling Jews are not notably religious; and still another fact would hammer for recognition, namely, the most devout believers and most obedient followers of the Jewish religion are the poorest among the Jews. If you want Jewish orthodoxy, the bracing morality of the Old Testament, you will find it, not among the successful Jews, who have Unitarianized their religion to the same extent that the Unitarians have Judaized their Christianity, but among the poor in the side streets who still sacrifice the Saturday business for their Sabbath keeping. Certainly their religion has not given them world-control; instead, they have made their own sacrifices to keep it inviolate against modernism.

Of course, if the Jew differs from the rest of mankind only when he is in full accord with his religion, the question becomes very simple. Any criticism of the Jew becomes sheer religious bigotry and nothing else! And that would be intolerable. But it would be the consensus of

thoughtful opinion that the Jew differs less in his religion than in anything else. There is more difference between the two great branches of Christianity, more conscious difference, than between any branch of Christianity and Judaism.

So that, the contention of certain modernists notwithstanding, the world will go on thinking of the Jew as a member of a race, a race whose persistence has defeated the utmost efforts made for its extermination, a race that has preserved itself in virility and power by the observance of those natural laws the violation of which has mongrelized so many nations, a race which has come up out of the past with the two great moral values which may be reckoned on monotheism and monogamy, a race which today is before us as the visible sign of an antiquity to which all our spiritual wealth harks back. Nay, the Jew will go on thinking of himself as the member of a people, a nation, a race. And all the mixture and intermixture of thought or faith or custom cannot make it otherwise. A Jew is a Jew and as long as he remains within his perfectly unassailable traditions, he will remain a Jew. And he will always have the right to feel that to be a Jew is to belong to a superior race.

These world-controlling Jews at the top of affairs, then, are there by virtue of, among other things, certain qualities which are inherent in their Jewish natures. Every Jew has these qualities even if not in the supreme sense, just as every Englishman has Shakespeare' s tongue but not in Shakespeare' s degree. And thus it is impracticable, if not impossible, to consider the international Jew without laying the foundations broadly upon Jewish character and psychology.

We may discount at once the too common libel that this greater form of Jewish success is built upon dishonesty. It is impossible to indict the Jewish people or any other people on a wholesale charge. No one knows better than the Jew how widespread is the notion that Jewish methods of business are all unscrupulous. There is no doubt a possibility of a great deal of unscrupulousness existing without actual legal dishonesty, but it is altogether possible that the reputation the Jewish people have long borne in this respect may have had other sources than actual and persistent dishonesty.

We may indicate one of these possible sources. The Jew at a trade is naturally quicker than most other men. They say there are other races which are as nimble at a trade as is the Jew, but the Jew does not live much among them. In this connection one may remember the famous joke about the Jew who went to Scotland.

Now, it is human nature for the slower man to believe that the quicker man is too deft by far, and to become suspicious of his deftness. Everybody suspects the " sharper" even though his sharpness be entirely honest. The slower mind is likely to conceive that the man who sees so many legitimate twists and turns to a trade, may also see and use a convenient number of illegitimate twists and turns. Moreover, there is always the ready suspicion that the one who gets " the best of the bargain" gets it by trickery which is not above board. Slow, honest, plain-spoken and straight-dealing people always have their doubts of the man who gets the better of it.

The Jews, as the records for centuries show, were a keen people in trade. They were so keen that many regarded them as crooked. And so the Jew became disliked for business reasons, not all of which were creditable to the intelligence or initiative of his enemies.

Take for example, the persecution which Jew merchants once suffered in England. In older England the merchant class had many easy-going traditions. One tradition was that a respectable tradesman would never seek business but wait for it to come to him. Another tradition was that to decorate one's store window with lights or colors, or to display one's stock of goods attractively in the view of the public, was a contemptible and underhanded method of tempting a brother tradesman's customers away from him. Still another tradition was that it was strictly unethical and unbusinesslike to handle more than one line of goods. If one sold tea, it was the best reason in the world why he should not sell teaspoons. As for advertising, the thing would have been so brazen and bold that public opinion would have put the advertiser out of business. The proper demeanor for a merchant was to seem reluctant to part with his goods.

One may readily imagine what happened when the Jewish merchant bustled into the midst of this jungle of traditions. He simply broke them all. In those days tradition had all the force of a divinely promulgated moral law and in consequence of his initiative the Jew was regarded as a great offender. A man who would break those trade traditions would stop at nothing! The Jew was anxious to sell. If he could not sell one article to a customer, he had another on hand to offer him. The Jews' stores became bazaars, forerunners of our modern department stores, and the old English custom of one store for one line of goods was broken up. The Jew went after trade, pursued it, persuaded it. He was the originator of "a quick turnover and small profits." He originated the installment plan. The one state of affairs he could not endure was business at a standstill, and to start it moving he would do anything. He was the first advertiser—in a day when even to announce in the public prints the location of your store was to intimate to the public that you were in financial difficulties, were about to go to the wall and were trying the last desperate expedient to which no self-respecting merchant would stoop.

It was as easy as child's play to connect this energy with dishonesty. The Jew was not playing the game, at least so the staid English merchant thought. As a matter of fact he was playing the game to get it all in his own hands—which he has practically done.

The Jew has shown that same ability ever since. His power of analyzing the money currents amounts to an instinct. His establishment in one country represented another base from which the members of his race could operate. Whether by the natural outworking of innate gifts, or the deliberate plan of race unity and loyalty, all Jewish trading communities had relations, and as those trading communities increased in wealth, prestige and power, as they formed relations with governments and great interests in the countries where they operated, they simply put more power into the central community wherever it might be located, now in Spain, now in Holland, now in England. Whether by intention or not, they became more closely allied than the branches of one business could be, because the cement of racial unity, the bond of racial brotherhood cannot in the very nature of things exist among the Gentiles as it exists among the Jews. Gentiles never think of themselves as Gentiles, and never feel that they owe anything to another Gentile as such. Thus they have been convenient agents of Jewish schemes at times and in places when it was not expedient that the Jewish controllers should be publicly known; but they have never been successful competitors of the Jew in the field of world-control.

From these separated Jewish communities went power to the central community where the master bankers and the master analysts of conditions lived. And back from the central

community flowed information of an invaluable character and assistance wherever needed. It is not difficult to understand how, under such a condition, the nation that did not deal kindly with the Jews was made to suffer, and the nation that yielded to them their fullest desire was favored by them. And it is credibly stated that they have made certain nations feel the power of their displeasure.

This system, if it ever existed, exists in greater power today. It is today, however, threatened as it has never been. Fifty years ago, international banking, which was mostly in control of the Jews as the money brokers of the world, was on top of business. It exercised the supercontrol of governments and finance everywhere. Then came that new thing, Industry, which expanded to a degree unguessed by the shrewdest prophets and analysts. As Industry gathered strength and power it became a powerful money magnet, drawing the wealth of the world in its train, not, however, merely for the sake of possessing the money, but of making it work. Production and profit on production, instead of loans and interest on loans, became the master method for a time. The war came, in which the former broker-masters of the world had undoubtedly their large part. And now the two forces, Industry and Finance, are in a struggle to see whether Finance is again to become the master, or creative Industry. This is one of the elements which is bringing the Jewish Question to the bar of public opinion.

To state this and to prove it may be nothing more than to establish the superiority of Jewish ability. Certainly it is not a tenable position to say that the Jew is extraordinarily successful and therefore must be curbed. It would be equally aside from the truth to say that the co-ordination of Jewish activity has been, on the whole, a harmful thing for the world. It may be possible to show that up to this point it has been useful. Success cannot be attacked nor condemned. If any moral question arises at all, it must concern the use made of the success which has been attained. The whole matter centers there, after the previous fact is established. May the Jew go on as he has gone, or does his duty to the world require another use of his success?

This inquiry obviously leads to further discussion, as well as a gathering up of the remaining threads of the present discussion, which future articles will attempt to do.

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