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Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

Reel
172

Box
62

Folder
72

Combating anti-Semitism, 1921.

Copy 21 For American Hebrew
Symposium "Constructive
Methods of Counteracting
anti-Semitism"
(Mar-Apr) 1921

For all practical purposes, anti-semitism, in some form or another, is here to stay for a good long while, because anti-semitism is co-extensive with every form of intolerance and intolerance dies hard. To put an end to prejudice is a slow process of attrition, of corrosion, of undermining, of education, of democracy - the work of ages. Then, how are we to meet it? Why, in exactly the same manner in which we have met it for two thousand years. We have evolved a strategy. We succeeded in meeting it in its most loathsome and hurtful forms for two thousand years, and we shall be able to continue to meet it if we remain true to our program and to our strategy.

First of all comes vigilance. We must organize for defense. We must not, we dare not, permit prejudice to make invasions upon our legal and political rights; we must safeguard these with all the power that is within us.

We must scotch lies and heard falsehoods and pocket no slurs and swallow no gratuitous insults. We must be ready for a dignified but a determined defense of our position, in this land as everywhere else. An attitude of indifference, or of cringing, or of mute submission will yield us no beneficent results. There is of course the danger of making mountains out of mole hills, of elevating a matter of purely local significance to national importance by too much publicity. It is unnecessary to use a sledge-hammer to kill a roach

And then, we must retain - and this is very important - our ancient spirit of pride, which comes from an intimate acquaintance with the spirit and history of our people. We must curry no favor, we must not worm and eel and maneuver ourselves into places where we are not wanted; we must maintain and we must inculcate in the souls of our children that precious sense of Jewish dignity; we must inspire our youth with the thought that no people on God's earth has the heritage, the culture, the civilisation, the ancestry, the records of seers and martyrs and heroes that Israel has.

And this can be done through education only. But we must educate not alone the Jew, but also the non-Jew. Is it not astounding how little the average intelligent non-Jew knows concerning our people and our faith. The Jew is still to millions of Christians a semi-legendary figure, stalking across the stage of history at the behest of some theologic notion or apocalyptic campaign not of apologetics or polemics, but of education, should be inaugurated on a large scale to inform our non-Jewish fellow citizens concerning ourselves, our faith, our life and our problems. And our motto should be "Love ye Truth and Peace". (Zech VIII, 19.)

And finally let us retain our faith, our optimism and our good sense. Let us not become morbid about it. This is no strange and novel phenomenon in Jewish life. We have met with it before - many times and surmounted it. Let us build while others are trying to destroy. Let us answer every attack with another synagogue and another school.

Faith in the ultimate triumph of our cause, faith in the ultimate acknowledgment which we shall receive from the world, faith that our ideals will ultimately receive universal sanction - faith in ourselves, in our cause, in our missions, in our life, in our ideals, in our institutions - faith in the nobility of Jewish life, faith in the dignity of Jewish life, faith in the worth-whileness of Jewish life - that's the important thing !