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Reel
181

Box
67

Folder
666

We must create values of our own, 1945.

"WE MUST CREATE VALUES OF OUR OWN"

An Analysis of the Tasks Before English-Speaking Jewry

By ABBA HILLEL SILVER

THE war has made the Jews of America more alert than they have ever been before and more self-aware. The Nazis succeeded in their attempt to make the whole Western world Jew-conscious, but they also succeeded in making all Jews more Jew-conscious. The majority of our people are being helped by this keener awareness of their true position to a fuller, franker and more dignified life as American Jews.

These American Jews are facing the future without any illusions, but certainly not without hope. After the political anti-Semitism of the Nazi variety — employed as a weapon of economic reaction, and imperial aggression — will have been defeated as a result of the defeat of the Nazis in this war, the high fever temperature of anti-Semitism will undoubtedly drop here and elsewhere. But much of what we now call the "good" and temperate anti-Semitism, that which in happier times we used to call prejudice, will remain as a constant factor in our experience.

Period of Upheaval

America is not likely to go Fascist, but Fascistically-minded Americans, who will always be anti-Semites, will persist in large numbers until such time as our age finds its new economic and political equilibrium after the prolonged upheavals of the technological revolution.

This spiritually formless period of reorientation which will continue to be fraught with much danger and unhappiness for mankind will last far beyond our present generation.

Our lives as American Jews have now fallen into a well-known pattern, Israel's millennial experience in Diaspora. America itself has become far less different, and far less isolated from the Old World. Politically, economically and culturally it has now become enmeshed in a common destiny with the rest of the world, and American Jews also

For all the diversity in the conditions of Jewry in the U.S.A. and other English-speaking countries, these communities have much in common. This article, based on a speech by the well-known Rabbi and Zionist leader in the United States, lays emphasis on matters which are also of great importance to S.A. Jewry.

have come to share the common and inescapable destiny of their fellow Jews in the rest of the world.

Following the war we shall be kept busy for a time undoing the mischief which the virulent Nazi-inspired propaganda of recent years will have accomplished in this country. This will prove a job of no mean proportions. Thereafter we shall proceed to make the necessary adjustments to the more "normal" forms of prejudice without spending too much time and thought upon the subject—a preoccupation neither satisfying nor edifying — and we shall turn our attention to the more constructive areas of Jewish life.

We have long ago been admonished by our sages not to observe the wind too closely lest we fail to sow, nor to regard the clouds with too much concern lest we fail to reap.

We will stop trying to find a solution for anti-Semitism and we will reconcile ourselves to a condition. We will, of course, join forces with all those elements in our population which work for the preservation of the basic traditions of American democracy. We shall be a portion of all that is around us and will share as fully as we shall be permitted in the common life. We will continue to resist the forces of darkness and disruption in our country. We will not surrender the hope of a future which will achieve in practice what has been projected in declaration, but like

the Messiah idea among our people, we shall think of it with hope but also with a saving measure of scepticism. We shall act as people who have finally matured and who do not attempt to escape into delusions or self-delusions.

As mature and responsible people we shall continue our efforts to organise our community life efficiently. As a people we have never been especially distinguished either for docility or tractability. We always have had more candidates for leadership than for discipleship. But we shall continue to work out plans and methods for better organisation and proper collective action, and we shall continue to learn the required disciplines of Jewish community life. This does not mean that we shall strive to achieve so-called "unity" in American Israel. No people anywhere in the world is "unified" on the basic issues which affect its life. Only dictatorship can achieve such a specious unity of action — and certainly not for long.

Majorities and Minorities

It is not unity which is essential, but democratic organisation in which all points of view can find their legitimate expression and by means of which the majority can properly receive its authority to speak and act for the entire community.

Minorities in Jewish life have the right to be heard, but they have no right to disrupt efforts at organisation in the hope of preserving for themselves a special status and vested privileges.

I believe that there are three principal tasks which face American Jewry to-day. European Jewry will emerge from the war physically ravaged and seriously depleted both in numbers and resources. Financial and material aid will be required for a considerable time after the war to heal the wounds which the war inflicted. Our first task will be to salvage, to rebuild

whatever can be rebuilt, to re-unite broken families, to re-establish shattered communities.

There will also be a large uprooted Jewish population, a population of human misery, seeking new homes in an inhospitable world. Palestine alone offers a sound and realistic prospect for mass-scale Jewish immigration and every responsible Jewish leader and communal worker owes it to himself and to his people at this critical juncture in our history to realise fully this fact. To assist the establishment of the Jewish National Home is the second great task confronting American Jewry.

There is a third task. Our people will emerge from this war not only physically but also spiritually shaken and ravaged. Many old centres of Jewish life have been destroyed. It is not enough to plan for the physical rehabilitation of our people after the war. We must also plan for a cultural and spiritual rehabilitation — how to keep alive the spirit of Israel, how to safeguard our heritage which alone gives dignity and distinction to our lives and meaning to our millennial suffering.

Our youth is not impervious to the appeal of our ancient faith and its glorious tradition. From army camps and battlefronts comes abundant testimony that their hearts are eager and their minds are open to receive the message of Judaism.

We cannot forever live on our past. We must begin to create values of our own, even as our people did in every great centre where they lived in the past. Nowhere did our ancestors regard themselves "as a piece of stubborn antiquity," but rather as a vital, challenging and moulding spiritual force in every age and clime.

As quickly as circumstances will permit, the emphasis of our activities should be shifted from the eleemosynary to the educational, cultural and spiritual. Fortunately, we have by now almost the required full quota of orphanages, hospitals and other philanthropic institutions. But our religious, cultural and spiritual life has been languishing. Neither our older people nor our younger people are experiencing Judaism as a directive force in their lives. No Jewish com-

munity can long survive on philanthropy alone, or on fighting anti-Semitism. Its spiritual and cultural life must be nurtured.

I believe that we shall live up to the challenge of these three great tasks which confront us. Men who can die as bravely as the Ghetto Jews of Warsaw and who can build as magnificently as the pioneer Jews of Eretz Yisrael belong to a deathless race. We are of that race, and something of their passion and power and faith and tenacity is with us and we shall share their immortality.

BOARD ORGANISING PANEL OF LECTURERS

IN order to satisfy the increasing interest in Jewish questions and the desire for more detailed information about the work of the Board, the Board is prepared to arrange talks at regular intervals for as many groups and societies as possible.

In addition, the Communal Relations Committee of the Board is organising a panel of prominent lecturers, who will give talks on various cultural, social and political aspects of Jewish life with a special emphasis on matters of contemporary interest.

These lectures, wherever possible, will be loosely grouped under various main themes in order to give a certain continuity to the programmes that will be arranged. Some of the themes planned are:

Aspects of Jewish life in South Africa to-day.

Leading personalities in Jewish literature and art.

The message and meaning of Judaism.

All Jewish organisations and groups who wish to hear talks on the work of the Board or on the other subjects enumerated above are cordially invited to apply to the Communal Relations Committee which will be glad to arrange programmes for them, and will do its best to comply with any special wishes they may bring forward.

Here is an opportunity for societies and study groups to introduce something new and instructive into their programmes.

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THE LATE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

MRS. FRANCES TEMPLE, the widow of the late Dr. William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, has addressed the following letter to the Society of Jews and Christians, Johannesburg:

"Will you please accept my sincere thanks for the message of sympathy you so kindly sent on the death of my husband. I have been deeply moved by the many tributes which have reached me from members of the Jewish community and from Jewish organisations. The tragic sufferings which have befallen your people were always a matter of deep concern to my husband, who, as I think you know, was ready at all times to do whatever he could on their behalf.

"Those of us who have been closest to him in his work feel that the best way in which we can show our gratitude for all that he had meant to us is to continue to work for the furtherance of the causes we know he had so much at heart. From the messages we have received I am encouraged to believe that we shall not be alone in this feeling, and that there are many people of goodwill both in this and other countries who will share this determination."

THE UNIVERSAL ENCYCLO- PAEDIA IN YIDDISH

The Secretary of the South African Committee of the Universal Encyclopaedia in Yiddish writes to us as follows:—

In the last issue of your journal under the heading of "Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia" you refer to criticisms on the information given on "South Africa" in Volume 9 of the said publication.

As it might be construed as a reference to our Encyclopaedia, we felt it our duty to rectify any misunderstanding this article might give rise to and thus make the position quite clear.

The Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia is published in English whereas "Universal Encyclopaedia in Yiddish" as its name implies is published in Yiddish.

We wish to add however, that we have just heard from America that it is intended to issue shortly a translation of the Volumes "Jews" in English, under the able Editorship of Maurice Samuel, the well-known writer.

We trust the Jewish public here will not confuse the latter with the other publication of a similar name.

Yours faithfully,

L. KOTKIN.