

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

(Extracts From Vol. XVI, No. 4, June, 1940)

On Historical Anti-Semitism

THUS a situation was created where the new bourgeois classes, fighting against the autocracy of the State, had to fight for separation of Church from State, for freedom of the individual, for the rights of man, and indirectly for the emancipation of the Jews. In this demand for freedom they were aided by the growing classes of intellectuals and professionals. It is only in the light of this situation that one can understand an intellectual like Richard Wagner, for instance, who before the Jews gained their emancipation was found among the champions of Jewish freedom, but later when the Jews were emancipated became an outspoken anti-Semite. 'When we strove for emancipation of the Jews,' says Richard Wagner, 'we virtually were more the champions of an abstract principle, than of a concrete case . . . our eagerness to level up the rights of Jews was far more stimulated by a general idea, than by any real sympathy.' The general principle Wagner mentions was the freedom from government interference for the bourgeois classes.

"An analogous situation obtained in old Russia. Tzarist pogromridden Russia never developed an anti-Semitic literature. Russian intellectuals had to make one cause with the Jews in fighting Czardom, because Russian reaction

entrenched itself in the vast and highly ramified anti-Jewish legislation. The Russian intellectual, desiring freedom for himself, could not bait the Jew without harming his own cause. The famous exclamation of a great Russian intellectual before the World War, 'Let us gain freedom for the Jew and for us the right to hate him,' bespeaks the reason, if not the quality, of Russian philo-Semitism, and also explains why the Russian intellectual classes, unlike those in Germany, have not developed a literature of scientific anti-Semitism. All these considerations made Jewish political emancipation a cardinal point in 19th century liberalism. Liberalism meant unrestricted interchange of people and commodities and was held to be the only proper policy for a cosmopolitan ear."

Uriah Z. Engelman in article, "The Rise of the Jewish Classes and the Decline of Anti-Semitism," pp. 327-35.

On a Detroit Study of Employment Discrimination Against Jews

"Sixteen of the twenty-four employment agencies included in this study indicate that they experience more difficulty in placing the Jewish applicant than in placing the Gentile worker.

"The majority of the agencies have no desire to be 'burdened' with a large

number of Jewish applicants, whom they consider a definite liability.

“Eighteen agencies report that the Gentile employer indicates a distinct preference for Gentile help, whereas twenty-one agencies claim that Jewish employers also practice discriminatory tactics.

“It is clear that the employment agencies to a certain extent reflect existing prejudice on the part of both Jewish and non-Jewish employers. At the same time, the conclusion is inevitable that the majority of the agencies definitely stimulate and encourage discrimination by employers, thus contributing to the Jewish applicants' difficulty in securing jobs.”

William I. Boxerman in article, “Gentiles Preferred,” pp. 339-48.

On Jewish Education

“The most significant occurrence was the formation of the Jewish Education Committee of New York City, which came into being largely as a result of a substantial gift from the Friedsam Foundation. After a survey of Jewish education in New York City had been made, the decision was reached that a central Jewish educational agency be created with the aid of the Friedsam fund, an agency which would amalgamate the existing educational bodies into one organization, and which would concern itself with all phases of Jewish education in the community.”

Julian L. Greifer, “In the Community,” p. 350.

On Community Councils

“During the past few years we have witnessed the development of a new form of organization in American Jew-

ish life—the community council. This movement has proceeded with varying degrees of success, depending upon local conditions and the extent to which the democratic idea has been accepted by all elements in each community. To date, some forty-six communities have set up agencies to which is attached the term “community council.” Although the terminology has become increasingly popular, the agencies vary in their structure and possess decided individuality, so that any generalized description is not very tenable. However, all of these community councils possess one distinguishing feature—that of being organized on a more or less democratic basis. Functionally, they fall into three categories—those with primary emphasis on discussing, determining, and in some respects, implementing community policies (both internal and in relation to the non-Jewish community); those with a sole interest in fund-raising; and those with a combination of these two functions.”

Julian L. Greifer, *Ibid*, p. 357.

On Voluntary Psychiatric Hospitals

“(In 1927) the Jewish Mental Health Society, now known as the Society of the Hillside Hospital, undertook the experiment of creating the first hospital in the United States where only voluntary patients would be admitted because the Society's experience in conducting out-patient clinics demonstrated that the patient unsuitable for out-patient care was equally unsuitable for commitment to a state hospital. This experiment is now completing thirteen years of service to the community and plans are under way to build a larger hospital which even with its greatly increased facilities will still meet only part of the population's needs.”

“Neither psychiatry nor psychiatric

hospitals can remove the stresses and hurdles of present-day life. In our professional capacity it is our obligation to point out the way of restoring to social usefulness and more comfortable functioning those individuals whose emotional stamina has become impaired. The Hastings Hillside Hospital has demonstrated that the existence of specialized institutions for the treatment of border-line mental disorders is conducive to people's accepting early treatment in surroundings and under conditions consistent with their requirements. It should become the objective of the mental hygiene movement to foster the construction of small hospitals under

state auspices, where border-line mental cases can be treated on a voluntary basis, distinctly apart from the present state hospitals. The creation of such special facilities would remove the trauma for patients and would result in a readiness to accept hospitalization in the early stages of illness which are more amenable to therapy. The real issue is that such a system would save human lives from the waste heap."

Louis Wender, M.D. in article, "The Place of the Voluntary Hospital in the Treatment of Border-Line Psychiatric Disorders," pp. 319-26.