

OUR WEEKLY EPILOGUE

By UNITAS

Germany, The Nazis and The Jews

IT is with a sad heart that I read my newspaper one day this week. The main news item in it read thus:

"The German Government last night declared a universal boycott against Jews in all professions and businesses... the boycott will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 1, and will be enforced in every town and village throughout Germany... committees of action will be set up to see that only the guilty suffer... the committees will popularise the boycott and supervise the newspapers. If the latter fail to join the boycott campaign, they are to be banned from every German household, and no German business man will be allowed to advertise in them."

And so the report of the Nazi Proclamation goes on with its eleven points—banishment from the schools and professions, an employment quota and all the rest of it! It is sad twentieth century reading.

"Do not ruffle one hair on any Jew's head," says the Proclamation! "Jewish doctors and lawyers, as well as Jewish shops stop business for the day," reports Reuters "at the request of uniformed Nazis."

No More Pogroms

The rise and fall of political parties in Germany is no concern of mine. It is the concern of Germany's own people. I am even prepared to believe that Germany's plight to-day is the plight of desperation—her position forced upon her by the working of the Treaty of Versailles. The Nazis arise in every nation at that point where the people become desperate.

I am all for "fair play for Germany" in the international field. But what

moves me to indignation is this revival of racial prejudice, religious bigotry, and anti-semitic feeling. A Jewish pogrom in this day of ours is an outrage and an anachronism.

Let me plead for the Jew. The prejudice against the race has lived too long. I know any amount of indifferent Jews. But I also know any amount of indifferent Christians! I cannot read the history of the world without becoming vividly aware of the contribution to its culture made by the Jews down through the centuries. And in no country more than Germany!

In music, art, literature, science, religion the Jew has nothing to apologise for. And yet the prejudice against him remains, and men can use that prejudice to ride into political power and dictatorship!

On the porch of Strasburg Cathedral there stand two figures. The one symbolises the Church and the other the Synagogue. The Church is a stately and vigorous woman looking sternly at her dejected sister the Synagogue. On her head is a crown; in her left hand is a chalice; in her right hand is a cross.

The Synagogue is represented by a downcast and pitiful figure, weary and exhausted. Her head is bowed; her eyes are veiled; in her left hand is a scrap of the Law; in her right hand is a banner supported by a spear. The point is blunted and the staff is splintered. The Church is vigorous and sure and forward-looking! The Synagogue is exhausted and wavering and blind!

Persecution Must Go

Those two figures are described as being perfect examples of mediæval Christian art. They are also perfect examples of mediæval religious thinking! The renaissance in art came many centuries ago. The renaissance in religious thought lagged far behind. Luther, in the early part of his career, was friendly to the Jews; towards the end of it he "would have their tongues torn out through the backs of their necks."

Thank God for the scholars and the men of vision who have arisen within the Church to proclaim a new light of tolerance and understanding. The thirteenth century attitude is not good enough for this day of ours.

I am not pleading because of any mere warmth of heart or any policy of live and let live. I read the open book of history and I am moved by what Jewry and the Synagogue have done for the human race.

The Synagogue is an ancient shrine. It has functioned for more than two thousand years. It is a potent force to-day in the lives of fifteen million men and women the world over.

For those twenty centuries it has maintained a people in courage and faith; it has inspired poet and artist, seer and sage; it has given rest to the weary and the heavy laden; it has functioned as school and house of worship and community centre. In that three-fold capacity it has disciplined the mind, refined the

moral centre, it has developed a tremendous literature. If we Christians read more of that literature we would be all the better for it.

Value for the World

I write as a Christian. I am under obligation to both the Jewish race and the Jewish Synagogue. The Jew has helped to keep aflame the torch of culture and learning. All the arts and sciences bear witness to his scholarship and worth. I hate pogroms; I detest inquisitions; I abhor boycotts; I despise prejudice, and oppose persecution. God only knows the Jew has had enough of them in every country of the world!

The darkest and most inexcusable stain on the history books of Europe has been the treatment of the Jew. As Lord Macaulay once said: "The Jews are what we have made them. Their virtues are their own; their vices are of our making."

There are mean and selfish and grasping Jews. I know it! I also know that there are mean, and selfish and grasping Gentiles. There are vulgar Jews, just as there are vulgar Christians. But we all know that there are as noble spirits, as truly cultured minds, as great and devoted souls among the Jews as among the Gentiles.

When will we learn to level these barriers to brotherhood, to see men just as men, to judge them by what they are, and not by the racial name they bear? Have we not all one Father? Hath not God created us!

I have the hope that some day man will gain sufficient freedom from his prejudices as to live a free and happy life in joyous co-operation with his fellows everywhere. In the meantime this news from Germany is sad reading.

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Worth of the Synagogue

The Synagogue is a folk creation. It is not a foreign culture imposed upon a people by a prosletysing religion. Beneath it is not the vanquished culture of a conquered race. It is the creation of the Jewish masses.

It came into being in the darkest hours of a people's needs. Human needs, human passions, human perplexities, the deep elemental yearnings of the human breast, tempered or accentuated by the storm and stress of the age, have shaped its character.

The Synagogue has ever been a democratic institution. Being the continuous creation of the Jewish masses, it has ever remained their own. Hereditary privileges and even official priesthoods are alien to it. The rabbi is a learned layman. Any learned layman may serve as a rabbi.

The Synagogue has ever defined worship in terms of learning as well as in those of prayer and meditation. The line between the secular and the spiritual is hazy. All life is spiritual. Duty must be in evidence as well as prayer.

Personal righteousness and moral worth are the predominant notes. The rabbi's duty is not to absolve from sin, but to redeem from ignorance. The Synagogue has ever been a teaching institution.

The Synagogue has given the world a many-sided culture. Serving as a people's school, house of worship, com-

all know that there are as noble spirits, as truly cultured minds, as great and devoted souls among the Jews as among the Gentiles.

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