

798TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, MARCH 23RD, 1936,
AT 4.30 P.M.

SAMUEL H. WILKINSON, Esq., F.R.G.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the Meeting of March 2nd, 1936, were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the following elections:—

As a Member: R. A. Laidlaw, Esq.; and as Associates, the Rev. F. J. Liebenberg, B.A.; James Cuthbert, Esq.; and James Ryley, Esq.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Dr. Gaster to read his paper entitled "The Present Position of the Jews in Relation to World Events."

THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE JEWS IN RELATION TO WORLD EVENTS.

By DR. M. GASTER.

THE world is witnessing with indignation and surprise the sudden outburst of mediæval barbarism, the victims of which are the Jews. A mighty nation which claims to stand in the vanguard of civilisation is venting its strength and trying to crush and oppress a small minority. Excuses do not now concern us; we are dealing with facts. Yet no one has yet tried to probe the problem to the depths, to realise its symptomatic character, to study its psychology and background, and to draw conclusions from the implications of history. It is not an easy task; but this phenomenon has appeared over and over again, and in the unbroken history of the Jews during the past 3,000 years many a page can be read where similar occurrences have been chronicled. It may be a truism, yet it is a fact, that the events of to-day are the offspring of yesterday. We must therefore turn to Jewish history not with the hope of finding a complete solution of this problem, but of drawing from it such lessons as may illustrate these events. It is not only a question of how far these persecutions and oppressions in fact affected the Jews, and whether the blow aimed at them has in

the long run the desired result, it is also necessary to envisage the effect it had upon those nations who singled out the Jews as victims of their wrath or frenzy.

The Jews have remained; many of those nations have perished, and what has happened to the Jews was merely a prelude to what happened to the others. The Jews, ever since the Dispersion, have been a minority and as such they were always exposed to bear the sins of the majority. The Jews were always on the defensive; they have never taken the offensive. They knew their weakness but also their strength. And if it were not for that the history of the Jews would have been a closed chapter long ago. The Jews were conscious of the Divine selection. Whether rightly or wrongly, that was their profound belief; it was written large in their sacred books and their prophets proclaimed it with no uncertain voice. Though scattered, they knew they were knitted together by unity of faith, unity of culture, and above all by unity of hope in a great future not only for themselves but for mankind. Let us therefore give here a scant survey of incidents like those which we are witnessing to-day and study from them the results which have accrued to the Jews and to the other nations. I am not starting from the Bible, for the historical record there is rather scant, but rather from the Maccabees.

It was after the time of the Maccabees that the Jews saw the beginning of the fulfilment of those hopes gradually extinguished by the contact with heathen nations. Shortly before we have the first conflict; on one side, the pleasure-loving Greek worshipping his idols, following the pleasures of the body, and on the other the stern, moral Jew with the law of God in his heart, believing in the one God and not in the thousand gods and goddesses and whose highest aim was to cleanse the Temple from all impurity. When he succeeded, he felt that God was near and that he had a mission to fulfil: to spread the light. Comparing himself with the hedonist Greek, the Jew was strengthened in his belief that he was really the chosen of God. It may have been a superarrogation, it may have been a presumption; but it has persisted and has indeed often been the cause of misunderstanding and animosity from one side or another.

Now the Jews found themselves the only Chosen People; they felt themselves superior to the morals and manners of the Greeks and, later on, of other nations which stood at a lower

level of spiritual achievement and which adopted grosser manners of life.

The Jew believed himself to be chosen for a definite purpose ; to be, as the prophet said, a light to the nations—a spiritual light. He did not deny to other nations the privilege of being chosen each for other purposes—the Greeks for art, the Romans for administration, etc. Thus a kind of cleavage was created, and this has endured for so long as the Jews found themselves face to face with similar institutions of an ungodly character, in faith, in justice, in scholarship and in humanity. Then already the Jews had acquired the power of being the only nation that was bilingual, speaking or understanding two languages. Wherever the Jew lived he knew, on the one hand, Hebrew, on the other the vernacular. He was bound to learn the language of the people because his material life depended on it. But for his spiritual life in the first place a knowledge of Hebrew was required. Every day he had to repeat his prayers in Hebrew, the morning prayer being especially long. He had more or less to understand what he was praying. On the Sabbath and on festivals he listened to the lessons from sacred scriptures, all in Hebrew. There was more or less absolute uniformity among the Jews throughout the world : they all knew Hebrew. Long before the Mohammedan or the Christian nations were able to write in their own language, the Jews wrote Hebrew and occasionally also the vernacular, though with Hebrew characters.

In one form or another unity of religious practice was also established ; by this knowledge of Hebrew and by the fact that all drew information and inspiration from a common source, viz., the worlds of the Bible and of the Mishnah. This communication between Jews in various parts of the world has continued uninterrupted. When Christianity came into the world, when a new light dawned upon the heathens, those who carried the message among them, the Apostles, followed the track of the Jewish messengers who had gone before, and wheresoever they went, they went first to the Jewish colonies and Jewish settlements.

The political aspirations of the Jews had been killed already at the time of the destruction of the Temple by the Romans and by their final Dispersion. The relation of the Jews to the Gentiles then depended not so much on the Jews as on the temper, outlook and disposition of the other nations towards

the stranger in their midst. There has never been a real point of contact between the one and the other (save in social intercourse whenever possible) except at such times as the spirit of forbearance, of mutual tolerance and desire of mutual understanding had first shown itself. The situation of the Jews changed then for the better. They were able to co-operate with the best and to help in enriching the nations both materially and spiritually.

With the adoption of Christianity as a state religion by Constantine a spirit of fanaticism was introduced into the Church which was borrowed from the ancient Greeks. The Jews withdrew to their tents. Similarly, in the Empire of the Sassanids a spirit of intolerance was created, unknown before, and thus the Jews began to experience again a difference which became very acute. With the growth of Islam the situation of the Jews in the East became more satisfactory. The difference between the Jews and the Mohammedans was not so great, there was no problem of the Messiah, nor a doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, nor any fundamental principle to divide them, and the Koran was not considered as a continuation or fulfilment of the Bible. The Jews, who were very willing pupils, at once joined the Mohammedans in the development of their rich literature. This has always been a characteristic feature of the Jew. He was and remains willing to accept the truth from whichever quarter it may come and to collaborate in the search after it.

There has never been a barrier to knowledge nor have the Jews been troubled overmuch by heretical sects, except in olden times by the Samaritans—a schism both of a political and religious character—and later by the Karaites (tenth to thirteenth century)—a schism which did not affect Judaism to any appreciable extent. In one way it fructified it, for it stimulated a deeper study of the Bible.

At each turn one can see in the situation of the Jews a perfect reflex of the intellectual, political, religious and economic life of the nations. With the persecution of the Jews a downgrade movement is at once visible; it is the premonitory sign of other changes of a much deeper nature often convulsing the inner status of the nation. This can be seen on a larger scale, and this repeats itself on a smaller scale. Whenever there was peace and security the Jews contributed their full share to the

rapid development that took place. When order changed into chaos and injustice came to be practised instead of justice, and when persecution took the place of tolerance or of freedom, then we find the Jew chafing under a persecution which he realises to be a return to barbarism, and everywhere he becomes the protagonist of liberty. Whether it is political or social or spiritual, the memory of Egypt becomes alive and to break the fetters of Pharaoh becomes a powerful incentive to action. The Jew becomes more conscious of his belief in being the chosen people. He protests with might and main against any attempt to dispossess him or to reduce him to a lower level than those in whose midst he lives, and of whose inferiority or at least mere equality he is painfully aware. We find among Jews in all ages the outspoken champions of that revolt against tyranny of the spirit, which was first exemplified by the Maccabeans in their struggle against the Greeks.

And here comes in the point of unity of culture which I have mentioned in the beginning. The Jews could not be kept up in an equal struggle unless they felt their unity. But there was something much more important at stake ; by maintaining a high level of cultural development. It may be asked how could the Jew living in some remote corner of Europe or in some place in Asia or anywhere be raised to any high level, considering that he lived among the most unlettered and ignorant people ? The answer is a very simple one. There was that perfect intercommunication between community and community which is exemplified by tens of thousands of letters which are still in existence. It is that immense literature which is called the *Responsa*, *i.e.*, questions and answers. The contents of these letters are often of a legal character. This correspondence between the various communities can be traced back to the fifth century and even earlier—it reminds one of the Epistles of the Apostles—and has continued to this very day. Much of it is of a legal character, much of it affects the religious life of the people. Its chief vehicle was the Hebrew language. Yet not only the letters themselves but—and this is what created the unity of culture—every great work written in Hebrew by a scholar, philosopher, man of science, physician, etc., was therefore carried from country to country, from place to place. In this way the Jews were able to maintain a very high level of culture, raising them above their immediate neighbours.

Whatever was thought or spoken of in Babylon on the one side, in Spain on the other side, or in one of the towns of the Frankish empire became soon the property of the whole of Jewry everywhere, and thus the bonds of all parts of Jewry were tightly knit together. They were given not only life and teaching but strength and courage.

The closest analogy to the use of Hebrew is that of Latin in the Middle Ages. This, however, was known only by the monks and a few scholars whereas Hebrew was accessible to all. Thus the advent of better times and of more friendly relations in one part of the world was easily communicated to those living in distant quarters, whilst when the adverse happened it was recognised elsewhere that the sun had begun to set upon one or another particular country.

Europe became disintegrated and broken to pieces when the Crusaders in passing through it left a trail of blood behind them. For centuries Germany was not able to recover. It was broken into small states. Internecine war was carried on between one place and the other. The Thirty Years War and the Black Plague continued the destruction, and it is just at this time the Jews were most bitterly persecuted, most fanatically oppressed by the thousand-and-one feudal lords who divided the country between them.

With the Crusaders, the darkness of the Middle Ages settled also upon Central Europe. The torch that lit the first *auto-da-fé* was destined to burn the whole of Spain, and the final expulsion of the Jews at the end of the fifteenth century was at the same time the death-knell of the Spanish Empire. It has never recovered since; its great power was broken, its economic life came to a standstill, and where there was originally affluence and riches, poverty and misery took its place. From a great and mighty power it sunk to be one of the most insignificant ones. Yet at the same time when Turkey opened her gates to the refugees the power of the Turkish Empire began to grow. Whatever one may think of the interlacing of these events the facts cannot be denied. Let any philosopher of history try to interpret them, there they are writ large on the pages of history "that he who runneth may read."

The Jews have always formed one portion of the population, a limb of a great body, and to endeavour to poison that portion has always had a deleterious or sometimes dangerous effect

upon the rest of the system. The Jews themselves could easily recover, but only so long as they kept up a unity of faith and culture. The moment one had gone the other was weakened or disappeared. Internal disintegration then took place.

Again I revert to ancient history in order to find analogies. The Jews settled in Alexandria had so much identified themselves with the Greek spirit and Greek language that they almost forgot the Hebrew alphabet, that very strong link in the chain which unites their people. In order, however, to read the sacred scriptures they translated the Hebrew or wrote it with Greek letters. Later they gave up even this and wrote and spoke Greek only. The result was that they disappeared.

Coming back to modern times, the situation of the Jews had undergone a favourable change from the time of the French Revolution in 1794. It did not come at once, but gradually. Slowly the old walls, both of the Ghettos and of the Burgs, were destroyed and closer acquaintance of Jew with non-Jew was the result; not so much from the social point of view as from the spiritual point of view; that very high cultural level fostered among the Jews made them eager and ready to absorb as much as possible of the further cultural development that had taken place in Europe and from which through the decline elsewhere the Jews had been cut off for some time. A gap had been created in that cultural development with the expulsion of the Jews from Spain towards the end of the fifteenth century. Something of the humanities, it is true, kept percolating from Italy and from the East, but the poverty and misery which had overtaken the communities, and the political and economic chaos in the midst of which they lived and struggled gave them no breathing space to attend as heretofore to their intellectual development. The greater, therefore, was their hunger for the new knowledge which they knew was awaiting them outside the gates of the Ghetto.

A further barrier had been created by the difficulty of language. Most were prevented from acquiring the language of the Eastern nations of Europe, *e.g.*, Polish, Russian, etc.; nor were they desirous of knowing, since they conveyed in their eyes nothing of any spiritual value.

The Jews never came in contact with the so-called aristocracy; there was then practically no middle class, and the only people with whom they could have mixed were the peasants. These,

however, had nothing to offer, and although the Jews in those parts of Europe, unlike their brethren in Germany itself, knew nothing of a visible Ghetto immured between walls and closed in with gates, they were perforce creating by their very isolation a kind of spiritual Ghetto or seclusion.

With their final entry into Western civilisation there set in an inner ferment which profoundly affected both the unity of faith and the unity of culture. The external situation of the Jews became not only different from what it had been shortly before, but affected also their internal relationships among themselves, as also their position *vis-à-vis* the nations into whose midst they had come. The impetuosity with which they threw themselves into their new life carried them often far within the national boundary. The development and the change seemed frequently to have been too slow; they wanted to make up for the lost three centuries. Thus a gradual process of disintegration set in. Knowledge of Hebrew began fast to disappear, as seeming to belong to an antiquated period now left behind. With its disappearance, the unity of culture was broken up. Jews began to depend upon the new culture and thus to destroy what had previously linked them together. Many of the old traditions were thrown overboard, and a new situation was created, the real outcome of which they have failed even now to realise.

Lacking any sort of political education they judged events by the sufficiency of the day, without ever anticipating the future. Thus a somewhat unparalleled situation has been created for the Jews. Whilst they had in ancient times and in the Middle Ages to face political and especially religious problems, now other problems have arisen, scarcely of a political but far rather of an economic character. It is in this way that present events have slowly ripened to culminate in what we all deplore.

The situation of the Jews on the whole has become very serious. One cannot help feeling that some hydra of the past is again raising its many heads. The old arsenal is again being opened and depleted; weapons which one believed to have become rusty with age are again brought out and burnished. Those, moreover, who wield them are not conscious that they have surrendered much of the heritage of the last few centuries and that they are going back to a period of disintegration and

of chaos. The old spirit of envy again prevails, destroying mutual confidence and co-operation, and a certain insanity of ultra-nationalism has seized upon many nations. It represents to a certain extent the insane fervour of the Crusaders. There it was of a religious character, but in the present case it is of a so-called nationalist stamp, and claims have been put forward which in the face of science cannot be justified and yet are proclaimed as the fundamental principles of national life.

We are witnessing to-day among various nations of Europe the marked growth of religious prejudice, political unrest and economic pressure. Upon these are grafted a quasi-mystical, but utterly baseless, teaching of blood and soil. It scarcely needs to be pointed out at this time of day that there is, in fact, no nation in Europe which can boast purity of blood or everlasting tenure of the land on which it happens to be living, yet the slogan is sufficient to inspire an impatient youth and a dictatorial oligarchy with mediæval fanaticism and ruthlessness. The first victims are inevitably the Jews, for it is upon them that those who sit in high places will always turn the fury of an inflamed mob, when they themselves begin to sense difficulty or danger. The Jews are used, so to speak, as lightning conductors or safety-valves; but in the long run even this fails, for the wires are really alive and the shock recoils.

History moves in cycles. "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be," and even if the times and circumstances seem different those who are able to read the pages of history learn not only the events of yesterday but also to understand the events of to-day and maybe to forecast those of to-morrow. It is the same story now as then. On the one side, a small weak minority, outraged, victimised and oppressed; on the other, a majority misled, dragooned and sometimes whipped to frenzy. The situation of the Jews now gives cause to great anxiety, it is more serious than is apparent.

Of course, it would be difficult to describe here in detail the exact situation of the Jews in every country in modern times. Those who have suffered for centuries under oppression and misrepresentation are always the first to embrace ideas of liberty and justice, even though they appear in distorted and exaggerated form, assuming quite an extreme aspect. At the same time the Jew dreams ever the Messianic dream, and those who realise that a proper understanding of Messianic hopes means that the

proper salvation comes to the world, with a new life of brotherhood, of unity, of friendship, or peace, deem no sacrifice too high or too heavy if they can but hasten the golden age. No wonder, therefore, that there are also Jews among the extreme political parties. These, however, are not working for themselves; they know that they are working for the great mass of the oppressed, for those who suffer like themselves either from political or economic pressure. At the one end of the pole is the extreme religious Jew, wrapped entirely in his old belief, unshaken in his conviction that the Divine protection will never fail them, and at the other the political extremist who believes that it is only in man's own active combat that God fights His way to the Kingdom. In all ranks of political life, therefore, Jews will take their share. In not a few cases, indeed, carried away by warped ideals, they will at the same time slowly relax the bond which binds them to the House of Israel.

Nevertheless, to the world without, the Jews appear to be still a united nation. The world is scarcely aware that much of the old unity of faith has been loosened and that the unity of culture is on the point of disappearing. It may not be considered a great loss to substitute one culture for another; in fact, some believe it to be a gain. The result is, however, that the uniformity of progress is broken down and that the culture of Jews in one part of the world lags behind that of their brethren in another. The Jews in Germany, for instance, have identified themselves with the German culture, in France with French and in England with English, with the consequence that many of the ties which formerly bound them together into a common unity have now been severed. Nevertheless, that inner unity being broken, Jews soon find that what they have received in its stead brings them ultimately disaster rather than satisfaction. Their neighbours whose cultures they have tried to assimilate, and for which they have surrendered their own, turn in the end upon them and regard them as strangers and intruders. The situation is tragic enough. In place of hope, there is now the bitterest disappointment and a complete revulsion of feeling. Living as it were in a dream, the Jews have now been rudely awakened, to find to their anguish that people who dream lose their sense of reality. On the other hand, however, this very tragedy has had an unexpected result not foreseen by those who dream at noon. It has reawakened in

the Jewish people the consciousness of a unity of faith. Jew has begun to cleave more closely to Jew, and whilst others take out of the dusty armouries of the Middle Ages the rusty weapons of attack, the Jew has also opened again the armoury of his past and taken from it weapons of the spirit. The Jew to-day is accoutred for the battle and wields in his hands those same weapons which stood him in such good stead on former occasions of popular upheaval and murderous attacks. To-day a revival of the Hebrew language has taken place. It is no longer a mere literary but a living tongue, expressing by word of mouth the inner movements of the spirit. What is more, a gathering of the nations is beginning to take place. Palestine, derelict for centuries, is becoming again the Holy Land of Israel and in tens of thousands Jews are "going up" once more, buoyed up by the great hope of a national home as of a future nationhood in the land of their fathers. These are signs which cannot be overlooked and the importance of which cannot be over-estimated.

All lies in the womb of the future. It is for us to try to read the signs as they appear on the wall, for as in the days of Belshazzar there are indeed signs upon the wall and the fate of nations is weighed in the balance. All the upheavals of to-day are so many ominous portents of the end of the second millenium. The Jews may be sufferers for a while, but they will outlive the present persecution. Yet what of the nations? These persecutions are a sign of inner decay, of moral disintegration. Is the world travailing for the birth of a new order of things; are these indeed the "pangs of the Messiah"? Will the darkness which now is deepening lift one day for a new sun to dawn upon a world reborn?

All which is happening is a warning, a signal to those nations who do not yet realise that we may be standing before a cataclysm—a new flood sweeping the world and effacing all things. And will the world at the end of it again behold a rainbow, spanning the heavens for a token of peace—a rainbow whereon, as the legend has it, the angels cross and come down to earth?

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. S. H. WILKINSON) proposed a vote of thanks to Dr. Gaster.

Colonel F. A. MOLONY seconded and, in doing so, said : I beg to assure Dr. Gaster that the Council welcome the presence of Jews at these meetings, because there are so very many subjects which Christians and Jews can discuss together in a friendly spirit. And we must all admire the moderation of Dr. Gaster's language. His expressions are strong in places, but those who know history will admit that they are none too severe.

Jews have rendered great services to the British Empire, and we deeply sympathise with them in the very harsh treatment now being meted out to them in Germany.

I expect we shall all agree in what I take to be Dr. Gaster's main contention, that Almighty God blesses nations which try to deal fairly with the Jews.

Rev. ARTHUR W. PAYNE remarked that the story of Israel was : sin brought suffering ; suffering led to repentance ; and repentance brought mercy. He had much enjoyed Dr. Gaster's paper, and recognised that what the Chairman said about the persecution of the Jews being Satanic was true. One has said that the great object of Satan is to rob God of His glory and men of their souls. He could hardly agree that the historical record of the Bible is scant with regard to results that have accrued to the Jews ; and when the Doctor said : " I am not starting from the Bible," he asked : " Why not ? " was not the special object of the Victoria Institute to seek to reconcile Science, History and Philosophy with the Bible ? Referring to paragraph 1, page 149, he regretted that the Jews were more willing to learn from the Koran than the New Testament, in reference to the statement " that they were willing to accept truth from whichever quarter it may come."

On page 156 we have the statement about Palestine becoming again the Holy Land of Israel. We well know the Zionist slogan, "*Arez Israel le am Israel*" (" The Land of Israel for the People of Israel "). How could they, however, have Immanuel's Land without Immanuel? What, after all, is a true Israelite ? Jacob became Israel when he wrestled with God at Jabbok all night in prayer, and was called a Prince with God. So an Israelite is a man of Prayer. We have also in Psalm xxii the statement : " Thou art holy that inhabitest the praises of Israel." So an Israelite is a man of *Praise*. Again,

on Psalm lxxiii, we read : " Truly God is good to Israel to them that are of a clean heart." So an Israelite is a man of *pure heart*. Jehūdah Ha Levy, the Hebrew poet, said once, we are told : " The Jewish nation is the heart of all nations and the diseased heart, too," but one rejoiced to remember Jehovah's promises to give them a new heart.

In these days, one realises it is more than ever necessary, while standing for the truth, to follow the Apostle Paul's injunction, and to " give no offence to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God."

The Rev. F. W. PITT said : Dr. Gaster is much too modest in his claims for what the Jews have done for those among whom they have settled, and he is too lenient in his denunciation of the cruelty of those who have persecuted them.

But the learned doctor seems to take pains to go round what lies at the root of Israel's age-long sufferings.

One of their own prophets writes : " Hear this word which the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, *you only* have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together unless they be agreed ? " (Amos iii, 1-3.)

Again it is written : " And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." (Gen. xii, 3.)

Do not these two passages, which concentrate the general teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures on the subject, explain Israel's condition in the world to-day ?

That Israel was chosen by Jehovah, there can be no doubt. No lover ever lavished on the choice of his heart more affectionate terms than those expressed for Israel in the Psalms and in the Prophets. Greece and Rome were never chosen as Israel was. God only chose one nation : " He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for His judgments they have not known them." " *You only* of the families of the earth have I known."

But privilege entails responsibility, " *therefore* I will punish you for all your iniquities"—that punishment has been meted out with terrible and inflexible severity through the ages. Can the Baby-

lonian captivity be explained in any other way? And why are the chosen people scattered to-day? Was it not because of their rejection of Him of "Whom Moses in the law and in the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth?" the long-promised Messiah, who nearly forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, said: "These be the days of vengeance that all things that are written may be fulfilled" . . . "for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." If He were not the true Messiah. He was at least a prophet, the truth of whose words is proved by the nineteen centuries of Israel's affliction.

This same Prophet also said: "It must needs be that offences come, but woe unto them by whom they come," agreeing with the promise to Abraham: "I will curse him that curseth thee."

Isaiah said: "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger and the staff in their hand is Mine indignation. I will send against him an hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. . . . Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks." (Isa. x, 5-12.)

The unparalleled sufferings of the Jews are the fruits of apostasy, but though Spain, Germany, Russia, and other nations may be the rod of God's anger, they will not escape punishment any more than did Assyria and Babylon of old. "I will curse him that curseth you." Whatever the motive of Israel's enemies may be, and even if they are implementing the vengeance of God, they shall not escape.

The world owes everything under God to the Jews, "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," and if Israel as a nation and for a time, lightly esteemed this privilege, it was Jews as individuals who founded Christianity, gave it its literature and its Saviour; and none can say that Christianity which, as Lord Beaconsfield said, is full Judaism, has not been a light to lighten the Gentiles and the

glory of My people Israel through that Christ who came unto His own and His own received Him not. Dr. Gaster's paper, it seems to me, omits all this.

Mr. DOUGLAS DEWAR said: I emphatically disagree with the Chairman's analysis of the present situation, but have no time to criticise it.

Dr. Gaster is of opinion that the Jews have proved a blessing to the various nations among which they are scattered. I beg to differ. While gladly admitting that this talented race has made valuable contributions to the culture of such nations, I believe that such contributions are heavily outweighed by the harm done by the Jews. It is my belief that the condition of the peoples of Europe and North America to-day would have been far better than it is had no Jew ever entered either continent. As God's chosen people the Children of Israel were endowed with intellectual and material advantages over the Gentiles. But the Israelites not only habitually disobeyed the commandments of God, but behaved abominably, and thus repeatedly incurred the wrath of God. The only result of any punishment, no matter how severe, seems to have been a short-lived improvement in conduct. This applies to the united Israelites and the later kingdoms of Israel and Judah. God said of the Jews (Judah) (Jeremiah xxiv, 9): "I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse in all places whither I shall drive them." This prediction has been fulfilled and is still being fulfilled to the letter. As examples of the harm done by the Jews in recent times (I refer to the Jews as a whole; the community includes many good individuals, possibly some better than any Christians), let me cite that done by the Jew Karl Marx, who is largely responsible for the growth of Communism and Bolshevism, and the even greater harm done by the Jews, Wellhausen, Strauss, Keunen and Hirtzig, the originators of the so-called Higher Criticism of the Bible, which, though devoid of foundation, has done so much to undermine the morals of Christendom. This, and other mischief for which the Jews are largely responsible, are set forth in Merton Smith's pamphlet entitled "Israel." On the balance the Jews have used their remarkable powers for evil. Let me quote two Jews on this matter.

Dr. Hertzl, the founder of Zionism, wrote : " When we sink, we become a revolutionary proletariat, the subordinary officers of the revolutionary party, when we rise there rises also the terrible power of the purse." The Roumanian Jew, Marcus Eli Ravage, thus delivered himself in the *Century Magazine* for January, 1928 : " We are intruders. We are disturbers. We are subverters. We have taken your natural world, your ideals, your destiny, and played havoc with them. We have been at the bottom not merely of the latest great war but of nearly all your wars, not only of the Russian but of every other major revolution in your history. We have brought discord and confusion and frustration into your personal and public life. We are still doing it. No one can tell how long we shall go on doing it. . . . Who knows what great and glorious destiny might not have been yours if we had let you alone ? " Portions of Ravage's article are reproduced in *The Fascist* of January, 1936. It is noteworthy that England's rise to greatness under Queen Elizabeth took place at a time when Jews were not allowed in England.

Dr. Gaster writes : " The situation of the Jews on the whole has become very serious." I am inclined to agree with him. It seems to me that the most hopeful way of remedying this state of affairs would be for the " moral Jews with the law of God in their hearts " to get together in every country, expose the machinations of the subversive Jews and unite with their Christian brethren in an effort to check these machinations.

Mr. W. J. JACKSON said : We have listened to an excellent reading of a well-written paper, but to my mind the point of the paper is not sufficiently clear and therefore its usefulness is impaired. Dr. Gaster commences his historical survey of the Jews from the Maccabees because it is the only possible starting point for him to adopt. The time is the first/second century B.C., and the Jews, as we understand them to-day, did not rise to any position of power until some time after the return of the communities from captivity under the decrees of Cyprus and Artaxerxes, 546-457 B.C. All mention of the pact of mutual assistance which the Jews entered into with the Roman power, as stated in 1 Macc. viii, has been omitted and a considered explanation of the term " Jew "—about

which there is so much misunderstanding generally to-day—would have been helpful and of interest to many.

The genealogy of Abram is clearly set forth in the Bible, and Genesis xiv, 13, refers to him as "the Hebrew." He was essentially a Semite and all that it implies. He lived c. 2000–1900 B.C. There is no mention of the "Jew" amongst the 12 tribes of Israel, and it is not until about 740 B.C. in 2 Kings xvi, 6, that we find the first mention of the word "Jew" in the Old Testament. In general terms, the meaning of the word as used there is "a part" or a "remnant" in the sense of an apostate remnant or a remnant apart from the true faith, and this first mention is perhaps significantly placed because 11½ books of Biblical record precede it and bear testimony to others. In this passage the King of Israel and the King of Syria are spoken of as besieging the King of Judah (the Kingdom of Israel was taken away from Judah and made a separate entity after the death of Solomon about 980 B.C., 1 Kings, xi), and it mentions the King of Syria having driven the Jews out of Elath as though they were but one small elemental community, as indeed they were, amongst the many of which Judah was composed. The Israelites were finally taken captive by the Assyrians about 720 B.C., 2 Kings xviii, and lost but Judah (or those remaining after the various captivities), taken captive to Babylon about 587 B.C., 2 Kings xxiv/v, partly returned to Palestine at a later date under the decrees of Cyrus and Artaxerxes, and it is to the leadership of these returned communities that this Jewish element aspired and later built up the nation of the Maccabees. It is thus and on this basis that the Jews falsely claim to be Judah and even Israel itself, despite the fact that no Jewish king was of the Royal House of David.

Israelite and Jew are not therefore necessarily the same, neither are all those of Judah necessarily Jews. Christ was of Judah, but of the Royal House of David. To my mind Israelite, Jew and even Judah appear as being distinctly apart throughout the Old and the New Testaments, and even to-day a clear line of demarcation certainly exists between the two congregations, the Sephardim and the Askenazim. Professor Hrozný, Oriental Lecturer at a Czeck University, says, "the Jews, often regarded as being Semitic and of Semitic origin owing to their speaking a Semitic tongue, can

in reality be traced back to an earlier race which predominated the Orient at a much earlier period," and Ezekiel xvi, 3, seems to confirm their non-Hebrew origin. Genesis xv, 18, indicates that Palestine alone did not constitute the promised land, Matthew xxi, 43, infers that the kingdom which Judah had lost by misuse and which the Jews had usurped should be taken from them and given to another, and in Matthew x, 6, and xv, 24, it is stated that Christ came to the Lost of the House of Israel. Why, therefore, should the Jews regard Abram or Abraham, the father of many nations, as theirs alone, and be so conscious of divine selection, regard themselves as being the chosen race or look upon Palestine as being their own particular land of promise? I doubt very much whether the fact that thousands of Jews are returning to Palestine, unscriptural in design as it is, is making it "The Holy Land of Israel," but their return is certainly a sign of the times which cannot be overlooked or overestimated.

In my opinion it is to be regretted that the present situation of the Jews in Germany is tacitly referred to in a paper at a meeting of this Institute, because it raises deep political issues. Any action which wrongly nullifies or curbs the individual free will or liberty or causes undeserved individual hardship is distasteful to a Britisher, whether such action takes place in Germany or in Russia, and the Jews are far from being blameless with regard to what has happened in Russia since the close of the Great War.

To understand these problems one may read mythology and the writings in allegory and legend, always realising the relationship existing in the individual between :—

1. *Thinking* as Abstract Reason or Science expressed nationally in terms of organisation, machinery and money (*i.e.*, gold).
2. *Feeling* as Art and Beauty or Emotion (*i.e.*, silver).
3. *Willing* expressed nationally as power or passion through the medium of Politics or Religion (*i.e.*, iron).

Nations may be said to typify the extreme development of or the specialisation in one or more of these great faculties of the human make-up and in no other way can the outstanding differences between an Englishman, a German, a Russian, or a Latin, be understood, and the fact that the Jew seems to fit in nowhere, be explained.

Hence we get disagreement amongst peoples, wars between nations, and neither Germany, Russia, nor the Jews are any exception to the rule.

We in this country, as a people of freedom, are consequently not given to violence or legislative discrimination against a class or individual but there are certainly some who regard with uneasiness the rising tendency of Jewish influence in all spheres of our national life today, more especially in finance and industry, and in their ally "politics." Some maintain that the "P.E.P." (Political and Economic Planning Group) is connected with Jewish aspirations because it advocates the application and extension of the principle of monopoly and rationalisation and of the various boards (such as Transport, Electricity, Milk, etc.) to other branches of the nation's industry, agriculture and public services. Such organisations bear a striking similarity to those existing in Soviet Russia to-day for like purposes and carried to the same extremes, they represent an excess of abstract reason or science, as expressed by organisation and machinery at the expense of something else which may be regarded as being more worthy and therefore of value and necessity to the individual advancement and happiness of mankind. The "Industrial Reorganisation (Enabling) Bill," with its far-reaching provisions, innovations and possibilities, was designed to assist the rising tendency towards monopoly in this country, and its defeat in the House of Lords was therefore welcome. Taking one more example, it must be acknowledged that the Jews support charity, yet already there are murmurings against the Jewish proposal of last week to raise £2,000,000 in order to further the settlement in Palestine of Jewish refugees from Germany, not because we have an unemployment problem of our own in this country as yet unsolved, but mainly because a too rapid Jewish concentration in Palestine might influence adversely the affairs of nations and consequently the lives of individuals. This is neither physical fear nor petty envy but an expression of opinion by a free people against any possibility likely to affect the free will and general advancement of mankind.

The reasons for Jewry being closer to the Mohammedanism of Arabia than to Christianity present no problem. Few really think about those reasons just as they fail to realise the basic relationships

of the various nationalities. The Jews understand the great laws of nature and of the human body, and their origin, training and upbringing have developed or perpetuated in an especial way a great mental activity, in which field they undoubtedly show great strength. Hence, labourers amongst Jews are not so common as amongst the other peoples, and it is not surprising, therefore, to find Jews contributing largely to all branches of learning. A Phœnician built the Solomonic temple which was without any outstanding artistic feature, but Solomon paid for it. Is not this the story of the ages and even of to-day, and does it not explain the present position of the Jews in relation to world affairs ?

Powers of mind have been devoted by the Jews to the sinews of economies for purposes of defence and attack in place of the vulgar cannons of war, and thus nations have prospered or failed precisely in the measure of their treatment of the Jews. It is hardly true to say that nations "intolerant" towards the Jews have disappeared from history altogether, when one looks at Germany, Italy, Spain, or Greece even to-day, but it can be said that in the past the comparative prosperity or world leadership of those nations, as measured in terms of the economic system prevailing at the time, has waned in such instances. To-day, a troubled world anxiously waits to see whether the closer acquaintance of Jew with non-Jew from a spiritual point of view is going to save it from the dread calamity of a final clash, before anything approaching a general millennial era can be entered upon.

In 1914, under the leadership of the British Empire, now a Commonwealth of free British nations, the world resisted an attempt at world domination by a power representing the rule of physical might. Since 1918 the emotional Russians have been dominated and decimated by those representing the deification of the national power of excessive abstract reason. To-day in Germany the world is witnessing physical might ruthlessly attempting to remove any possibility of that power being extended to Germany from an outside source as the first step in an attempt at world domination, or it may be they desire to ensure against any attempt to introduce alien blood or other element foreign to the supreme worth of the soul and blood of the Nordic race which they seek to deify. Let us all hope that to-morrow will not see an extension of this struggle or

even a terrible world death struggle by these godless and anti-Christian powers, fighting between themselves but in conjunction with a deified corporate state as the Roman power, chiefly against all those who value and defend freedom against any form of tyranny because such a struggle seems to be foreshadowed in Ezekiel xxxviii.

Huxley stated that "No human being and no society composed of human beings ever did or ever will come to much unless their conduct was governed and guided by the love of some ethical ideal." We need only alter the word "ethical" to read "spiritual," or better still "Christian," and with this truth we may well leave the world of to-day to examine its own conscience.

Whilst regretting that I cannot deal with this paper more fully and at greater length, I hope that Dr. Gaster will not take anything I have said as being in any way personal nor that anyone will think that I support any kind of tyranny or persecution against any class or individual, whoever they may be, for there are good and bad, rich and poor amongst all races of men. There will be no real and enduring peace in the world until the Jewish question and all that it implies is finally settled, and this can only be brought about at present by a mutual understanding and by the proper balancing of the human faculties of thinking, feeling and willing in a perfect unit of harmonious love which does not rule but raises. This is the rainbow token of peace which the angels can cross and thus, even upon earth is a kingdom like unto heaven open to all men of understanding and goodwill.

Surely this is the great lesson of the New Testament, the lesson of love as the essence of Christianity, as opposed to the Jewish Messianic Ideal of World Domination and its methods and consequences, and surely too it is the meaning and purpose of the beautiful example given to us by the divine-human life which ended in the final scene on the hill of Calvary, only to shine forth again in the infinite and dazzling brilliance of a glorious resurrection at the dawn of a new day, which we know as the first Easter morn.

Lt.-Col. SKINNER said: The Jews have come in for both praise and blame to-day. May I direct your thoughts to that wonderful epitome of Jewish life and character we have in the story of Jacob,

their great progenitor. Jacob was a man appointed of God unto a great destiny, but we all know how, at his mother's instigation and with his own too ready acquiescence, he sought and obtained the appointed ends by wrong means. From that time forward his life was that of a fugitive. Thrown back upon himself he lived by his wits and prospered only by outwitting others. It is not a likeable portrait we get of him. The character displayed—that of Yacoub the Shuffler, the Supplanter—is not a lovable one. Indeed our sympathies are more readily drawn out towards his sportsman brother with all his obvious defects. Nevertheless, throughout Jacob's early career, there are not wanting flashes of inspiration, hints of better things; and long years afterwards we are told of conflict with the Angel of God when, in brokenness of body and will, he ceased from his own resource and strivings and clung thenceforth to God for all his help and strength. From that moment there was a great change. No longer was he "Jacob the Supplanter" but "Israel the Prince," endued with power—"power with God, and with man, to prevail."

And are not the Jews of to-day passing through some such experience? Did not their forefathers take the wrong turning long ago, and have they not suffered ever since? A people scattered and peeled, how should they subsist to-day if not by their wits? We may not like them for it, but what else can they do? Have we not analogy in the desperate case of the Armenian nation? I sometimes hear it said, by those who have had to do with them, that the Armenians are this and that and no better than they should be; but after so many hundred years of bitter persecution unto death, what can you expect of poor hunted creatures but that they should live as best they can?

Is that the whole story, then, as regards the Jews? Thank God, no! In His mighty providence there is a day coming when in utter brokenness of heart and pride, forsaking all their own resources and devices they will cast themselves back upon God and be restored to the Divine favour, to fulfil in His counsels the purpose of the ages. Thank God that day is not far distant. It will come to Israel—it is coming even now—as with grace and supplications they look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn for Him as for an only son.

Major E. F. HOLLAND wrote : The world has also witnessed the exposition of the Christian teaching that nations who take the sword shall perish by the sword—in the declension of great nations who have persecuted minorities.

Almost a year ago I had the opportunity of discussing with an influential German journalist the present position of the Jews—he informed me that his Government when dealing with this question had very logically rejected Christianity on the grounds that it supports the Jewish claim as put forward by Dr. Gaster in this paper.

In an attempt to restore interest in the Christian faith, I invited my friend to consider the obvious alternative to this school of thought—that the adherents to the Jewish faith do not constitute in a historical sense the fulfilment of the purpose of God, revealed in the Scriptures—such purpose being vested in Israel (of which Judah was part), the nation which, in confederation with King Pekah of Syria, gives us the first *recorded* instance of Jewish persecution (in the time of Ahaz, King of Judah). That this was more than a family quarrel is confirmed by the record in the Bible that the division between the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah was in accord with the will of God.

LECTURER'S REPLY.

To Mr. Dewar, I wish to reply very briefly. Before rising to criticise here, he ought to have known at any rate the facts. With legends we cannot deal. A man who can tell us that Wellhausen, Keunen, and Strauss were Jews puts himself outside the range of any argument. In addition, to pick out one single sentence from the Bible of condemnation by the Prophet, as against hundreds and thousands of passages praising the Jews, also shows a way of arguing which one cannot follow. In all his sweeping statement, there is not one single grain of truth. There is no answer to fantastic arguments. Nobody denies that there are bad Jews as there are bad Christians. A man who cannot see that Ravage writes in an ironical strain, showing the absurdity of the accusations which are hurled against the Jews, and takes these words seriously, is not

open to any reasoning. One can only pass by with a shrug of the shoulder and regret.

Concerning Mr. Jackson's remarks, I am sorry to say they are so rambling and disconnected that I find it impossible to reply to them unless one takes each section separately, for which there is neither time nor disposition. His reading of the Bible is so curious that I cannot understand what kind of argument he is deriving from it. The passage in 2 Kings proves nothing; and the reading there is doubtful. Some old texts and various manuscripts read instead of "Aram" "Edom." Elath was a place fortified by Azariah, King of Judah, who placed there a garrison of Judeans, and so it became part of Judea. Mr. Jackson has not adduced a single argument to prove that the Jews are a mixed people; it is a mere *obiter dictum*, and we must leave it at that. I certainly cannot follow him into his economic lucubrations. Here again he has failed to show that only Jews had anything to do with the creation of those various Boards. Even if it happened that a Jew were on any of them, he would be one among a large number of managers and directors of pure English blood. I do not understand why he finds fault with our collecting £2,000,000 for settling Jews in Palestine. I think that he should be grateful. So far as charity is concerned, all those present here will easily bear witness to the generous support which we Jews are giving to every charitable institution and charitable undertaking. But what are £2,000,000, even if distributed among the unemployed here—a sum, remember, which has to be collected within the next five years? It would only mean a few shillings per head. The Jews have taken their part in all the great undertakings which are benefiting the country, and they have placed their minds and their energies at the disposal of every work from which the inhabitants of the country were likely to benefit. An increase in the industrial development, helped by Jews, can only result in giving more labour to the people, and in bringing more money into the country. Where is the wrong? Why make this a reason for adverse criticism? On the contrary, I should have thought that the more the Jews are contributing either to the spiritual or to the economic wealth of the country, the more should they be supported, and the more should they be appreciated. None has yet shown that the advent of the Jews into

any country did not contribute to its prosperity. The reverse is always the case. This can be seen here also, but I do not wish to dwell upon this economic problem, which lies outside the sphere of our consideration. Nor can I accept the legend of the Jews having taken a large share in those changes which have taken place in Russia. There were a few prominent Jews among the leaders ; but they are also lost in the mass of the others who are the prime workers and representatives in the movement. Everything else is a mere legend. I fully concur in the condemnation of the new paganism which is growing up in Germany and manifesting itself in such a ruthless manner, reminding us of the barbarism of its earlier inhabitants, the Goths and the Vandals. But leaving all these points aside, far from taking amiss the other remarks of Mr. Jackson, I readily accept the statement that, as a man who loves freedom and justice, he will also see to it that the privileges of equal rights and equal duties, of absolute freedom of conscience and political and civil liberty be granted to the Jews.

As to the remarks of the Rev. F. W. Pitt, I can only say that to me, as a believing Jew, it is impossible to follow his interpretation of the Scriptures. There are two ways of reading them, and merely to pick out certain sentences, and to draw conclusions from them, is neither convincing nor illuminating. I still believe that the promise made to Abraham has always been fulfilled and will be fulfilled in the course of time : " In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

To the Rev. A. W. Payne, who introduced the apparent difference between Jew and Israelite, I am bound to remark that we recognise no such difference ; those who claim to be Israelites fail to be recognised by us as such. Only those are real Israelites or Jews who have in their flesh the sign of the covenant of our forefather Abraham.

As to the character of Jacob, I am afraid Lt.-Col. Skinner and others have misunderstood the Bible. What Jacob had obtained from his father was not of any material value. It was only the spiritual blessing which God had given to Abraham, and then to Isaac. Anyone who reads the Bible carefully, and without bias, will find that the blessing, which Isaac gave to Esau, is, in substance, precisely the same as that given to Jacob, but with the addition

of material power and wealth. Nor did Jacob's tribulations come to an end and when he had become Israel. Biblical history must be read in a different light.

I have been asked by many of the speakers why I have started my survey from the period of the Maccabees, to the exclusion of the Bible. My answer is very simple. The situation, of which my lecture was to have been a survey, only began after the conquest of Asia by Alexander the Great. It is from that time onwards that the Jews have been finally dispersed among the nations, and that situations had been created for them which has continued to this very day, and my endeavour has been to show that the Jew of to-day is the result of the vicissitudes through which he has passed and of the oppression and persecution of which he had been the victim century after century, and which we are witnessing in our days again in a more virulent form. On the other hand, we draw the lesson from it that those who curse the Jew in the long run remain accursed, whilst blessing falls upon those who bless the Jew.

Finally, I can only express my gratification at the almost unanimous condemnation by everyone of the speakers of the treatment to which the Jews are exposed now in Germany, and the hope, which they all expressed, that these dark days may soon pass away and that the principles of freedom, justice, and equality may be shared by all. I have endeavoured to restrain my language since no purpose will be served by strong expressions. I prefer to listen to the high level of the sentiments expressed by the members of this institution, which are in keeping with its fine tradition. Almost everyone here, I am glad to see, agree that only blessing can come from freedom and justice, from mutual forbearance and from the spirit of love and mercy, for only in such way the Divine Blessing promised through the seed of Abraham will be fulfilled.