

Anti-Semitism: What To Do About It

FOR the first time in its history the United States faces the consequences of organized anti-semitism. As John L. Spivak pointed out in his concluding article (THE NEW MASSES, Nov. 27), pogroms are not only possible, but probable. The various shirted movements will see to that. The American Jew is today confronted with anti-semitism everywhere: in the college, in the neighborhood, in the factory and shop. This country, once the refuge of oppressed Jewry, is today developing as menacing a form of Jew-hatred as now exists in Germany and Poland.

Bourgeois liberalism, now in its last stages of decrepitude, cannot rouse itself to recognize today's realities. The liberal would still like to console himself with the thought that hatred of the Jew is an imported, "un-American" creed, incapable of striking root here. It is a fad from over-seas—a transitory phenomenon which will be gone tomorrow. He does not understand that anti-semitism is neither a manifestation of Czarist despotism nor merely the domestic policy of Hitler. Its significance is much deeper; it grows out of present day capitalist civilization as inevitably as do wars and revolutions.

One cannot understand the "problem of the Jew" without analyzing the complex of economic, religious, racial and national factors involved.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, when the German labor movement first came into contact with organized anti-semitism, Engels could write: "Anti-semitism is the sign of a backward culture and for this reason is only to be found in such countries as Prussia, Austria and Russia. Anyone preaching anti-semitism here in England or in America would be laughed to scorn." But that was in the last century. Nineteen-thirty-four presents a different story. No one either in England or America today dares laugh at a movement which fifty years ago the progressive capitalist countries would have considered a disgrace to their civilization. The anti-semites of today are the children of the erstwhile industrially progressive bourgeoisie. We can by this fact measure the cultural level of our time.

A moment's consideration of Germany, today's classic land of anti-semitism, is pertinent here. Anti-semitism

appeared there in organized form in the Seventies, a direct consequence of the bitter economic crisis of 1873. Where this anti-semitism said "Jew" it meant "capital." August Bebel, then leader of German Social Democracy, called this anti-semitism the "Socialism of the Imbecile." This "imbecilic Socialism" continued through the years waxing in crises and waning in periods of relative prosperity, until Hitler refurbished it with all the trappings so well known today. The medieval persecutions of the Jews, springing entirely from economic motives, had been carried out under the cloak of religion. It was God's work to smite the Jew. In the anti-semitism of today "race" and "nationality" replace the Holy Ghost.

The fundamental economic source of anti-semitism was carefully hidden in Germany. Yet when the ruined middle-classes in that land revolted against the Jew they did so because he personified Capital that was destroying them.

As long as the bourgeoisie could accumulate and feel assured of its riches, it had no reason for organizing the forces of the lower middle-class against the proletariat. The quicker the petty bourgeoisie was ruined, the better for capital; the better for the commodity market. The industrial reserve army was thereby increased and wages went down. The relative weakness of the labor movement and the objective possibilities for expansion of capital were the basis for the liberalism of the bourgeoisie. The revolutionary maturity of the working-class and the universal crisis of capitalism in the post-war period constitute the causes for the process of Fascization today going on throughout the capitalist world. As part of the mobilization of all reactionary forces against the threatening proletarian revolution, anti-semitism becomes one of the most effective weapons of the bourgeoisie for diverting and confusing the revolutionary impulse. With the aid of anti-semitism the bourgeoisie has undertaken the political organization of the wavering middle-classes. For this reason the "Hate-the-Jew" creed has become a political question of prime significance for the working-class itself.

Thus the Jewish question is primarily a class question: it is involved thoroughly in the incessant conflict raging

between the upper bourgeoisie and the proletariat. If any further proof is necessary let us recall the years of the Russian civil war: Jewish industrial magnates supported the pogrom generals. In February of this year, when the Austrian workers fought their heroic battle against the Catholic Heimwehr Fascists, the rich Viennese Jews hastened to furnish the Dollfuss government with money. The same in Nazi Germany, where Fascism has thus far developed the most definitive form of anti-semitism, hundreds of Jewish revolutionaries have been murdered, but not a single big Jewish banker has thus far been expropriated. (The first "nationalization" of a Jewish department store in Nuremberg, recently reported in the press, is the best example of Hitler's class policy regarding the Jewish question.) Wealthy Jews helped to finance Hitler's rise to power. There are bourgeois Jewish organizations in Germany which openly and voluntarily declare their loyalty to the Fuehrer.

Immediately after the August elections this year (after the party purge of June 30) Dr. Neumann, chairman of the "Union of National-German Jews," issued the following historic proclamation:

The members of the Union of National German Jews, founded in 1921, have in war and in peace placed the well-being of the German people and the German Fatherland, with which we feel ourselves inextricably bound up, above our own. For this reason we welcomed the national revolution of January, 1933, although it was accompanied by certain hardships for ourselves, for we consider it the only means of eliminating the damage done in fourteen miserable years by un-German elements. We are in entire agreement with the political legacy of the honored president and director of the state, Hindenburg, who has acclaimed the deeds of the Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, as a decisive step of deep historical significance, at the same time declaring that much still remains to be done, and that the National revolution must be followed by a reconciliation embracing the entire German people.

That portion of the German Jews, who know no fatherland other than Germany belong to the German fatherland body and soul. . . ."

The conclusions from these facts have a direct bearing on the situation in

America today. Hundreds of thousands of Jews, accustomed to a degree of security from race hatred, suddenly find anti-semitism all about them. What has become of their haven—America? The ghetto and the pogrom, which yesterday seemed like an evil story out of an old book, today become a reality.

In America we find two reactionary nationalist organizations seeking hegemony over the Jewish masses: The American Jewish Committee, led by the upper crust, and the American Jewish Congress, the upper middle-class groups, many of which are clustered about Zionism. Their solution of the anti-semitic danger has been characterized by their pussy-footing policies concerning Hitler, their exaggerated nationalism, their extreme wariness of offending the powers that be. After all, they will not reverse history and act contrary to the behavior of their fellow-bankers in Germany. Herr Neumann's manifesto is an international object lesson.

The only safety for the Jew, his only tactic, can be his alliance with the working-class. For after all, Fascism is primarily directed against the pro-

ducing masses and not against the Jewish masses. The Jew is made a scapegoat; his own co-religionist in the upper class will turn him over to the American fascist when it becomes expedient. Spivak produced undeniable proofs of the financing of anti-semitic organizations by the American Jewish capitalists.

The Jewish question and anti-semitism can only be solved by the class which strives toward the fall of the exploiter-class: the proletariat. In the Soviet Union there is no longer a Jewish question. There it has been solved as part of the question of national minorities. Only there is it possible for the Jewish people, freed from all forms of exploitation and oppression, to develop its national culture.

But there are millions of Jews who are not ready for this solution. They must be taught that only a classless society can finally put a stop to their misery. But in the interim, these Jews—whether they be workers, or professionals, or small business-men—must realize that a common fighting front with the working-class on the specific anti-Fascist issue is necessary. Fascism

is not inevitable. Pogroms are not inevitable. They can be circumvented if a powerful enough united front is welded.

The Jewish-American Clubs, with headquarters at 80 East 11th Street, have been formed for this purpose. Their program has been drafted to include students, middle-class groups, in the fight against anti-Semitism, against Fascism. This organization is affiliated with the American League Against War and Fascism.

The lessons for American Jewry to observe are manifest. There was Czarist Russia. Today there is Hitler Germany. The moral is inescapable; the Jewish masses cannot stave off anti-semitism by themselves. They cannot purchase safety through meekness, nor retreat to the synagogue, nor even flight to Palestine. They must stay and defend themselves. They can only accomplish this through alliance with all those socially-conscious forces, who like them have everything to lose from the success of a fascist movement. Without them, the Jews are consigned to the Ghetto, doomed to massacre and pogroms.

The Middle Class Must Choose

WHERE can the middle-class turn—the little businessman, the one-clerk storekeeper, the independent grocer and the corner druggist, the small butcher and the clothing dealer, the salaried white collar worker—in this second year of the New Deal? The question is one of the most important facing the masses in America today.

The small merchant is a capitalist at heart. In better times he grabbed all he could, often by the most intensive exploitation of his few employes. Today he cries out for help and represents himself as one who unselfishly seeks to "serve society." But the question is not to be solved by moral judgments. It must be seen in terms of the economic and social position of this class in relation to the struggle between the whole mass of the workers and the capitalists. The two alternatives before the small merchant are becoming ever clearer: Shall he become Fascist or Communist? Shall he throw in his lot with the militant struggles of the vastly greater body of industrial and farm workers,

or shall he support the rule of the very capitalists who have always exploited him and now are crushing him out of existence?

Two years ago Roosevelt made his campaign for the presidency on the slogan of "the forgotten man." It was easy for the small merchant to believe that he was "the forgotten man," and to see himself as the sole beneficiary, once Roosevelt had set about his famous task of "driving the money changers out of the temple." As Roosevelt's N.R.A. codes emerged, they were shown, one after the other, to be written dead against the small fellow and in favor of the monopolies. In 1934 the small merchant and business man is worse off than ever before, and feels he has been betrayed. He is discontented, but this discontent of itself does not guarantee that the same thing will not happen again. The examples of Fascist Italy, Austria and Germany prove, over and over again, that unless the middle-class elements can be won over to active sympathy with the working-class, they eventually provide the

mass base for the Fascists. And the Fascists, taking power as agents of the big capitalists, immediately forget all their promises to their middle-class supporters, and set out to further enslave and destroy them.

Why have the Fascists been able to win over such large sections of the middle-class? Economics and history are against the Fascists. Fascism has solved no problems in the countries where it rules. It has only intensified the insane contradictions of capitalism. It has lowered living standards, increased unemployment, promoted a mad nationalism and war preparations, and fostered race hatred and persecution. To maintain itself it has had to use the utmost terror against the working and middle-classes. On the basis of Mussolini's record in Italy—too little known to the world in detail because of his iron censorship—Fascism had not the shadow of a claim to power anywhere else. Yet it seized power in Germany and Austria, it is pressing for power in Spain, it is raising its head in England and America. How does it gain the atten-