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Auto-Emancipation

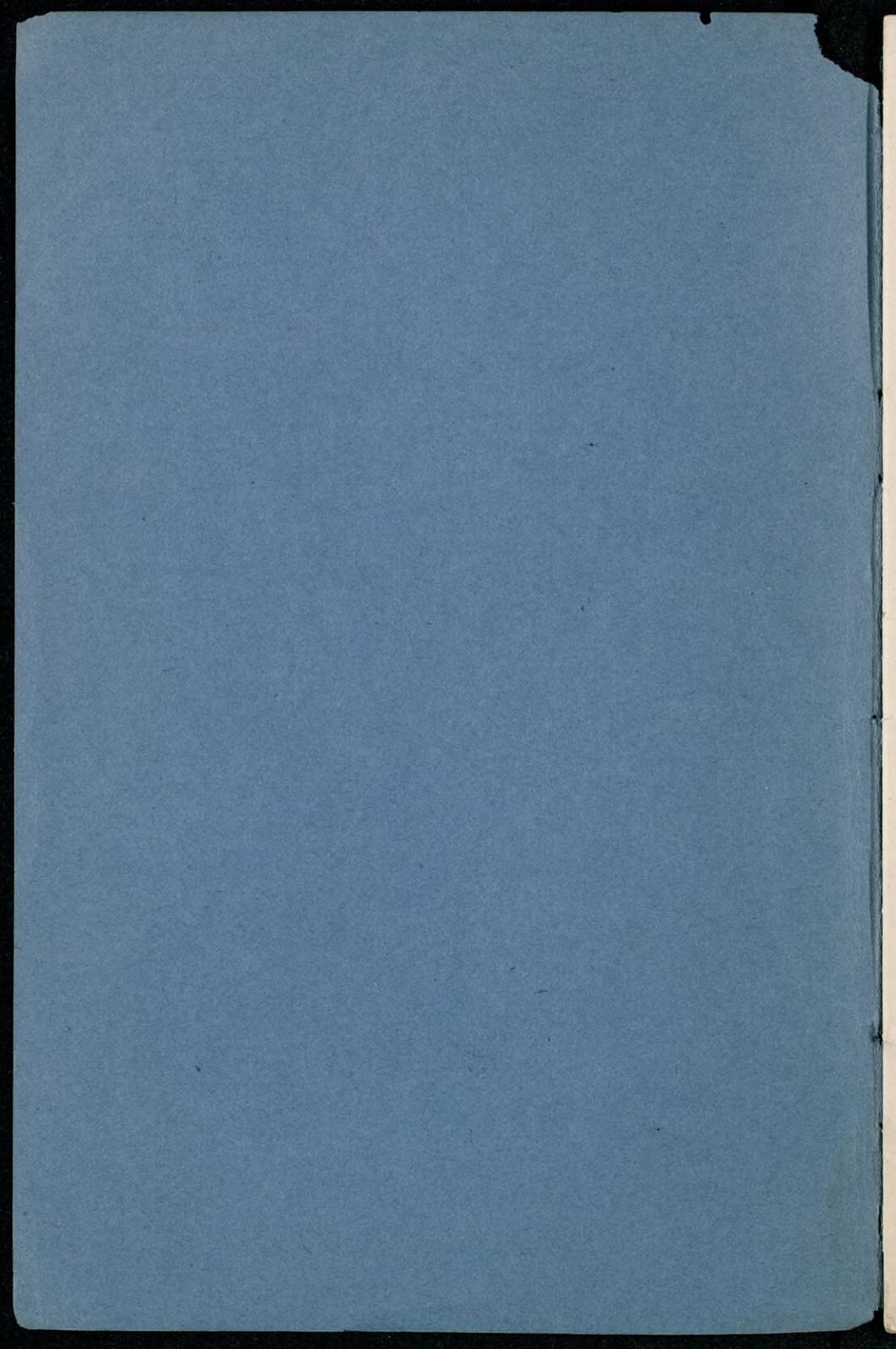
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AUTO-EMANCIPATION:

An Admonition to His Brethren by a Russian Jew.

"If I do not help myself, who will help me? and if not now, when?"—HILLEL.

THE misery caused by bloody deeds of violence has been followed by a moment of repose, and baiter and baited can breathe easier for a time. Meanwhile the Jewish fugitives are being "repatriated" with the very money that was collected to assist emigration. The Jews in the Occident have again learned to endure the cry of "Hep, hep" as their fathers did in days gone by. The flaming outburst of indignation at the disgrace endured has turned into a rain of ashes which is gradually covering the glowing soil. Close your eyes and hide your heads in ostrich-fashion as you will, if you do not take advantage of the fleeting moment of repose, and devise remedies more radical than those palliatives with which incompetents have for centuries vainly tried to relieve our unhappy people, lasting peace is impossible for you.

SEPTEMBER, 1882.

The eternal problem presented by the Jewish Question stirs men to-day, as it did ages ago. It remains unsolved, like the squaring of the circle, unlike which, however, it is still a burning question. This is due to the fact that it is not merely a problem of theoretic interest, but one of practical interest, which renews its youth from day to day, as it were, and presses more and more imperiously for a solution.

The essence of the problem, as we see it, consists in the fact that, in the midst of the nations among whom the Jews reside, they form a heterogeneous element which cannot be assimilated, which cannot be readily digested by any nation. Hence the problem is to find means of so adjusting the relations of this exclusive element to the whole body of the nations that there shall never be any further basis for the Jewish Question.

We cannot, of course, think of establishing absolute harmony. Such harmony has probably never existed, even among

the other peoples. The millenium in which the "International" will disappear, and the nations will merge into humanity, is still invisible in the distance. Until it is realized, the desires and ideals of the nations must be limited to establishing a tolerable *modus vivendi*.

The world will have to wait long for universal peace; but meantime the relations of the nations to one another may be adjusted fairly well by an explicit mutual understanding, an understanding based upon international law, treaties, and especially upon a certain equality in rank and mutually conceded rights, as well as upon mutual esteem.

No such equality in rank appears in the intercourse of the nations with the Jews. In the latter case the basis is lacking for that mutual esteem which is generally regulated and secured by international law or by treaties. Only when this basis is established, when the equality of the Jews and the other nations becomes a fact, can the problem presented by the Jewish Question be considered solved. Unfortunately, although such equality existed in reality in days long since forgotten, under present conditions we can hope to see it restored only in so remote a future that the admission of the Jewish people into the category of the other nations seems illusory. They lack most of those attributes which are the hall-marks of a nation. They lack that characteristic national life which is inconceivable without a common language, common customs, and a common land. The Jewish people have no fatherland of their own, though many motherlands; they have no rallying point, no center of gravity, no government of their own, no accredited representatives. They are everywhere in evidence, and nowhere at home. The nations have *never* to deal with a Jewish *nation*, but always with mere *Jews*. The Jews are not a nation, because they lack a certain distinctive national character, possessed by every other nation, a character which is determined by living together in one country, under one government. It was clearly impossible for this national character to be developed in the Dispersion: the Jews seem rather to have lost every memory of their former home. Thanks to their ready adaptability, they have all the more easily acquired the alien traits of the people among whom their fate cast them. Moreover, to please their protectors, they not seldom divested themselves of their traditional individuality. They acquired, or persuaded themselves that they had acquired, certain cosmopolitan tendencies which could appeal to others no more than they could satisfy the Jews themselves.

In seeking to fuse with other peoples, they wilfully renounced, to a certain extent, their own nationality. Nowhere, how-

ever, did they succeed in obtaining from their fellow-citizens recognition as native-born citizens of equal rank.

The strongest fact, however, operating to prevent the Jews from striving after an independent national existence is the fact that they feel no need for such an existence. Not only do they feel no need for it, but they even deny the reasonableness of such a need.

In a sick person, the absence of desire for food and drink is a very serious symptom. It is not always possible to cure him of this fateful loss of appetite. And even if his appetite is restored, it is still a question whether he will be able to assimilate food, even though he desires it.

The Jews are in the sad position of such a patient. We must discuss this most important point with all possible precision. We must prove that the misfortunes of the Jews are due, above all, to their lack of desire for national independence; and that this desire must be evoked and maintained in time if they do not wish to be exposed forever to disgraceful existence—in a word, we must prove that *they must become a nation*.

In the apparently insignificant circumstance, that the Jews are not considered an independent nation by the other peoples, lies, in part, the secret of their anomalous position and of their endless misery. The mere fact of belonging to this people constitute an indelible stigma, repellent to non-Jews, and painful to the Jews themselves. Nevertheless, this phenomenon has its basis deep down in the nature of man.

Among the living nations of the earth the Jews occupy the position of a nation long since dead. With the loss of their fatherland, the Jewish people lost their independence, and fell into a decay which is not compatible with existence as an integral, living organism. The state, crushed under the weight of the Roman rule, disappeared from before the eyes of the nations. But after the Jewish people had given up their existence as an actual state, as a political entity, they could nevertheless not succumb to total destruction—they did not cease to exist spiritually as a nation. The world saw in this people the uncanny form of one of the dead walking among the living. This ghostlike apparition of a people without unity or organization, without land or other bond of union, no longer alive, and yet moving about among the living,—this strange form, hardly paralleled in history, unlike anything that preceded or followed it, could not fail to make a strange, peculiar impression upon the imagination of the peoples. And, if the fear of ghosts is something innate, and has a certain

justification in the psychic life of humanity, what wonder that it asserted itself powerfully at the sight of this dead and yet living nation?

Fear of the Jewish ghost has been handed down and strengthened for generations and centuries. It led to a prejudice which, in its turn, in connection with other circumstances to be discussed later, opened the way for Judeophobia.

Along with a number of other unconscious and superstitious ideas, instincts, and idiosyncrasies, Judeophobia also has become fully naturalized among all the peoples of the earth with whom the Jews have had intercourse. Judeophobia is a form of demonopathy, with the distinction that the Jewish ghost has become known to the whole race of mankind, not merely to certain races, and that it is not incorporeal, like other ghosts, but is a being of flesh and blood, and suffers the most excruciating pain from the wounds inflicted upon it by the timorous multitude who imagine themselves threatened by it.

Judeophobia is a psychic disorder. As a psychic disorder it is hereditary, and as a disease transmitted for two thousand years it is incurable.

It is the fear of ghosts which, as the mother of Judeophobia, has evoked that abstract, I might say Platonic hatred, thanks to which the whole Jewish nation is wont to be held responsible for the real or supposed sins of its individual members, and to be slandered in so many ways, to be buffeted about so shamefully.

Friend and foe alike have tried to explain or to justify this hatred of the Jews by bringing all sorts of charges against them. They are said to have crucified Jesus, to have drunk Christian blood, to have poisoned wells, to have taken usury, to have exploited the peasant, and so forth. These and a thousand other charges against an entire people were proved groundless. They showed their own weakness by the very fact that they had to be trumped up wholesale in order to quiet the evil consciences of the Jew-baiters, to justify the condemnation of an entire nation, to prove the necessity of burning the Jew, or rather the Jewish ghost, at the stake. He who tries to prove too much proves nothing at all. Though the Jews may justly be charged with many shortcomings, those shortcomings are, at all events, not such great vices, not such capital crimes as to warrant the doom of the entire people. In individual cases, indeed, we find these accusations contradicted by the fact that the Jews get along fairly well in close intercourse with their non-Jewish neighbors. This is the reason that the charges preferred are usually of the most general character, made up out of whole cloth,

based to a certain extent on a *priori* reasoning, and true at most in individual cases, but not admitting of proof as regards the entire nation.

Thus have Judaism and Jew-hatred passed through history for centuries as inseparable companions. Like the Jewish people, the real wandering Jew, Jew-hatred, too, seems as if it would never die. He must be blind indeed who will maintain that the Jews are not the chosen people, the people chosen for universal hatred. No matter how much the nations are at variance in their relations with one another, no matter how different in their instincts and endeavors, they join hands in their hatred of the Jews; on this single point they are all agreed. The extent and the manner in which this antipathy is manifested depends, of course, upon the cultural status of each people. The antipathy as such, however, exists everywhere and at all times, no matter whether it appears in the form of deeds of violence, as envious jealousy, or under the mask of tolerance and protection. To be plundered as a Jew or to be protected as a Jew is equally humiliating, equally painful to the self-respect of the Jews.

Having analyzed Judeophobia as an hereditary form of demonopathy, peculiar to the human race, and represented Jew-hatred as based upon an inherited aberration of the human mind, we must draw the important conclusion, that we must give up contending against these hostile impulses just as we give up contending against every other inherited predisposition. This view is all the more important as showing that we should at length recognize that polemics is useless sparring, and abstain from it as a waste of time and energy, for against superstition even the gods fight in vain. Prejudice or instinctive ill-will can be satisfied by no reasoning, however forceful and clear. These sinister powers must either be kept within bounds by material coercion, like every other blind force of nature, or simply avoided.

In the psychology of the peoples, then, we find the basis of the prejudice against the Jewish nation; but other factors besides, not less important, which render impossible the fusion or equalization of the Jews with the other peoples, must also be considered.

No people, generally speaking, has any predilection for foreigners. This fact has its ethnological basis, and cannot be brought as a reproach against any people. Now, is the Jew subject to *this* general law to the same extent as the other nationalities? By no means! The aversion which meets the foreigner in a strange land can be repaid in the same coin in his home country. The non-Jew pursues his own interest in a foreign

country openly and without giving offense. It is everywhere considered natural that he should fight for these interests, alone or in league with others. The foreigner has no need to *be*, or to *seem to be*, a patriot. But as for the Jew, not only is he not a native in his own home country, but he is also not a foreigner; he is, in very truth, the stranger *par excellence*. He is regarded as neither friend nor foe, but as a stranger, of whom the only thing known is that he has no home. People do not care to *confide* in the foreigner, or to *trust* the Jew. The foreigner claims hospitality, which he can repay in the same coin. The Jew can make no such return; consequently he can make no claim to hospitality. He is not a guest, much less a welcome guest. He is more like a beggar; and what beggar is welcome? He is rather a refugee; and where is the refugee to whom a refuge may not be denied? The Jews are aliens who can have no representatives, because they have no fatherland. Because they have none, because their home has no boundaries behind which they can entrench themselves, their misery also has no bounds. The *general law* does not apply to the Jews, as strangers in the true sense of the word. On the other hand, there are everywhere *laws for the Jews*, and if the general law is to apply to them, this fact must first be determined by a *special law*. Like the negroes, like women, and unlike all free peoples, they must be *emancipated*. It is all the worse for them if, unlike the negroes, they belong to an advanced race, and if, unlike women, they can show not only women of distinction, but also men, even great men.

Since the Jew is nowhere at home, nowhere regarded as a native, he remains everywhere an alien. That he himself and his forefathers as well were born in the country does not alter this fact in the least. In the great majority of cases, he is treated as a stepchild, as a Cinderella; in the most favorable cases he is regarded as an adopted child, whose rights may be questioned; *never* is he considered a legitimate child of the fatherland. The German, proud of his Teutonic character, the Slav, the Celt, not one of them admits that the Semitic Jew is his equal by birth; and even if he is ready, as a man of culture, to admit him to all civil rights, he will never go as far as to forget the Jew in this fellow-citizen of his. The *legal emancipation* of the Jews is the crowning achievement of our century. But *legal emancipation* is not *social emancipation*, and with the proclamation of the former the Jews are still far from being emancipated from their exceptional *social position*.

The emancipation of the Jews naturally finds its justification in the fact that it will always be considered to have been a postu-

late of *logic*, of *law*, and of *enlightened self-interest*. It can never be regarded as a spontaneous expression of human *feeling*. Far from owing its origin to the spontaneous *feeling* of the peoples, it is *never a matter of course*; and it has never yet taken such deep root that further discussion of it becomes unnecessary. In any event, whether emancipation was undertaken from spontaneous impulse or from conscious motives, it remains a rich gift, a splendid alms, willingly or unwillingly flung to the poor, humble beggars whom no one, however, cares to shelter, because a homeless, wandering beggar wins confidence or sympathy from none. The Jew is not permitted to forget that the daily bread of civil rights must be given him. The stigma attached to this people, which forces an unenviable isolation among the nations upon it, cannot be removed by any sort of official emancipation, as long as this people produces in accordance with its nature vagrant nomads, as long as it cannot give a satisfactory account of whence it comes and whither it goes, as long as the Jews themselves prefer not to speak in Aryan society of their Semitic descent, and prefer not to be reminded of it, as long as they are persecuted, tolerated, protected, emancipated.

This degrading dependence of the eternally alien Jew upon the non-Jew is reenforced by another factor, making a fusion of the Jews with the original inhabitants of a land absolutely impossible. In the great struggle for existence, civilized peoples readily submit to laws which help to change their struggle into a peaceful competition, a noble emulation. Even in this case the peoples usually make a distinction between the native and the foreigner, the first, of course, always being given the preference. Now, if his distinction is drawn even against the foreigner of equal birth, how harshly is it insisted upon, in reference to the eternally alien Jew! With what irritation the beggar must be regarded who dares to cast longing glances upon a land, the home of others, as upon a beloved woman guarded by distrustful relatives! And if he nevertheless prospers, and succeeds in plucking a flower here and there from its soil, woe to the ill-fated man! Let him not complain if he experiences what the Jews in Spain and Russia have experienced.

The Jews, moreover, do not suffer only when they achieve distinguished success. Wherever they are congregated in large masses, they must, by their very *numbers*, have a certain advantage in competition with the non-Jewish population. In the western provinces of Russia we behold the Jews herded together, eking out a wretched existence in the most dreadful destitution. Nevertheless, complaints of the *exploitation* practiced by the Jews never cease.

To sum up what has been said, for the living, the Jew is a dead man, for the natives an alien and a vagrant, for property-holders a beggar, for the poor an exploiter and a millionaire, for patriots a man without a country, for all classes a hated rival.

This *natural antagonism* is the basis of the untold number of reciprocal misunderstandings and accusations and reproaches which both parties rightfully or wrongfully cast at each other. Thus the Jews, instead of realizing their own position and adopting a rational line of conduct, appeal to eternal justice, and fondly imagine that the appeal will have some effect. On the other hand, the non-Jews, instead of relying simply upon their superior force and holding fast to their historical and actual standpoint—the standpoint of the stronger—try to justify their unfavorable attitude by a mass of accusations which, on closer examination, prove to be baseless or negligible. He, however, who desires to be unbiased, who does not desire to judge and interpret the affairs of this world according to the principles of an Utopian Arcadia, but would merely ascertain and explain them in order to reach a conclusion of practical value, will not make either of the parties seriously responsible for the antagonism described. To the Jews, however, in whom we are chiefly interested, he will say: “You certainly are a foolish and contemptible people! You are *foolish*, because you stand awkwardly by and expect of human nature something which it has always lacked—humanity. You are contemptible, because you have no real self-love and no national *self-respect*.”

National self-respect! Where can we get it? It is truly the greatest misfortune of our race that we do not constitute a nation; that we are merely Jews. We are a flock scattered over the whole face of the earth, without a shepherd to protect us and gather us together. Under the most favorable circumstances we reach the rank of goats, which are mated in Russia with race-horses. And that is the highest goal of our ambition!

It is true that our dear protectors have always taken good care that we should never get out of breath and recover our self-respect. As individual Jews, but not as a Jewish nation, we have carried on for centuries the hard and unequal struggle for existence. In isolation each separate individual had to waste his genius and his energy for a little oxygen and a morsel of bread, moistened with tears. In this hopeless struggle we did not succumb. We waged the most glorious of all partisan struggles with all the peoples of the earth, who with one accord, desired to exterminate us. But the war we have waged—and God knows how long we shall continue to wage it—has not been for a father-

land, but for the wretched maintenance of millions of "Jew peddlers."

If all the peoples of the earth were not able to blot out our existence, they were nevertheless able to destroy in us the feeling of our national independence. And as for ourselves we look on with fatalistic indifference when in many a land we are refused a recognition which would not lightly be denied to Zulus. In the Dispersion we maintained our individual life, and proved our power of resistance, but we lost the common bond of our national consciousness. Seeking to maintain our material existence, we were constrained only too often to forget our moral dignity. We did not see that on account of tactics unworthy of us, which we were forced to adopt, we sank still lower in the eyes of our opponents, that we were only the more exposed to humiliating contempt and outlawry, which have finally become our baleful heritage. In the wide, wide world there was no place for us. We prayed only for a little place anywhere to lay our weary head to rest; and so, by lessening our claims, we gradually lessened as well our dignity, which was effaced in our own and others' eyes until it became unrecognizable. We were the shuttle-cock which the peoples tossed in turn to one another. The cruel game was equally amusing whether we were caught or thrown, and was enjoyed all the more, the more elastic and yielding our national respect became in the hands of the peoples. Under such circumstances, how could there be any question of national self-determination, of a free, active development of our national force or of our native genius?

We may note, in passing, that our enemies, in order to prove our inferiority, have not failed to make capital of this last trait, which, though in a measure borne out by facts, is at bottom altogether irrelevant. One would think that men of genius were as plentiful among our opponents as blackberries in August. Poor creatures! They reproach the eagle who once soared to heaven and recognized the Divinity, because he cannot rise high in air when his wings are clipped! But even with wings clipped we have remained on a level with the great peoples of civilization. Grant us but the happiness of independence, allow us to be sole masters of our fate, give us a bit of land, grant us only what you granted the Servians and Roumanians, the advantage of a free national existence, and then dare to pass a slighting judgment upon us, to reproach us with a lack of men of genius! *At present we still live under the oppression of the evils you have inflicted upon us. What we lack is not genius, but self-respect, and the consciousness of human dignity of which you have robbed us.*

If we are ill-treated, robbed, plundered, outraged, we do not dare defend ourselves, and, worse still, we look upon it almost as a matter of course. If a blow is dealt us in the face, we soothe our burning cheek with cold water; and if a bloody wound has been inflicted upon us, we put on a bandage. If we are cast out of the house which we have built for ourselves, we beg humbly for mercy, and if we do not succeed in touching the heart of our oppressor we move on and seek—another exile. If we hear an idle spectator on the road call out to us: "You poor devils of Jews certainly are to be pitied," we are most deeply touched; and if a Jew is said to be an honor to his people, that people is foolish enough to be proud of it. We have sunk so low that we become almost jubilant when, as in the Occident, a small fraction of our people is put on an equal footing with non-Jews. But he who must be *put* on a footing, assuredly stands insecurely. If no notice is taken of our descent and we are treated like others born in the country, we are thankful to the point of actually turning renegades. For the sake of the comfortable position we are granted, for the flesh-pots which we may enjoy in peace, we persuade ourselves, and others, that we are not Jews any longer, but full-blooded sons of the fatherland. Idle delusion! You may prove yourselves patriots ever so true, you will still be reminded at every opportunity of your Semitic descent. This fateful *memento mori* will not prevent you, however, from enjoying the hospitality extended, until some fine morning you are cast out of the country, until the sceptical mob reminds you that you are, after all, nothing but nomads and parasites, protected by no law.

But even humane treatment should not be a proof to us that we are desired rather than cursed.

What a pitiful figure we do cut! We do not count as a nation among the other nations, and we have no voice in the council of the peoples, even in affairs which concern us. Our fatherland is the other man's country; our unity—dispersion, our solidarity—the general hostility to us, our weapon—humility, our defense—flight, our individuality—adaptability, our future—tomorrow. What a contemptible role for a people which once had its Maccabees!

What wonder that a people who have allowed themselves to be trampled upon for dear life's sake, and have learned to love the very feet that trample upon them, should fall a prey to the utmost contempt!

The tragic feature of our history is that we can neither die nor live. We are not able to die despite the blows of our enemies,

and we do not wish to die by our own hand, through apostasy or self-destruction. Neither can we live; our enemies look well to that. Nor do we desire to begin a new life as a nation, to live like the other peoples, thanks to those over-zealous patriots who think it is necessary to sacrifice every claim upon independent national life to their loyalty as citizens—which is, moreover, quite a matter of course. Such patriotic fanatics deny their ancient national character for the sake of any other nationality, whatever it may be, of high rank or of low rank. But they deceive no one. They do not see how gladly people would dispense with their Jewish companionship.

Thus for eighteen centuries we have lived in disgrace, without a single earnest attempt to cast it off! We know well the great history of the sufferings of our people, and we would be the last to make our forefathers responsible for it. Care for individual self-preservation necessarily nipped in the bud every national thought, every united movement. If the non-Jewish peoples, thanks to our dispersion, desire to strike in each of us the whole Jewish people, we were indeed resistant enough not to succumb as a people, but we were only too powerless to rise and carry on an active struggle in our own behalf. Under the oppression of all the hostile peoples of the world, we have lost in the course of our long exile all self-confidence, all initiative.

Moreover, the belief in a Messiah, the belief in the intervention of a higher power to bring about our political resurrection, and the religious assumption that we must bear patiently a punishment inflicted upon us by God, caused us to abandon every care for our national liberty, for our unity and independence. Consequently, we really gave up every thought of a fatherland, and did so the more willingly, the more we had to care for our material welfare. Thus we sank lower and lower. The people *without a fatherland forgot their fatherland*. Is it not high time to realize what a disgrace this state of things is to us?

Happily, affairs are now in a somewhat different position. The events of the last few years in *enlightened* Germany, in Roumania, in Hungary, and especially in Russia, have effected what the far bloodier persecutions of the Middle Ages could not effect. The national consciousness which until then had existed only in the latent state of a sterile martyrdom, burst forth under our eyes among the masses of the Russian and Roumanian Jews in the shape of an irresistible movement toward Palestine. Mistaken as this movement has been proved by its results, it testifies, nevertheless, to the correct instinct of the people, to whom it became clear that they needed a home. The severe tests which they have

endured have now produced a reaction which points to something other than fatalistic submission to a punishment inflicted by the hand of God. Even the unenlightened masses of the Russian Jews have not entirely escaped the influences of the principles of modern culture. Without renouncing Judaism and their faith, they revolted most deeply at undeserved ill-treatment, which could be inflicted with impunity only because the Russian Government regards the Jews as aliens. And the other European governments—why should they concern themselves with the citizens of a state in whose internal affairs they have no right to interfere?

Nowadays, when our brethren in a small part of the earth have caught their breath and can feel more deeply for the sufferings of their brothers; nowadays, when a number of other dependent and oppressed nationalities have been allowed to regain their independence, we, too, must not sit a moment longer with folded hands; we must not admit that we are doomed to play on in the future the hopeless role of the "Wandering Jew." This role is truly hopeless; it is enough to drive one to despair.

If an individual is unfortunate enough to see himself despised and rejected by society, no one wonders if he commits suicide. But where is the deadly weapon to give the *coup de grace* to all the Jews scattered over the face of the earth, and what hand would offer itself for the work? This destruction is neither possible nor desirable. Consequently, it is our bounden duty to devote all our remaining moral force to re-establishing ourselves as a living nation, so that we may finally assume a more fitting and dignified role.

If the basis of our reasoning is sound, if the prejudice of the human race against us rests upon anthropological and social principles, innate and ineradicable, we must look no more to the slow progress of humanity, and we must learn to recognize that as long as we lack a home of our own, such as the other nations have, we must resign forever the noble hope of becoming the equals of our fellow-men. We must recognize that before the great idea of human brotherhood will unite all the peoples of the earth, milleniums must elapse; and that meanwhile a people which is at home everywhere and nowhere, must everywhere be regarded as alien. The time has come for a sober and passionless realization of our true position. With unbiased eyes and without prejudice we must recognize in the mirror of the nations the tragi-comic figure of our people, which, with distorted countenance and maimed limbs, helps to make universal history, without having decently finished its own little history. We must

reconcile ourselves, once for all, to the idea that the other nations, by reason of their eternal, *natural* antagonism, will forever reject us. We may not shut our eyes to this natural force, which works like every other elemental force; we *must* take it into account. We may not *complain* of it; on the contrary, we are *in duty bound* to take courage, to rise, and to see to it that we do not remain forever the Cinderella, the butt of the peoples.

We are no more justified in leaving our national fortune entirely in the hands of the other peoples than we are in making them responsible for our national misfortune. The human race, and we as well, have scarcely traversed the first stage of the immeasurably long road leading to the practice of perfect humanitarianism—if that goal is ever to be reached. Therefore we must abandon the delusive idea that we are fulfilling by our dispersion a Providential mission, a mission in which no one believes, an honorable station which we, to speak frankly, would gladly resign, if the odious epithet "Jew" could only be blotted out of the memory of man.

We must seek our honor and our salvation not in illusory self-deceptions, but in the restoration of a national bond of union. Hitherto the world has not considered us as a firm of standing, and consequently we enjoyed no decent credit.

If the nationalistic endeavors of the various peoples who have risen before our eyes bore their own justification, can it still be questioned whether similar aspirations on the part of the Jews would not be justified? They play a more important part than those peoples in the life of the civilized nations, and they have deserved more from humanity; they have a past, a history, a common, unmixed descent, an indestructible vigor, an unshakable faith, and an unexampled history of suffering to show; the peoples have sinned against them more grievously than against any other nation. Is not that enough to make them capable and worthy of possessing a fatherland?

The struggle of the Jews for unity and independence as an organized nation not only possesses the inherent justification that belongs to the struggle of every oppressed people, but it is also calculated to attract the sympathy of the people to whom we are rightly or wrongly obnoxious. This struggle must be entered upon in such a spirit as to exert an irresistible pressure upon the international politics of the present, and the future will assuredly bear witness to its results.

At the very outset we must be prepared for a great outcry. The first stirrings of this struggle will doubtless be given out

by most of the Jews, who have with reason become timorous and sceptical, as the unconscious convulsions of an organism dangerously ill; and certainly the attainment and realization of the object of such endeavors will be fraught with the greatest difficulties, will perhaps be possible only after superhuman efforts. But consider that the Jews have no other way out of their desperate position; and that it would be cowardly not to take that way merely because it is long, difficult and dangerous, or because it offers only a few chances of a happy result. But "faint heart never won fair lady"—and, indeed, what have we to lose? At the worst, we shall continue to be in the future what we have been in the past, what we are too cowardly to resolve that we will be no longer: *eternally despised Jews*.

We have lately had very bitter experiences in Russia. That country has too many and too few of us; too many in the south-western provinces, in which the Jews are allowed to reside, and too few in all the others, in which they are forbidden to reside. If the Russian government, and the Russian people as well, realized that an equal distribution of the Jewish population would inure only to the benefit of the entire country, the persecutions which we have suffered would probably not have taken place. But, alas, Russia cannot and will not realize this. That is not our fault, neither is it a consequence of the low cultural status of the Russian people; we have found our bitterest opponents, indeed, in a large part of the press, which ought to be intelligent; the unfortunate situation of the Russian Jews is due, rather, purely and simply to the operation of those general forces, the consequences of the nature of humanity, which we have previously discussed. Accordingly, as it is not to be our task to improve the human race, we must see what *we*, ourselves, have to do under the circumstances.

Since conditions are and must remain such as we have described them, we shall forever continue to be what we have been and are, parasites, who are a burden to the rest of the population, and can never secure their favor. The fact that, as it seems, we can mix with the nations only in the smallest proportions, presents a further obstacle to the establishment of amicable relations. Therefore, we must see to it that the *surplus*, the unassimilable residue, is removed and elsewhere provided for. This duty can be incumbent upon no one but ourselves. If the Jews could be equally distributed among all the peoples of the earth, perhaps there would be no Jewish question. But this is not possible. Nay, more, there can be no doubt that an immigration of the Jews *en masse* into the most advanced states would be declined with emphasis.

We say this with a heavy heart; but we must admit the truth. And this admission is the more important, inasmuch as it would only be realizing the truth that we can improve our position.

Moreover, it would be very unfortunate if we were not willing to profit by those results of our experience which have practical value. The most important of these results is the constantly growing conviction that we are nowhere at home, and that we finally must have a *home*, if not a *country* of our own.

Another result of our experience is the recognition that the lamentable outcome of the emigration from Russia and Roumania is ascribable solely to the momentous fact that we were taken by it unawares; we had made no provision for the principal needs, a refuge and a systematic organization of the emigration. When thousands were seeking new homes we forgot to provide for that which no villager forgets when he desires to move—the small matter, forsooth, of a new and suitable dwelling.

If we would have a secure home, so that we may give up our endless life of wandering and rehabilitate our nation in our own eyes, and in the eyes of the world, we must above all, not dream of restoring ancient Judea. We must not attach ourselves to the place where our political life was once violently interrupted and destroyed. The goal of our present endeavors must be not the "Holy Land," but a land of our own. We need nothing but a large piece of land for our poor brothers; a piece of land which shall remain our property, from which no foreign master can expel us. Thither we shall take with us the most sacred possessions which we have saved from the shipwreck of our former fatherland, the *God-idea* and the *Bible*. It is only these which have made our old fatherland the Holy Land, and not Jerusalem or the Jordan. Perhaps the Holy Land will again become ours. If so, all the better, but *first of all*, we must determine—and this is the crucial point—what country is accessible to us, and at the same time adapted to offer the Jews of all lands who must leave their homes a secure and unquestioned refuge, capable of being made productive.

We do not fail to recognize that the attainment of this goal, which is to be the life-long object of our people, will involve the greatest difficulties, both from within and from without. More difficult than anything else will be the satisfaction of the first and most essential condition, the *national resolution*; for we are, to our sorrow, a stiff-necked people. How readily could conservative opposition, of which our history has so much to tell, nip such a resolution in the bud! If it should, then woe to our entire future!

What a difference between Past and Present! In unity and in serried ranks we once accomplished an orderly departure from Egypt, to escape from a shameful slavery, and conquer a fatherland. Now we wander as fugitives and exiles with the foot of the ruffianly boor upon our necks, death in our hearts, without a Moses for our leader, without a promise of land which we are to conquer by our own might. We are driven through the lands of all rulers: here we are escorted further with all politeness, in order that we may not introduce a plague; there fortune grants that we are provided for anywhere and anyhow, in order that we may free and unmolested—deal in old clothes, make cigarettes, or become incompetent farmers. It would be a euphemism to speak of this movement as an emigration. Ashamed and perplexed the fugitives stood on the border and looked out with their hollow eyes for help. A few barracks and a few thousand passports served, as it were, as an answer! Then a few more repatriations, another thousand bitter disillusionments, and the flood of a popular movement newly awakened to life ebbs. All becomes quiet round about, and our beneficent brothers in the West betake themselves comfortably to repose. The surging sea of yesterday is calmed, and changes into the old swamp with the old creeping things.

Thus, for centuries we have been turning around perplexedly in the enchanted circle, allowing blind fate to work its will upon us. The sorrows of thousands of years have made us only a folk of "Merciful Brethren," but have not trained up any rational healers of our ills. We continue on in the old, humdrum way seeking only for the palliative of beneficence. But we would hear nothing of taking our malady at the root, in order to effect a complete cure.

Intelligent and rich in experience, we are as short-sighted and thoughtless as children; we have had no time to reflect and ask ourselves whether this mad race, or rather this mad rout, will ever come to an end.

In the life of peoples, as in the life of individuals, there are important moments which do not often recur, and which, according as they are utilized or not utilized, exercise a decisive influence upon the future of the people as of the individual, whether for weal or for woe. We are now passing through such a moment. The consciousness of the people is awake. The great ideas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have not passed by our people without leaving a trace. We feel not only as Jews; we feel as men. As men, we, too, would fain live and be a nation like the others. And if we seriously desire that, we must

first of all extricate ourselves from the old yoke, and rise manfully to our full height. We must first of all *desire to help ourselves* . . . Only then will the help of others as well be sure to come.

But the time in which we live is adapted for decisive action not merely because of our own *inner* experience, not merely in consequence of our newly-aroused self-consciousness. The *general* history of the present day seems called to be *our* ally. In a few decades we have seen rising into new life nations which at an earlier time would not have dared to dream of a resurrection. The dawn already appears amid the darkness of traditional statesmanship. The governments are already inclining their ears—first, to be sure, in those cases in which they cannot do otherwise—to the louder and louder tones of national self-consciousness. It is true that those happy ones who attained their national independence were not Jews. They lived upon their own soil and spoke *one* language, and therein they certainly had the advantage of us.

But what if our position is more difficult? That is all the more reason why we should strain every energy to the task of ending our national misery in honorable fashion. We must go to work resolved and ready for sacrifice, and God will help us. We were always ready for sacrifice, and we did not lack resolution to hold our banner fast, even if not to hold it high. But we sailed the surging ocean of universal history *without a compass*, and such a compass must be invented. Far off, very far off, is the heaven for which our soul longs. As yet we do not even know where it is, whether in the East or in the West. For the wanderer of a thousand years, however, no way, no matter how distant, may be too long.

But how can we find that heaven without sending out an expedition? If we are once so happy as to know what we need, and if only we are resolved, we must go forward with all care and foresight, step by step, without undue haste, and we must struggle with all our strength against being diverted into by-paths. We probably lack a leader of the genius of Moses—history does not grant a people such guides repeatedly. But a clear recognition of what we need most, a recognition of the absolute necessity of a home of our own, would arouse among us a number of energetic, honorable, and distinguished friends of the people, who would undertake the leadership, and would, perhaps, be no less able than that one man to deliver us from disgrace and persecution.

What should we do first of all, how should we make a beginning? We believe that a nucleus for this beginning is already at hand; it consists in *the societies already in existence*. It is incumbent upon them, they are called and in duty bound, to lay the foundation of that lighthouse to which our eyes will turn. If they are to be equal to their new task, these societies must, of course, be completely transformed. They must convoke a *national congress*, of which they are to form the centre. If they decline this function, however, and if they think that they may not overstep the boundaries of their previous activity, they must at least form some of their number into a national institute, let us say a *directory*, which will have to supply the place of that unity which we lack, without which the success of our endeavors is unthinkable. As a representative of our national interest, this institute must be made up of the heads of our people, and it must energetically take in hand the direction of our general, national affairs. Our greatest and best forces—men of finance, of science, and of affairs, statesmen and publicists—must join hands with one accord in steering toward the common destination. This would succeed chiefly and especially in creating a secure and inviolable home for the *surplus* of those Jews who live as proletarians in the different countries and are a burden to the native citizens.

There can, of course, be no question whatever of a united emigration of of the entire people. The comparatively small number of Jews in the Occident, who constitute an insignificant percentage of the population, and for this reason, perhaps, are better situated and even to a certain extent naturalized, may in the future remain where they are. The wealthy may also remain even where the Jews are not readily tolerated. But, as we have said before, there is a certain point of saturation, beyond which their numbers may not increase, if the Jews are not to be exposed to the dangers of persecution, as in Russia, Roumania, Morocco and elsewhere. It is this surplus which, a burden to itself and to others, conjures up the evil fate of the entire people. It is now high time to create a refuge for this overplus. We must occupy ourselves with the foundation of such a lasting refuge, not with the purposeless collection of donations for pilgrims or fugitives who forsake, in their consternation, a hospitable home, to perish in the abyss of a strange and unknown land.

The first task of this national institute, which we miss so much and must unconditionally call into existence, would have to be the discovery of a territory adapted to our purpose, as far as

possible continuous in extent and of uniform character. In this respect there would probably commend themselves most highly those two lands, situated in opposite parts of the world, which have lately vied with each other for first place in creating two opposite currents in the Jewish emigration. This division was the cause of the failure of the entire movement.

Without plan, destination, or unity, as the emigration was, it would really have to be regarded as entirely unsuccessful and as having disappeared without a trace, had it not been so instructive as to what we should do and what we should leave undone in the future. With the total lack of foresight, reasonable consideration, and wise unity, it was impossible to recognize in the chaos of wandering, famishing fugitives a movement with any prospects whatever, directed toward a clearly marked goal. It was no emigration, but a portentous flight. For the poor fugitives the years 1881 and 1882 were a highway covered with wounded and corpses. And even the few who were so happy as to reach the goal of their desires, the longed-for haven, found the latter no whit better than the dangerous road. Wherever they came, people tried to get rid of them. The emigrants were soon confronted by the desperate alternative of either roaming about without shelter, without help, and without a plan in a strange land, or wandering back shamefacedly to their no less strange and loveless home-country. This emigration was for our people nothing but a new date in its martyrology. But this aimless wandering in the labyrinth of exile, to which our people has always been accustomed, does not cause them to advance a step; they rather sink deeper in the sticky morass of their wanderings. In the last emigration no sign of progress toward a better state of things is to be observed. Persecution, flight, dispersion, and a new exile—just as in the good old times. The weariness of the persecutors now allows us a little respite; will we be satisfied with it? Or will we rather use this respite to draw the proper moral from the experience accumulated, in order that we may escape the new blows which are sure to come?

It is to be hoped that we have now passed that stage in which the Jews of the Middle Ages wretchedly vegetated. The sons of modern culture among our people esteem their dignity no less highly than our oppressors do theirs. But we shall not be able successfully to defend this dignity until we stand upon our own feet. As soon as an asylum is found for our poor people, for the fugitives whom our historic and predestined fate will always create for us, we shall simultaneously rise in the opinion of the peoples. We shall forthwith cease to be surprised by such

tragic happenings as in the last few years, happenings which promise, alas, to be repeated more than once, not only in Russia, but also in other countries. We must labor actively to complete the great work of *self-liberation*. We must use all means which human intellect and human experience have devised, in order that the sacred work of national regeneration may not be left to blind chance.

The land which we are about to purchase must be productive and have a good situation, and an area sufficient to allow the settlement of several millions. The land, as national property, must be inalienable. Its selection is, of course, of the first and highest importance, and must not be left to off-hand decision or to certain preconceived sympathies or individuals, as has, alas, happened lately. This land must be uniform and continuous in extent, for it lies in the very nature of our problem that we must possess as a counterpoise to our *dispersion one single refuge*, since a *number* of refuges would again present the features of our old dispersion. Therefore, the selection of a national and permanent land, meeting all requirements, must be made with all care, and confided to one single national institute, to a commission of experts selected from our directory. Only such a supreme tribunal will be able, after thorough and comprehensive investigation, to give an opinion and decide upon *which* of the two continents and upon *which* territory in them our final choice should fall.

Only then, and not before, should the directory, together with an associated body of capitalists, as founders of a stock company later to be organized, purchase a piece of land upon which in the course of time several million Jews could settle. This piece of land might form a small territory in North America, important duty of the directory to secure the assent of the Porte, and the other Powers as neutral. It would certainly be an important duty of the directory to secure the assent of the Porte, and probably of the other European cabinets to this plan.

The land purchased would have to be divided by surveyors, under the supervision of the directory, into small parcels, which could be assigned according to the local conditions to agricultural, or building, or manufacturing purposes. Every parcel laid off thus (for agriculture, house and garden, town-hall, factory, etc.) would form a lot which would be transferred to the purchaser in accordance with his wishes.

After a complete survey and the publication of detailed maps and a comprehensive description of the land, a part of the lots would be sold to Jews for an adequate payment at a price in

exactly determined proportion to the cost-price, perhaps somewhat higher than the latter. The proceeds of the sale, together with the profits, would belong in part to the stock company, and be turned in part into a fund to be administered by the directory, for the maintenance of destitute immigrants. For the establishment of this fund the directory could also open a national subscription. It is definitely to be expected that our brethren everywhere would hail with joy such an appeal for subscriptions, that the most liberal donations would be made for such a sacred purpose.

In the title-deed given every purchaser, made out in his name, and signed by the directory and the company, the exact number of the lot upon the general map would be given, so that every one could see clearly the location of the piece of ground—field, or building lot—which he purchases as his individual property.

Assuredly, many a Jew, perhaps momentarily fettered to his old home by an occupation little to be envied, would joyfully grasp the opportunity to throw out an anchor to windward by such a deed, and to escape those sad experiences in which the immediate past is so rich.

That part of the territory which would be assigned to the directory for free distribution, in return for the national subscription mentioned, and for the financial returns to be expected, would be given to destitute but able-bodied immigrants, recommended for consideration by local committees.

As the donations to the national subscription would have to come in, not all at once, but say in annual instalments, the settlement, too, would have to be made gradually and in a fixed order.

If the experts give their opinion in favor of Palestine or Syria, this decision would have to be based on the hypothesis that the country could be transformed in time by labor and industry into a quite productive one. In this case land there would rise in price in the future.

If the decision of those selected should be in favor of North America, however, we must hasten. If one considers that in the last thirty-eight years the population of the United States of America has risen from seventeen millions to fifty millions, and that the increase in population for the next forty years will probably continue in the same proportion, we can well understand that *immediate* action is necessary, if we do not desire to eliminate *for all time* the possibility of establishing in the New World a secure refuge for our unhappy brethren.

Every one who has the slightest judgment can see at first glance that the purchase of lands in America would, because of the swift rise of that country, not be a risky undertaking, but a lucrative enterprise.

Whether this act of national self-help on our part would be a more or less productive enterprise, however, is of little importance in comparison with the great significance which such an undertaking would have for the future of our unsettled people; for our future will remain insecure and precarious so long as a radical change in our position is not made. This change cannot be brought about by the civil emancipation of the Jews in this or that state, but only by the auto-emancipation of the Jewish people as a nation, the foundation of a colonial community belonging to the Jews, which is some day to become our inalienable home, our fatherland.

There will certainly be no lack of objection to our plans. We will still be charged with reckoning without our host. What land will grant us permission to constitute a nation within its borders? At first glance, our building would appear from this standpoint to be a house of cards to divert children and wits. We think, however, that only thoughtless childhood could be diverted by the sight of shipwrecked voyagers who desire to build a little boat in order to leave an inhospitable country. We even go as far as to say that we expect, strangely enough, that those inhospitable peoples will aid us in our departure. Our "friends" will see us leave with the same pleasure with which we turn our back upon them.

Of course, the establishment of a Jewish refuge cannot come about without the support of the governments. In order to attain the latter and to insure the perpetual existence of a refuge, the creators of our national regeneration will have to proceed with patience and care. What we seek is at bottom neither new nor dangerous for anyone. Instead of the *many refuges* which we have always been accustomed to seek, we would fain have *one single refuge*, the existence of which, however, would have to be politically assured.

Let "Now or never!" be our watchword. Woe to our descendants, woe to the memory of our Jewish contemporaries, if we let this moment pass by!

We may sum up the contents of this pamphlet in the following sentences:

The Jews are not a living nation; they are everywhere aliens; therefore they are despised.

The civil and political emancipation of the Jews is not sufficient to raise them in the estimation of the peoples.

The proper, the only remedy, would be the creation of a Jewish nationality, of a people living upon its own soil, the auto-emancipation of the Jews; their emancipation as a nation among nations by the acquisition of a home of their own.

We should not persuade ourselves that humanity and enlightenment will ever be radical remedies for the malady of our people.

The lack of national self-respect and self-confidence, of political initiative and of unity, are the enemies of our national renaissance.

In order that we may not be constrained to wander from one exile to another we must have an extensive, productive place of refuge, a *rendezvous* which is our own.

The present moment is more favorable than any other for the plan unfolded.

The international Jewish question must receive a national solution. Of course, our national regeneration can only proceed slowly. *We* must take the first step. Our *descendants* must follow us in measured and not over-hasty time.

A way must be opened for the national regeneration of the Jews by a congress of Jewish notables.

No sacrifice would be too great in order to reach the goal which will assure our people's future, everywhere endangered.

The financial accomplishment of the undertaking can in the present state of the case encounter no insuperable difficulties.

Help yourselves, and God will help you!

W. J. Money
12/14/20

