

(October 30, 1933)

## Hitler Challenges Still

BY RABBI EISENDRATH.

CHAIRMAN A. R. ARSCOTT:—Gentlemen, the attendance today is very gratifying and I am sure after you have heard the address none of you will regret having taken the time to be present. It is a great pleasure to have Rabbi Eisendrath with us again today. Those of you who were fortunate enough to attend the meeting of the Club on the 10th of April this year will remember what a splendid address he gave at that time. The subject of his address on that occasion was, "Hitler's Challenge," and today, perhaps to follow up that address, Rabbi Eisendrath speaks under the title "Hitler Challenges Still." Since he was last with us, however, he has visited Germany with a view to obtaining first-hand information on the conditions there and I am sure what he has to say today will be very interesting. I have much pleasure in asking the Rabbi to address us.

RABBI EISENDRATH: — Mr. Chairman and friends, encores are always gratifying, and I am exceedingly grateful at standing once more in this place that is so frequently honored by a succession of distinguished guests. I am likewise grateful for the opportunity that you have afforded me of supplementing or correcting, upon the basis of my personal observations and study of this Summer past, whatever I may have said to you a few months ago. But I am happiest of all today just to be quite simply once again in your midst to participate in that spirit of fellowship which characterizes this gathering, so utterly impossible in most of those lands which quite happily I left behind. And if I say to you one of the greatest joys of my life has been to set foot once again upon this Canadian soil, I trust that

you will not think that I am indulging in mere idle flattery or using the mere niceties of speech. Those who know me best realize full well that all manner of Jingoism and Chauvinism is repugnant to my very soul and consequently, when I say that I thank God that I have the privilege of returning and laboring in this fair Dominion, my word should carry a conviction which is not always present in the perpetually spouting and sometimes much too superficial professional patriot.

How can it be otherwise? After living for an entire month under a dictatorship, under a tyranny, exacting uncompromising, fearful; after sharing the lives of shattered peoples, men who were once stalwart and brave and heroic, who served voluntarily during the world war, now reduced to veritable shadows of their former selves; afraid to speak except in scarcely audible whispers; walking down the streets with their heads ever behind them; after going through an experience such as that, so spiritually convulsing, so heart-breaking, so terrorizing, you can well imagine with what rapturous joy I returned to this Anglo-Saxon land where freedom does still reign and liberty of conscience and conviction is vouchsafed to all, where a man's blood or race or religion are not things to be despised.

Now just what this Anglo-Saxon freedom has meant during the entire history of minority groups, especially my own people, just what it means even to those harried souls in Germany today, can perhaps be best exemplified by a little story which I heard repeated over and over again during my sojourn in Germany. It tells of a certain Jew, rather devout, who was standing on a street corner cursing as loudly as possible, the leader, as he is called by all his followers, whereupon a friend of his overhearing his remarks, became quite terrorized, reached his side, tapped him on the shoulder, and said, "Jacob, for Goodness sakes be quiet; don't you see that Brown Shirt? The first thing you know you will be hurried off to prison and you will have reward for all your yelling."

"What is the matter?" Jacob responded.

"What is the matter? Here you are cursing the leader,

cursing this newly risen leader of the German people, whom everybody calls the Messiah, cursing Hitler with all your might, and yet you ask me what is the matter?"

"Cursing Hitler?" Jacob inquired. "Who said I was cursing Hitler? When I denounce the leader I am not cursing Hitler. I am cursing Moses, our old Jewish leader. If only he had left us in Egypt we would all have had British passports."

Now there is more truth than fiction in that little story and more tragedy than pathos, because it is with great longing that those Jews are looking forward to the day when perchance they too may be the proud possessors of British passports which mayhap will carry them to far distant Zion, made possible as a place of refuge once again by the generosity of Great Britain, or which will carry them to other lands protected by the Union Jack. And so it was quite natural that the moment I set foot upon the British Isles I found an atmosphere that was surcharged with a feeling of moral outrage and righteous indignation. I don't know when I have ever been in any land that was burning with such sense of protest. From the Archbishop of Canterbury, from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, down to the humblest clerk in the Departmental stores, Great Britain was seething with resentment against what today was the outlawry of those basic values upon which this Commonwealth of Nations has been founded.

I came in close contact with what was happening in the German Rhine, and you will remember, my friends who heard me in April last before this Club, that I expressed my own mental reservations and doubts with regard to many of the things which were reported in our press of that day. As you read my address, if you will, of that time, you will discover I said that some of the things appeared to me to be too gross an exaggeration to believe of any people. I held that belief, that will to disbelieve in my fellow-men's cruelty, as it were, until it first began to waver when I came into the British Isles, because then I met for the first time some of these hapless refugees, and the most lurid tale in print, to be short, becomes insignificant before a single syllable spoken by some unhappy soul

who has felt the lash upon his very back, and those *émigrés* pleaded with us not to proceed into the German Rhine. Some of the most prominent men in the Government of Great Britain, likewise, entreated us not to go, but I felt that out of satisfaction to my own desire to know the truth I had to go. I felt that, in the days which lie immediately before us, we of this Western world are going to be confronted with a tremendous struggle between humanity and Hitlerism,—not between humanity and Germany, mark you, because I remember that there were twenty million Germans who voted against the Nazis on March 5, 1933; twenty million Germans voted against Hitler, more than voted for him, and, consequently, those twenty million are still rebels at heart, although superficially they are coerced into line. And consequently when I speak of a struggle of humanity against Hitlerism, let us bear in mind those twenty million who voted their protest against Nazism on March 5, 1933.

But I felt in this incipient battle between those doctrines in which these Anglo-Saxon lands believe and the Dictatorship which has been established in Central Europe, we would have to know the facts. I realized men will be returning to tell us this and tell us that, to proclaim the entire propaganda as nothing but a mass of lies, and I would not run the risk of being challenged with the imputation, that inasmuch as I had not been in Germany I knew not whereof I spoke. So I proceeded, and I will admit it was with a bit of apprehension that I approached the border. And yet the examination was perfunctory and polite, and as we speeded on toward Berlin, to my surprise—I had rather pictured the skies laden and overcast—the Heavens were blue and the grass was green, the peasants were laboring in fields, there was not a cracking of guns in bloody revolution. All seemed tranquil and quiet and peaceful enough. And I might have remained in Berlin for many months and strolled through its streets, along its boulevards, and into museums and into the glorious Tiergarten and I might have returned, had I not been too observant, to report to my fellow-countrymen, that all is quiet on the Nazi front. Many of those who are report-

ing this fact and are saying they have seen no atrocities are telling the truth. They are sincere. They are earnest. They are telling the truth in so far as they have seen it. But they have not seen it in all its reality because everything is superficially quiet; in fact, it is eerily and creepily quiet.

I was in Berlin two years ago and surely it was not my imagination entirely which focussed my attention upon this strange and tomblike quiet that seemed to cover the entire city of Berlin. Surely in those days there had been loud laughter and chatter in the cafés over foaming steins of beer. The foaming steins were still there and the cafés were likewise, but somehow I missed the laughter, likewise the noisy and happy conversation. Everything seemed to be wrapped in a gnawing and almost maddening silence, and added to the silence there were the flags, the huge banners bearing the hooked cross, huge banners all over the buildings, in every departmental store window, on the motor cars and trams,—even in the smallest hamlet and town. And then there were the uniforms. Never in all my life have I seen so many uniforms. Not even in some of the more nationalistic countries of the post-war period, in Checko-Slovakia, for example, which has the largest standing army in proportion to population in the world, or in Italy—not in any of these countries, not even in our own lands in the days of the world war, have there been apparent so many uniforms. There are the Brown Shirts of the storm troops, the S.A. men. There are the Black uniforms of the S.S. men, the Pretorian Guard of Hitler; the green-grey uniforms of the Steel Helmets, and the regular standing army. There are uniformed men on every street corner, in every café, in every hotel lobby, so it seems, throughout the whole of the German Rhineland—silence, banners and uniforms.

One might very well have remained in Germany for a long time and not have been cognizant of what was going on beneath one's very nose. It was not until one entered the home and gained the confidence of some erstwhile Liberal or former Social-Democrat, of some idealistic and sensitive lover of peace, of some demurring Protestant

fighting valiantly against the perversion of the church into a national instrument of the Government, or into the home of some Catholic or some despised Jew, it was not until then that one became acquainted with the whole nightmarish reality. Now, my friends, I am not going to talk atrocities. In the first place we have just eaten luncheon and I do not want to speak about anything that is too gory and lurid. I am not going to speak about atrocities for two reasons; in the first place I believe that these atrocity stories have been substantiated by sufficient authorities for us to believe that they are true. While Canada may still have certain reservations and the United States too—because we are so far distant from the scene—when the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Great Britain, and when the statesmen of every other power on earth, speak unequivocally upon the basis of these atrocities, physical and violent, then it is time for men no longer to doubt, and to say they are not the vicious propaganda coming from one source or another.

That is one reason, but my second is more important and I will come to it in a moment. All I wish to say with regard to this subject is this, that upon the basis of reliable testimony, not the testimony merely of Jews, my friends, but the testimony of the leaders of the Church, both Protestant and Catholic, upon the authority of foreign correspondents whose word has never yet in all their experience been doubted, whose veracity is recognized throughout the world, the representatives of such papers as *The London Times*, the *Chicago Daily News*, and the Associated Press, and a host of others, upon the personal testimony of these press representatives (a better class and a more heroic and courageous group I have never met) upon the testimony furthermore of the official representatives of the great world powers, whose consulates and embassies are to be found within the German Rhineland, upon the testimony indisputable, irrefutable, of such groups as these, I am prepared to say, and I realize the significance of so dangerous a generalization, I say it only after careful deliberation, that with a few rather insignificant exceptions all that we have heard with regard to this aspect of what is happening

in Germany—I say this with utter disillusionment, with sadness gnawing at my heart—all this is true. It is all too tragically true, and I will put it in the words of one consular representative of a great world power who told me (and this I quote) that not one tenth of what is happening and has happened in Germany has yet come to light. The very worst thus far said is the very least that might be said and that some day will be said. But again I leave this subject because the worse atrocity that could be told and the worst that I heard were from the lips of official representatives of our governments, of the Allies, the worst atrocities that could be told fade into utter insignificance before that one all-encompassing atrocity which we might describe as the slashing of every economic artery of Jewish life in Germany, making it impossible for the Jew to persevere in that land where he has lived for a thousand years.

Now, my friends, this is something that admits of no refutation. Out of the mouths of the Nazi's themselves they are admitted. They admitted to American and English groups before which they spoke, before the Sherwood Eddy group, for example, composed of some of the leading college professors and presidents and preachers, they admitted it and they shocked them to the very depths when they said it was an instrument of national policy in the Nationalist Socialist regime to accomplish the humane annihilation of the Jews—humane in the sense that somehow or other it is considered to be more humane to starve a child to death rather than to batter out its brains. The humane annihilation of the Jews! Why, in the words of another Nazi official, it is said that it is not their purpose to murder or to massacre the Jews, but to make it impossible for them to live. These are their own statements and as a result they are driving the Jews out of every office of economic life with the ferocity and a consistency that beggars description. These facts, I say, cannot be denied.

But there is something I would like to ask. It was asked of me upon the conclusion of my address last April, and that is the important question: why is all this so? Admitting the fact, why has this come to pass? I want to treat first of the alleged reasons advanced by the Nazis

and then with the real reason as outlined by the most penetrating political thinkers of our time. Perhaps the foremost reason alleged by the Nazis for their persecution of the Jews is their allegation that the Jew is responsible for Communism in Germany. Now so absurd is this declaration that it hardly needs a single word in refutation, but because it is so generally believed, men believe what they want to believe, because even here in Toronto I have been fumblingly and embarrassedly asked by some of my friends whether this allegation is true. Because of this fact I would deal with it for a moment. In the first place the Communists in Germany polled six million votes in the last election. There are half a million Jews, men, women and children, in the German Rhineland. At most there can be between fifty and sixty thousand voters among that Jewish population of Germany. Now, if every single one of these potential voters voted the Communistic ticket it would still be only one per cent. of the total Communist vote.

But the absurdity of believing that the Jews as a people voted the Communist ticket is revealed by the fact that the Jew is primarily, made so by external circumstances throughout the ages, a middle man, the petty tradesman. He is the first to suffer. He was the first to suffer in Russia as an economic group when the revolution came, the revolution which made, so they thought, Russia safe for the proletariat, but unsafe for anyone who did not belong to the proletariat. The same is true in Germany. The one enemy of the great bulk of the Jewish people is Communism, first, because of their economic status, and second, because between Judaism and Communism there can be no reconciliation. Judaism and Communism are two antithetical philosophies of life. Judaism believes in God. The entire focal point of our whole Jewish destiny has been God. Judaism sanctifies every act of life, even the pettiest and seemingly most trivial, by what it calls the Sanctification of God. And Communism is atheistic, bitterly opposed to a faith like Judaism. In the second place Judaism believes in private property. Of course it surrounds private property with a host of regulations to pre-

vent monopolistic enslavement of the masses. It provides, to be sure, that no man shall hunger while another has superfluity. It tells us to be sure that a man must beware of joining house to house and field to field. But the grandest vision of the Prophets, the most Utopian dream of these seers of Zion which has pulsed through the whole of Jewish destiny, has been the vision and dream of the golden day when every man shall sit 'neath his own vine and figtree, there being none to make him afraid. Well, Communism would sweep aside this entire institution of private property.

Judaism believes in Democracy and the rights of man, in the freedom of man's will to express itself in government. Communism believes in Dictatorship, ruthless and suppressive. Judaism believes in brotherhood and peace. Communism believes in the class struggle and in fratricidal war. So between Bolshevism and Judaism there can never be reconciliation. So both as Jews and followers of the Jewish faith this accusation is made absurd. And it is made by a group that seems to forget that not Jews, but the Kaiser and his Potsdam crowd furnished Lenine, (who is not a Jew nor is Stalin), with fifty million marks in the year 1917, and a sealed car to carry him from Switzerland to Russia in order that he might overthrow the Czarist regime and help Germany win the war. The Kaiser furnished Lenine with the fifty million marks which brought Communism into Russia and presented the world with this particular threat on the Austrian frontier. There the whole libel stands revealed.

Then it is said the Jews dominated the government. Right here in our midst, I heard it advanced by a student just the other night that eighty per cent. of those who were in pivotal points in the National Government of Germany were Jews. Now in all the governments from 1918 to the present time, consisting of one hundred and fifteen ministers, only five were of Jewish origin. Then it is said that the Jews were responsible for what is called the revolution in Germany of 1918 and the establishment of the hated republic. That Republic with its hated head, which would have brought reconciliation between Germany

and the Allies, which was bringing about *rapprochement* between Germany and England particularly, would have gained by peace and conciliatory methods everything that justice demanded for Germany in time, had it not been for this defiance of today. In that Republic in which it is said some ninety per cent. were Jewish, out of four hundred and twenty-three representatives only nine were Jews by birth and only four were professing Jews. There are 2.8% as over against the 90% alleged.

Then it is said the Jewish dominate in all the professions. These statistics likewise are misleading. It is true that Jews did have a large proportion in the professions in the larger cities where the Jews were concentrated by virtue again of the environment in which they live which made them pursue certain professions. Let us remember that before the war the aristocracy, the scions of the wealthy families of Germany sought only to gain distinction in the army and in the civil service and government. And the Jew was permitted to go into these despised professions only. And now since the war and Germany's consequent disarmament these sons of the wealthy and aristocratic seek these positions which once they frowned upon. So we must remember that these statistics are taken from the crowded centres. But even then let us remember that whoever found a place in those professions gained it through admitted merit.

Such are the allegations—excuses. Domination of the press, likewise. If there was one man that dominated the press of Germany it was Hugenberg, who owned nearly the whole press and official correspondence services in the entire German Rhineland. The whole democratic press which is usually called the *Juden-Press* comprised only one-tenth of the press of Germany.

The real cause, not merely in my mind, but in the minds of men who are the best political annalists of our day, is merely this. Germany had been fed on dreams of *Der Tag*, of "The Day of Victory" and world domination. Germany had dreamed of the time when she would get her place in the sun. May I make a distinction here? The German masses consist of a people as peace-loving as

any people on earth. I am speaking only of the Prussian clique. They led their people to believe in all this. And then the ignominious defeat! How could these proud Germans have lost the war? It was utterly impossible. Someone must have stabbed them in the back. Look for a scapegoat, for the scapegoat that all generations have found conveniently at hand, and in Hitler's own words they found it. The natural hatred of the peasant for the Jew must be fanned into a fighting frenzy and fanned into a fighting frenzy it was. And this host of restrictive measures and persecutions followed.

But now I would ask you one more question. Regardless of cost, even if everything I have said today were not true—and I can assure you that it is—even if every allegation against the Jew were proven and were not merely falsehood, even then would what has followed been justified? Do we persecute those with whom we differ or whom we may regard, although ungratefully so, as not quite our kind? Is that humane? Is that Christian? It is neither humane nor Christian in such lands as ours. But apparently it is both Christian and humane in a land which has transvaluated all values and which would take the very church of Christ itself and convert it into a mere tomb of a highly nationalized and hate-infested state.

I was in Germany during those frenzied days preceding the church elections of this Summer. I was with church leaders fighting valiantly to preserve the integrity of the Christian church. I felt and I shared their fear and anxieties. One of the leading churchmen of Germany, who is no longer in the German Reichstag since the elections, but who is now on this continent, one of the chief Protestant leaders of all the German Reichstag, told me that if the Deutch Christians as the Nazi-Christians were called, had been victorious in July it might spell the doom of Protestantism in Europe because the Protestant Church in Germany is the chief Protestant Church in Europe, numbering forty millions. There are only twenty million in the whole of Europe outside Germany. And that man who is struggling heroically to save the church from being despoiled by those who would convert it into a Nordic temple, is no

longer to be regarded as leader of the church, because he possessed, as they term it, the slave feeling of Christ instead of the heroic virtues of the Nordic man, this noble spirit, struggling to preserve the Church from being perverted and becoming but the mouthpiece of the state which frowns upon peace and love and harmony and brotherhood.

Yes, Hitler may wave the palm branch to the nations of the world, but within the German Reich these facts speak for themselves. There is not a Pacifist, a peace lover, who is not in jail or in a concentration camp, or who has not been forced to flee beyond the German Rhine. Even so fine a personality as the Jane Adams of Germany, who established a settlement for the poor in Berlin, is no longer allowed within the borders of Germany. Stresemann is looked upon as a traitor today.

I do not know the exact statistics with regard to arms in Germany today. I am sure that the archives of France and Britain are filled with adequate facts. But this matter of a statistical survey of arms is not the important thing. It is the spirit that is being bred in the youth of Germany, children six years of age, marching, marching, in the tiniest villages, listening to harangues with regard to the hatred engendered in the outside world against Germany, harangues calling them to look forward to *Der Tag*, the day of revenge, in order that Germany once again will regain her colonies, when she will do away with the Polish Corridor and unite Austria to herself, when the Versailles Treaty will be completely revised. Such is the spirit being engendered in the youth of Germany today and that is what matters—terribly. Yes, Hitler challenges still. We must meet this situation with serious thought, with sane minds, yes, with patience. I do not for a moment counsel physical violence against Germany because in this critical and delicate moment Europe might again explode and carry us all to destruction. We must exert every means at our command, every sanction given us by the association of nations which we have set up since the war, and which Germany today defies, we must bring these things to bear in order that we might restore Germany, that we might return Germany, to the humble and gentle and kindly and

peace-loving German folk, the twenty million of them and more who, but a few months ago, voiced their protest against this regime, and thus restore the gaiety of Heinrich Heine and Schiller and Kant to the German masses and thus save civilization from destruction.

CHAIRMAN ARSCOTT:—Brother Eisendrath, we have enjoyed very much your most excellent address. We have seen a great many representations in the press in the past several weeks as to the conditions in Germany, but it is not possible to get the same intimate understanding of the situation from reading as from listening to an address such as has been delivered today by yourself. You have given us a very vivid word picture of the conditions in Germany and on behalf of the Canadian Club I wish to extend to you our thanks.