

Joseph Fels on Anti-Semitism

Semi-occasionally there is an outbreak of protest registered in the newspapers published in the interests of Jews all over the world. This protest seems to sweep through these newspapers as a more or less stale bit of food for discussion, and the voicing of it does next to no good, as far as I can see, because it suggests no remedy in its presentation to the world.

I would voice the fact that such a protest amounts to a little more than waste of so much good ink and paper in the publishing, and the destruction of a certain quantity of grey matter in its composition, having absolutely no effect in reducing the prejudice which is supposed to exist against the Jews, whatever the cause of that prejudice may be.

If the Jews want to eliminate prejudice and injustice, they can do so. But to succeed, they must not confine their efforts to attacking the prejudice and injustice that is directed against themselves only. Let them devote their energies to elimination of economic injustice which is oppressing and crushing Jew and Gentile alike. Let them forget or ignore their own peculiar grievances while doing this work, and they will soon find gone for ever the prejudice indiscriminately directed at them as a class.

In the ranks of those striving to abolish poverty, unreasonable prejudices die a natural death. As Henry George has well stated:

"The Gospel of Deliverance," let us not forget it; it is the gospel of love, not hate. He whom it emancipates will know neither Jew nor Gentile, nor Irishman nor Englishman, nor German nor Frenchman, nor European nor American, nor difference of color or of race, nor animosities of class or of condition. Let us set our feet on old prejudices -- let us bury the old hates. There have been "holy alliances" of kings. Let us strive for the "Holy Alliance of the people."

There are many Jews already engaged in spreading the gospel of deliverance, and all know that Henry George truly described its effects on old prejudices and hate. Complaints about prejudice and injustice come only from Jews who have failed to take part in this great work.

Now why are these Jews holding themselves aloof from this movement? In some cases the reason is lack of information, but in too many instances it is due to prejudice as unreasonable as that concerning which they make so loud a complaint. In other cases the cause is fear lest the establishment of justice cause a loss of unjust profits. These are anxious for justice only so long as it will cost them nothing. Frequently these upholders of injustice to other contribute largely to charity, endeavoring thus to give some slight remuneration to a few victims of the system they help to maintain.

It is now thirty-three years since Henry George showed in *Progress and Poverty* how the institution of land monopoly is impoverishing and oppressing the workers of all countries. He called attention to a just and simple remedy which has since become known as the *Single Tax*. Although many attempts have been made to refute his arguments, none have yet succeeded. The test of thirty-three years ought to be convincing enough to those whose desire to eliminate prejudice and injustice extends beyond the point at which these evils affect them only. If the Jews will help to put in operation the reforms that will destroy the foundation of economic injustice, they will soon find anti-Semitism a thing of the past. Such of them as decline to do so

need not complain when they realise that those who deny justice to others deserve it not for themselves.

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- Social Justice and the Jew: An Address to the Melbourne Jewish Undergraduates' Society on Sunday, 26th October, 1913, by Louis P. Jacobs.
- The Religion of Joseph Fels
- Joseph Fels on Philanthropists and Charity
- Joseph Fels on Disease
- Joseph Fels on Class Prejudice
- Joseph Fels on Anti-Semitism

Front cover:

That justice is the highest quality in the moral hierarchy I do not say; but that it is the first. That which is above justice must be based on justice, and include justice, and be reached through justice. It is not by accident that, in the Hebraic religious development which through Christianity we have inherited, the declaration, "The Lord thy God is a just God," precedes the sweeter revelation of a God of Love. Until the eternal justice is perceived, the eternal love must be hidden. As the individual must be just before he can be truly generous, so must human society be based upon justice before it can be based on benevolence. -- Henry George (Social Problems)

Inside front cover:

Signs are not wanting that the germ of the idea underlying the fuller conception of a Messianic age was in existence from the time of the founders of the race of Israel. "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed," was the promise given both to Abraham and to Isaac. It was a promise that reached far beyond the lifetime of each, farther than the limits of the temporal kingdom their descendants founded; that has obtained but partial fulfilment up to our time, and looks for fullest realization to that future towards which each of us in his measure may contribute his share. . . .

It is to my mind the loftiest idea in the whole doctrine that it is this earth which is to be the scene of a better state of things, and that through human agencies, divinely helped and guided though they be, the Messianic glories are to be achieved.

-- Rabbi Simeon Singer on "The Messianic Idea in Judaism," An Address to the Jews' College

Library Literary Society, May, 1887