

IMMIGRATION

The Rabbi was always deeply involved with the problems of immigration; not only because he had been an immigrant with personal knowledge of some of the stress involved, but because the vast wave of immigration after 1880 was creating conditions unfavorable to American Jews. Leaving Europe to escape persecution they were not easily absorbed into the American economy because of their lack of familiarity with our customs, language, and concepts. Many of these immigrants were from eastern Europe, where they had been treated as subhuman, allowed to learn only a limited number of skills, and where they felt some sense of social acceptance only among their coreligionists.

The problem of rejection at the port of entry was especially tragic for Jewish immigrants. While deportation of non-Jewish immigrants for physical disabilities meant only their return to poverty in their own lands, such a rejection of Jewish immigrants was often, in effect, a condemnation to death. As Edward Lauterbach, president of the National Liberal Immigration League explained, "They go to meet massacres and pogroms."

Rabbi Krauskopf wrote of this era, "The unwallled ghettos sprang up on American soil, more crowded than any that Europe had seen, and as filthy as the filthiest of foreign lands." In 1901 it was estimated that from 75,000 to 100,000 members of the New York City Jewish community were unable to supply themselves with the immediate necessities of life. While other national and ethnic groups formed colonies or neighborhoods, leaving them when they chose or were able,

Jewish neighborhoods ran the risk of becoming ghettos of the European pattern, from which escape in the future might be difficult or impossible.

By 1885, the Rabbi was beginning the first of a series of projects intended to help not only immigrants, but all poor Americans, regardless of race, color, creed, or national origin. In that year, in Kansas City, Missouri, he was the founder and president of the Poor Man's Free Labor Bureau, with a committee of Protestant ministers contributing both their own money and their own time to its successful operation. "Our purpose is to provide the labor-seeking poor with work. We accept no remuneration, neither from employer nor employee. . . . We mean to help the poor to help themselves." Later, in Philadelphia, he publicly declared the need for a state employment service. When the governor of Pennsylvania later appointed a State Employment Commission, the Rabbi was a member.

His interest in slum conditions led him to try, unsuccessfully, to organize a "Model Dwelling Association," a plan for the erection and operation of modern, low-rent housing developments constructed and operated by private enterprise. Twenty years later, because of this early effort, he was appointed to the executive committee of the Philadelphia Housing Commission. Because slum dwellers were so frequently victimized by purveyors of adulterated foods and subjected to the atmospheric conditions which we now recognize as industrial air pollution, the Rabbi hammered for pure food and smog-control laws, holding that "It is not an unwarranted assumption of power for the state to interfere with the food we eat and with the air we breathe" if such control is necessary for the health of its citizens.

His approach to the problems of immigration was always positive. He strongly opposed restrictive legislation which would impose nationality quotas, for such laws did not seem

humane in view of the persecution of minority groups in Europe. He believed such laws to be contrary to the American spirit, for our prosperity, strength, and great potential had been achieved by immigrants who fled oppression, persecution, or economic insecurity elsewhere. What American, himself, of immigrant ancestry, could establish such quotas without bias? Krauskopf would have had immigration liberalized:

To the Irishman and the Briton, to the Swede and to the Swiss, we would say, "You are welcome to our shores. Your sires have rendered yeoman service for the development of our country; we shall show our gratitude by affording their descendants every opportunity for becoming self-supporting and prosperous men and women. There, in the Far West, is room and food and work for all of you. Thither wend your way, pitch your tent, and God's blessing be with you."

To the poor Russian Jewish exile we would say, "Your fathers have given us all we value highest in our civilization. Our God and our Bible are theirs. Theirs the Psalms we sing and the prophets we quote. Theirs the spirit that permeates our Constitution. Theirs the message: Proclaim liberty throughout the land, that is cast upon our Independence Bell. Their Moses taught us how to break the fetters of tyranny, and how to organize a representative form of government. Their Nazarene Rabbi taught us to do to others as we would have others do to us."¹

Unfortunately for the Rabbi's humanitarian views, and in spite of his active protests, restrictions against immigration gradually increased: physical requirements became more rigid, the economic status of the individual immigrant became a more serious consideration in his admittance, and only two years after Joseph Krauskopf's death, quotas by nationality were imposed.

Much prejudice, often by sons or grandsons of earlier immigrants, against liberal immigration policies had developed because the majority of immigrants were poor. Most impoverished of all were the Jews from Russia and the Balkans. They were blamed for the increasing cost of living—it was said that they consumed food without producing any; for lowered wages, because they were willing to work for whatever wages were offered; for political corruption, because machine politicians could secure their votes with food baskets or local employment assistance; for the congestion of the cities, though most immigrants were limited in their choice of residence. Rising anti-Semitism entered the picture, though never approaching that which existed in Europe.

On March 10, 1910, during hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, the following debate ensued, clearly showing the conflict between liberalism and entrenched conservatism in the thinking of the time:

Mr. Hayes. We cannot make the United States the harbor of refuge for all the persecuted people of the world.

Mr. Bennet. You say that we do not want to make this country a harbor of refuge; it has never been anything else.

Mr. Hayes. That is the way to destruction, if you pursue it to the logical end.

Mr. Goldfogle. I think the sentiment of my colleague, Mr. Bennet, is in accord with the American spirit.

Mr. Hayes. But you cannot legislate on sentiment.

Mr. Bennet. The moment we cease to legislate on sentiment in this country we begin to retrograde. That has been the history of every country.²

Harry Golden, that astute and beloved commentator on the American scene, once wrote:

At New York's International Airport at Idlewild, the folks dedicated a plaque in honor of Emma Lazarus' famous sonnet which appears at the base of the Statue of Liberty. The mayor cut the ribbon. The New York press wrote a sentimental story, and all the Jewish papers expressed pride and appreciation.

The plaque at Idlewild (now Kennedy) Airport is as follows:

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free . . .
Send these, the homeless tempest-tost, to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

In place of "The wretched refuse of your teeming shore," they put . . . three dots. When Emma Lazarus wrote that line, "The wretched refuse of your teeming shore," she thought in terms of Czarist Russia, and of the third-class citizenship imposed on people everywhere in Europe. In addition to their political disabilities, the people of Italy, Ireland, and the Balkans were plain hungry. They were indeed "refuse." But when this "refuse" entered the "golden door," it took on new hope and eventually the vast majority became valuable citizens. This was the whole point of Emma Lazarus' sonnet. There was no need to fear a line of poetry.³

Part V

The Private Man

ON RACE RELATIONS

In 1916, the Rabbi spoke of the startling paradox that Americans, so shocked by the reported outrages and acts of brutality of the German armies in the war then raging in Europe, could yet be indifferent to the long and continuing record of outrages committed against American Negroes, citizens of the United States.

He called attention to the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution: *No state shall make or enforce any laws which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States.* . . . Yet Jim Crow laws existed in state and municipal statutes, in violation of the Constitution.

. . . *Nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.* . . . But the bloody record of over four thousand reported lynchings, for which no white men had ever been brought to trial, the surrender of prisoners to mobs, the condoning of such vigilante societies as the Ku Klux Klan, the refusal of certain states to take any corrective measures, were open violations of the Constitution.

The rights of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged. . . . But the lynching threats, economic reprisals, poll taxes, and literacy tests aimed at denying the Negro the right to vote were certainly violations of the Constitution.

We look in vain for a moral force . . . loud enough to command regard for the sacred rights of more than one-tenth of our citizenship. . . . Such an open, tolerated, unpunished violation of law may ultimately lead to disregard

of all law; for, if one part of the Constitution may be violated with impunity, what is to prevent the violation of another part if compliance with it interfere with personal interests or is opposed by passion or prejudice?¹

In that year of 1916 the Rabbi could say that more than half a century had passed since the Emancipation Proclamation, yet little had been done to provide full citizenship to the American of Negro ancestry; on the other hand, much had been done to prevent it.

He is free, but still a slave; he has been given his liberty, but suffers from tyranny still. . . . Barring honorable exceptions, where others live, he may not live; the higher pursuits that others follow, he may not follow; the cars which others ride, he may not ride; at the hotels where others stop, he may not lodge; at the restaurants where others are served, he may not eat; where others amuse themselves, he may not enter. Insult awaits him at every turn. The haunts of misery, of vice and crime, the lowest of callings, are generally the only ones open to him. . . .

The negro has been far more successful in raising himself from the degradation of slavery than has the white man in emancipating himself from the shackles of race hatred. The white man cannot, or will not, see that the root of the evil is in the white man's brain, and not in the colored man's skin.²

As Negro leaders and spokesmen have been emphasizing in recent years, the difficulty is not a "Negro problem"; it is, rather, a "white problem," for the whites reject the former slave, and his children, and his children's children, and see themselves as a superior caste.

As Caucasians, we have signally failed in dealing with the race problem. We have worked on the theory that

color determines culture and character, that civilization is the product of skin and not of brain and heart. We have forgotten that the builders of the Pyramids were of the black race, Buddha of the brown race, and Confucius of the yellow race. It is for this reason that we brutalized the red man, broke our treaty with the yellow man,* violated the rights guaranteed by the Constitution to the black man. We have been deeply concerned about other nations' wrong-doings abroad, but have little or no concern for our own wrong-doings at home. We have posed as saints in other countries, and acted as sinners at home. We have clamored for war because a few Americans came to grief for being where it would have been wise for them not to have been; we have not stirred though Americans are being done to death at home. . . .

Inequality before the law between the white and colored American must cease. Lynch law must be rooted out. . . . Having dragged the negro from his country to ours and made a slave of him, having set him free after two-and-a-half centuries of bondage, he is entitled, by all that is right and holy, to his full freedom; and to all the educational and economic advantages that may make his freedom a blessing to the white man as well as to himself.³

Can we conscientiously say, more than fifty years after the Rabbi delivered his soundly reasoned discourse, that equal rights as citizens are enjoyed by the average American Negro? Hardly. Where others live, he will find it difficult to rent or buy a home, despite legislation which says that, under certain conditions, he may. The higher pursuits which others follow he has seldom found the opportunity to enter because of segregated, substandard educational facilities, or fewer educational opportunities, or exclusion from professional socie-

* The Portsmouth Agreement of 1905 had guaranteed travel and immigration rights to the Japanese.

ties. The cars in which others ride he may now ride, but in many areas of our country he does so with fear. At the hotels where others stop he often finds that the last room has just been taken. At the restaurants where others are served he finds, at best, a grudging welcome; at worst, no admittance.

A recent governor of Georgia found it possible to be elected with no prior political experience because of the nationwide publicity he received for barring Negroes from his restaurant in defiance of a United States Supreme Court ruling.

Where others amuse themselves the black man may still find himself barred. The proprietor of a bowling alley in a small Southern town having a Negro college was recently sued by the United States Attorney General's Office for refusing admittance to Negroes. Insult still awaits the Negro at every turn, for prejudice has many faces, and centuries of insult have made him hypersensitive.

Despite the contentions of racists, both white and black, the majority of American Negroes want nothing more than the equality as citizens which our Constitution guarantees them. The Rabbi believed that remedies for this predicament lay in a reforming of attitudes rather than in legislation. There is no question that he would have approved the Civil Rights legislation enacted in the past few years; however, he saw the need for a deeper change. "The reforms we need . . . must begin in and with God." We must practice the religion we profess. If racial discrimination continues, he predicted, the sins which it perpetrates will militate against us:

We shall not escape the consequences of our injustice. God is long-suffering, but God is also just. We cannot long do evil to others, or suffer it to be done, without, in the end, suffering it ourselves. When we fasten one end of a chain around a brother's neck, the other end will inevitably fasten itself around our own.⁴

ON LABOR DISPUTES

The Rabbi believed that one of our major social problems was that which involved the settlement of disputes between labor and industry. Both labor and industry have definite, indisputable rights. Labor has the right to organize for protection of the interests of workers, to secure bargaining power in order to obtain wages attuned to living costs and decent living standards, and to seek improved working conditions involving health and safety.

Industry has an equally indisputable right to earn a fair profit on its investment, research, and management skill, which it can do only by producing a product or service of marketable quality at a competitive price.

The public, which is the beneficiary of cooperation between labor and industry, becomes the innocent victim when that cooperation collapses.

Union organizers are often unscrupulous, not genuinely concerned with the best interests of labor:

To hold on to their lucrative positions they feel, it is claimed, that they must make a show at doing things. . . . They little care whether or not they kill the [goose] that lays the golden egg. They little consider the poor laboring man upon whom a long-enduring strike bears the hardest. They little care whether, by closing to the laborer the door of industry, they open wide to him the doors of want and misery.¹

Industry tends to feel that the power of the strike "places the owner of an establishment in the attitude of being dependent

on the good will of a dictator."

The case made by labor is that, as labor is essential to the production of capital, the withholding of labor is the working-man's only means of securing acceptable living standards and a recognized bargaining position:

But for the laboring-man's combination with his fellow laborers, his lot, they claim, would still be that of the slave or serf, his wages would still be a mere pittance, his hours of labor twice as long as now, his home a hovel, his clothes rags, his degradation as base as it was in the days now happily past. . . . Having these noble ends in view, they claim, they have a perfect right to coerce the non-union man into the union. . . .²

The general public, though not directly a party in any specific strike, is often directly affected. Strikes almost invariably hurt other workers in satellite industries, whose relations with their employers may be perfectly harmonious. The consumers of products or services are also involved. Industries interrelated to the struck industry may find it impossible to continue production; layoffs or bankruptcies then militate against labor itself.

In a paper presented before the American Academy of Political and Social Science, of which he was a member, the Rabbi proposed that courts of arbitration be established in which labor-management grievances might be decided judicially. He had acted as arbitrator in several labor disputes in the clothing manufacturing industry in Philadelphia, and based many of his observations on this practical experience. His paper, after presenting an overview of the problem, ended with this proposal:

As government has provided courts for settling quarrels between man and man, so it must provide courts for arbi-

trating differences that are arising in increasing numbers, and that are bound to arise in yet larger numbers. . . . More and more the people feel that [they have the right] . . . in self-protection and for the sake of public peace, to demand that special courts be permanently established for the arbitration of industrial quarrels.³

In the nearly sixty years since the Rabbi read his paper, arbitration has played an increasingly larger role in labor-management disputes; yet, no permanent court of arbitration has emerged, no tribunal of industrial justice has evolved. It would appear that the settlement of such disputes is still in a primitive state of development, each such dispute precipitating a local, regional, or national emergency.

Neither labor nor industry is ready to accept such a form of mediation; and since they both support powerful lobbies in all our state capitals, as well as in the national capital, legislation necessary to establish labor-relations courts seem unlikely in the foreseeable future. Future generations of legislators, more concerned with the solution of the nation's problems than with their own reelection, may do well to consider Dr. Krauskopf's proposal.

ON ZIONISM

The Rabbi's stand on Zionism seems to be misunderstood by some Reform Jews today, who consider that he was an uncompromising anti-Zionist.

Zionism, before Theodore Herzl's awakening of the spirit of nationalism in European Jewry, and sympathetic response among many American Jews, was a spiritual longing for an eventual return to Palestine; it was an integral part of the ritual in the Orthodox Passover service: "Next year in Jerusalem. . . ."

Despised, persecuted, abused, deported wholesale from one hostile European country to another, denied citizenship in the countries of their birth, slaughtered in government-sponsored pogroms, slandered in literature, exploited by rulers, bearing the anathema of the Christian churches, it is hardly surprising that the soul's longing for freedom and security should have developed a group desire for a homeland of its own. The sudden growth of European nationalism after 1848, and the consolidation of the Germanic states under Prussia, spurred the development of "modern" anti-Semitism. Germany, with its obsession of racial superiority, introduced the idea that Jews are a "race," inferior to the "Teutonic race," hence a threat to the racial purity of Germany. The Russians, with an official slavophile policy, could settle for nothing less than either Christianization or extermination of its Jews.

Small and uncoordinated movements aimed at agricultural colonization in Palestine developed as a result of this new and frenzied antagonism toward Jews, but these movements had little success. Herzl's call for a Zionist Congress at Basle,