

FOREWORD

The subject to which Mr. B. Z. Goldberg has devoted the following pages is one which must not be spoken of without a great deal of caution. Indeed, there are few problems which excite so many contradictory passions. To borrow a term from the mathematicians, Mr. Goldberg's theme might be described as dangerous "to the n th degree," for it deals with two explosive elements, neither of which, in our time, is it customary to treat objectively.

The Jews? The world in general, completely unaware of the facts, speaks of them as a distinct and different people; they are charged with every conceivable sin, crushed with every conceivable sarcasm, accused of every conceivable crime. Even though this people has not deliberately set itself apart for several thousand years, the world, in order to serve the most evil causes, repeatedly and inconsistently insists that it be considered a nation, a religion, a state, a clan. If, on the contrary, certain wiser individuals try to be objective about the matter, they are taken for traitors or idiots. And mention should also be made here of those rare Semitophiles who demonstrate a reverse racism by attributing to the reputedly villainous people the most unlikely virtues.

The U.S.S.R.? Should you dare say that all is not absolutely perfect within her boundaries, you qualify immediately as an enemy of the socialist fatherland and, as such, are nominated a candidate for the next inquisition. If, on the other hand, you should, quite innocently, question aloud whether *all* aspects of this great country must be systematically condemned, you are labeled a Soviet agent. Depending on the country, this may render you liable to severe censure or even to the penalty of death, and, of course, at the very least, to the loss of your countrymen's esteem. Let me add that as circumstances alter, the same individuals will vary their reaction in order to serve the present needs of their particular cause: the highest Moscow authorities considered the author of these lines, who had not solicited the privilege, worthy of attending the trial of the pilot Francis Powers; exactly one month later he was accused of interfering with the interior affairs of the Soviet state because he had dared

to interest himself in the cultural fate of the Jews of this same state. The sum of these and many other revealing considerations confirms again the risk Mr. Goldberg has taken in attacking this double subject, of which one aspect—the Jews—is complicated, and the other—the Soviet Union—is well-nigh taboo.

Few men would be able to do this with such detachment, with such understanding of the problem. Few have so much experience with men, so many points of comparison based on the observations of a quarter of a century.

The principal merit of such an undertaking is its posing the fundamentals of a problem whose existence must not be denied. The policy of the ostrich has never led to anything good; this is true, obviously, for those who are the reason for the silence and the official denials, but it holds even more for those who proudly carry out these policies.

Well, there *is* a Jewish problem in the U.S.S.R.

To answer this elementary statement by pointing out that there is also a Jewish problem in other countries is not to answer it at all: partisans of the Soviet regime should be the first to admit that in using this supposed argument they are placing the country of their dreams on the same level with the others, although in all other areas they make the most subtle distinctions to avoid this parallel which is, in their eyes, odious.

Journalist, psychologist, reporter, with a perfect knowledge of both Russian and Yiddish, a man who refuses to be chained to ready-made or preconceived ideas, Mr. Goldberg has crossed the vast lands of the Soviet Union three times, each time being permitted total independence. As his often witty comments indicate, he was frequently astounded by Soviet efficiency; he freely praises the flawless organization of the arrangements made for him and the facilities provided for him. Refusing easy generalizations, he did not return to the country of his birth with prefabricated sentiments: neither an unconditional friend nor a sullen adversary, he has honestly followed his calling of inquirer. The real merit of the book will be that it will open discussion on a problem which otherwise would have been either completely avoided or given half-hearted treatment.

There may, furthermore, be discussion of Mr. Goldberg's outline for a solution. There will be many individuals, from all backgrounds, who will find it inadequate. Its dominant idea is, I feel, based on a deep understanding of a number of psychologies: that

"the more the Jew is integrated with his Jewishness, the more easily he will find strength to devote himself to the general cause; at peace with himself, without inner conflict, no frustration will fetter his enthusiasm." If the leaders of any state where discrimination still exists understood this (because this truth holds, I believe, for all peoples, all states, and all latitudes) they would win for their own national cause a great number of hearts and minds; in permitting the pariahs to become citizens, they would make men of them. It is hardly necessary to add that for such a measure to be fully effective it must include permission for those who find they cannot effectively reconcile their double duty to their history and their country, to leave without hindrance the latter in order to be faithful to the former.

Thus one approaches the fundamental problem, a problem belonging to all persons in all eras: that of freedom of movement for men and for goods, a topic which, naturally, Mr. Goldberg has only touched on, and which involves one of the essential rights of man.

Freedom of religion—whether religion should come to a man, or whether, on the contrary, it is the man who should go freely to the religion of his choice—is—and will be, until the final reckoning—insisted upon by those men everywhere who refuse to accept tyranny. Moreover, some progress has already been made in this direction, on which it would be unjust to keep silent. The international cooperation in this area furnishes many proofs of a solidarity which has not yet ceased to grow. The successes of UNESCO and of the technical assistance given to underdeveloped countries attest to this.

We should not underestimate the importance of the complex of moral constraints which are the only means by which the United Nations Sub-Commission for the Fight against Discriminatory Measures and for the Protection of Minorities can force refractory nations to recognize human rights. After much careful study based on objective rather than purely political ideas, this organization recently *unanimously* adopted resolutions condemning discriminations in law or *in fact* in matters of education. These resolutions have opened a gap, which can only grow larger, in the suffocating jungle of nationalism. These sentiments were reiterated at UNESCO's last general conference, where an antidiscriminatory agreement and recommendation were adopted. Discrimination, according to the definition on which they agreed, includes "any distinction, exclusion, limitation, or preference which, based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion or any other opinion, national or social

origin, economic condition, or place of birth, tends, either in its aim or in its effect, to destroy or to alter equality of treatment in matters of education."

But is culture not both the consequence and the complement of education? Does not the vote—unanimous, I repeat—of delegates from almost one hundred countries (even if some were not acting completely without ulterior motives), does this vote not foretell measures that their governments will be obliged to take in the near future, knowing that unless their preaching and their practice are in harmony they must be denounced by public opinion? Now, every nation in these times of greater and greater interdependence is aware of this, even though its form of government may leave much to be desired from the point of view of formal democracy. And that is one aspect of the facts which must not be overlooked. In this respect, a work like Mr. Goldberg's, addressed to the people even more than to their leaders, is an important element in the formation of opinions; and this is one more reason we should be thankful to him for having written it.

It is certain that in one or two centuries young people will not be able to understand how, not very long before their time, there could have been an era when men and ideas were not permitted to travel freely. These youths will judge that era as we today judge certain practices of the Middle Ages—even though we continue to feel a certain nostalgia for the era when physical force prevailed over spiritual riches, a nostalgia which still prevents us from being wholly civilized.

The work you are now going to read will have helped to combat certain prejudices, in particular and most important, that prejudice which is the most difficult to overcome: that of dutiful silence on forbidden subjects. The author's attack on hypocrisy will help men to understand themselves better, and to realize that freedom is both good and useful in every sphere, including, above all, whatever may be said to the contrary, in politics and in diplomacy.

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