

# The Position of the Jew in South Africa

## "No Such Thing as a Jewish Vote"

AT this period of annual stock-taking, a brief survey of the position of the Jews in South Africa may not be out of place.

The lot of the Jew in most lands of the diaspora is an unhappy one. The virus of anti-Semitism is permeating every sphere of life, and is being exploited to the full by political parties.

In South Africa we have, as yet, little cause to complain of the evils of anti-Semitism. While, unfortunately, it is not entirely absent, and has, on occasion, flared up, its progress has been slow and has, during the past twelve months, even been arrested. It is a tragic paradox that this arrest has not been occasioned by a more liberal spirit amongst our fellow citizens, but is the result of an unfortunate revival in racial antagonism between the two main white races of the Union. In the revival and temporary intensification of racial strife between the English and Afrikaans elements in our South African Nation the Jew is being overlooked and left alone; in fact, politically, there has recently been a tendency to extol his virtues and seek his friendship.

While welcoming this, the Jew, like every other citizen, must deplore the cause and help to eliminate it. Both as citizens and as Jews our aim must be to help to break down racialism, foster the spirit of liberalism and bring about an economic revival, especially as the lesson of Jewish history is that racialism, illiberalism and economic depression have always proved fertile soil for anti-Semitism.

By

M. KENTRIDGE M.P.

A further means of obviating the the revival or growth on anti-Semitism in South Africa is, without being guilty of any aggressiveness or conceit, to impress upon our fellow citizens the no mean part which the Jew has played, and is continuing to play in the development of South Africa. The Jews have contributed their due share to the development of South African Art, Music and Literature. In commerce the stigma of being a mere middelman, which in the past has attached to the Jew, is no longer justified.

In the development of commerce without which, the economic life of any country is incomplete, the Jew is not merely an importer and distributor of goods, but has, in recent years, become the necessary and useful intermediary between the producer and the consumer, and has helped very substantially to build up the export trade of South Africa.

### Commerce and Industry.

THE records of industry reflect the part which the Jew has played and is continuing to play in the development of the secondary industries of South Africa, many of which would have been non-existent but for Jewish energy and initiative. The records of the Trade Union Movement in South Africa reflect the fact that both in Commerce and Industry the Jew is not merely engaged in the direc-

tion but in the actual process of commerce and industry.

The contribution of the Jew to the development and establishment of Agriculture on a progressive basis is no longer in dispute. The value of and capacity for our further contribution to the progress of South Africa depends on the Jew, in South Africa, maintaining his individuality and self-respect.

### The Quota Act.

THERE is a not unreasonable fear that the illiberal provisions of the Immigration Quota Act, which was supported by an almost unanimous Parliament, must impair the individuality and self respect of South African Jewry. A recognition of this and the efforts to make friends with the Jewish people, recently evinced in all political circles, may result in amending legislation in the near future.

What may expedite such desirable legislation is the fortunate circumstance that there is no such thing as a Jewish vote in South Africa, but that Jews freely support all political parties and public men, in accordance with what they, individually, conceive to be in the best interests of South Africa.

In the meantime, South African Jewry and South Africa generally can be congratulated on the new spirit which during the year which is now drawing to a close, has stirred and is permeating our youth. This may prove to be the most important factor in maintaining and improving the position of the Jew in South Africa.

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