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“In Darkest Ghetto and the Way Out,” 1904 April 10.

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April 10th. 1904.

IN DARKEST GHETTO AND THE WAY OUT.

RUSSIA is the Egypt of Today. The pale of settlement is the Ghetto. Read Arnold Frederick's "The New Exodus" or Leo Errera's "The Russian Jews" if you wish to understand Russia and its Jewish problem. The oppressions and misery of the Jews in Russia antedate the persecutions of 1891 and of 1882. The pale is more than one-hundred years old and Czar Nicholas was called the "Second Haiman" more than fifty years ago. Alexander the Second, the Liberator Czar, the emancipator of serfs, gave the Jews new liberties and increased opportunities. Russia needed them for the development of her empire, needed Jewish skill and Jewish brains and Jewish honesty and Jewish industry. Arnold Frederick says nowhere is it suggested, even under the Liberator Czar, "that the burdens resting upon the Hebrews were lightened because it is the civilized and humane thing to do."

Alexander the Second was assassinated March the 2nd., 1881. There followed quickly riots in Elizabeth Grad; fires and looting in holy Kieff. A thousand houses and shops were plundered in Warsaw; 10,000 men and women and children, the old and the young, the sick and the strong, were expelled from Moscow with brutality unbelievable. Still Arnold White writes ~~to say~~ that it is unjust to say that the Russians are uncivilized and inhuman. Prof. Wright of Oberlin, in a recent magazine article, places Russia as a civilized and civilizing nation. He speaks of its colleges and libraries and museums. One is led to believe that Russia is a most progressive country. One might almost be persuaded to believe that it is zealous in the development of popular education. The peasant children of Russia are not at school. There is no enlightened effort to educate the people. Autocracy is far stronger among a people ignorant and superstitious as is the Russian Moujik. Jews everywhere throughout the world are zealous and eager for education and knowledge. In Russia they are limited and prohibited from free access to the schools within the pale; only 10% of the pupils may be Jews outside the pale; 5% in St. Petersburg and Moscow 3%. Within the pale sometimes the population is 50% and more, Jewish. Is Russia so civilized and so humane? No civilized, no humane government would have permitted the cruelties and brutalities of 1881 and of 1891 and the like

brutality and horrors of the 20th century at Kisheneff. The government of Russia makes the Jew a pariah legally. It creates him an alien in the land of his birth. In the old days, and at this very hour, Jews are hated, and hunted in Russia with the full consent and full knowledge of distinguished and humane and refined Russian officials. The massacre of Kisheneff was permitted although anticipated, though full warning had been given. Russia did not protect its unfortunate Jews, nor has it adequately punished those who were guilty of Kisheneff crimes. The Governor of Bessarabia and the Chief of Police of Kisheneff had full power. 7000 soldiers and men were within call. Unquestionably they were guilty. Strange is such civilization, and stranger still, such humanity. No American police or soldiers or plain citizens, with or without orders, would stand idly by and witness such brutality to defenseless women and children; no, not while strength and life were left to lift a hand in their defense. The great historian, Mownson, speaks of the Jewish persecutions in Russia as the darkest blot on the Nineteenth Century.

What hope is there for the Jews in Russia? Is the end of the pale near at hand? Unjust laws, heavy burdens and cruel oppressions and special taxes and official blackmail have been these many years and unfortunately seem destined yet to be. What is the solution of Russia's Jewish problem? The Procurator of the Holy Synod, Pobieonosteff, is credited with this solution, - One third will die of hunger and starvation; one-third will emigrate; one-third will be converted. Errera suggests four possibilities extermination, conversion, emigration, emancipation. Will and can Russia exterminate her Jews? I doubt that Russia is so inhuman that she would if she could. If she could, the world would not permit it. History teaches us that extermination seems impossible. All the Pharoahs of all the ages have not exterminated the Jews. Will the Jews of Russia become converted to Christianity and thereby become more Russian? These centuries long they have resisted sword and rack and fires and tortures of the inquisition. They have lived through poverty and shame. They will still hold fast to their Judaism. Will they emigrate? Can they emigrate? Wholesale emigration to the Argentine Republic or to any other country is Utopian. The solution of Russia's Jewish misery is neither in East Africa nor in Palestine. Hundreds of thousands have left in Russia in the past twenty-

five years, but the number of Jews in Russia seems to remain quite the same. Jews must remain in Russia.

Emancipation is the only remedy. The distinguished Russian Prince Demidoff says there is only one remedy for the situation,- an equal government for the Jews, abolition of exceptional laws and a spirit of kindness inscribed in the code which will pass from the letter of the law into daily practice. Russia needs the Jews for her industrial and commercial development. Russia needs the skill of the Jewish hand of the Jewish artisan, the power of the trained Jewish intellect, the Jewish capacity and zeal for work. The day may not be near, but it must surely come. Russia must grant to the Jews within her empire freedom to live everywhere; freedom to choose their labor, business and profession; freedom to own at least, and to cultivate the land. It may seem cruel to believe that the Jews must remain in Russia, that they cannot escape from its cruelty and its injustice. Yet thus it seems. Mownson says,- "It is a duty never to despair of poor humanity; liberty will yet come even in despotic Russia."

