

# Past and Prologue

By Judith Rice



**When is the past prologue?**

**When we think we have nothing to learn from the past.**

**William Rabinowitz**

*"Anti-Semitism, as a political issue, is dead"*

***New York Times***

**Nov.15, 1908**

**Jew-Baiter Retires**

Dr. Adolf Stocker, Formerly Kaiser's Chaplain Resigns from Reichstag

Special Cable to the New York Times

Berlin, Nov. 14 – A German politician and theologian well known in the United States as an anti-Semitic leader, Dr. Adolf Stocker, resigned his seat in the Reichstag this week, after almost twenty years continuous membership in that body. Dr. Stocker was formerly the Kaiser's private chaplain, but was dismissed in disgrace seven or eight years ago.

His decision to retire from public life is said to be due to a realization that anti-Semitism as a political issue is dead. Dr. Stocker has devoted practically all his time and energy in recent years to Jew-baiting activities.

*"A people, the same as an individual, if it would receive recognition, assistance and encouragement from the world, must make an effort to help itself, must stand for those things the world has decreed as becoming a people. Zionism is doing this."*

### **Galveston Daily News**

**May 16, 1910**

#### **Large Crowd Attended Zionist Mass Meeting**

Held Sunday Night at Orthodox Synagogue

President's Address- Other Officers of Zionist's Association Made Talks

Two Societies Organized

The Orthodox Synagogue was well filled Sunday night to hear addresses by state officials of the Texas Zionists association, who came to reorganize the Zionists of Galveston. The Houston Zionists sent a number of delegates down from the Sons and Daughters of Zion and Herzl Zionist societies.

Mr. A Mendel is president over the assembly. He first introduced Mr. L.A. Freed of San Antonio, president of the Texas Zionists Association, who made the address of the evening. Dr. Charles Blumenthal of Fort Worth also delivered an address in Yiddish. He discussed at length all details of the Zionist movement. Dr. Blumenthal's address was followed by a talk by Mr. Abe Gordon of Houston. Two societies were organized after adjournment.

President Freed's address was in part as follows:

"No intelligent Jew has ever shut his eyes to the fact or denied that we have a Jewish question in the world – a problem affecting directly the great majority of our people in other lands who suffer massacres, persecution and are denied all ordinary rights of liberty and justice. Indirectly those in other countries feel the Jewish problem in many ways for anti-Semitism constantly transplants itself from one country to another wherever the Jews go in any numbers. No Jew with pride, who himself enjoys freedom and prosperity, can be content with these conditions.

We are one people although some of us were born in Russia, some in Germany and others in America, and so long as the Jews refuse to recognize these truths and to labor with a national consciousness for the whole people just so long will the majority suffer and the minority while they may prosper be held up to scorn and contempt.

A people, the same as an individual, if it would receive recognition, assistance and encouragement from the world, must make an effort to help itself, must stand for those things the world has decreed as becoming a people. Zionism is doing this.

After all other solutions of the Jewish problem offered had been tried out and failed, the idea of a Jewish state through the immortal Herzl came into new life and the modern Zionist movement took form. Today it is the largest organization of Jews in the world and has its object the establishment of a legally assured home for Jews in Palestine. A home for those who must go from lands where they cannot live as Jews and for others who feel an attachment, for the ancient home and wish to go we are working to secure this land and to awaken the national conscience in the Jew to desire this land.

In America, while it was not necessary under our constitution and our loyalty and good citizenship had been proven in many ways yet the old German fever was taken up by the reform rabbis at the Pittsburg conference and they too cut the word "Zion" out of the prayer book. Of course they could not foresee the modern Zionist movement and while their action has not been reconsidered it is without any force and effect, since they represented a very small part of the Jewish people – principally themselves. WE have many reform rabbis – some of the most prominent ones – who are now ardent Zionists, and who have not been excommunicated. So in speaking of them, it is with the satisfaction that we have them split upon several great questions with the hope that they will finally extend to Zionism a brotherly hand.

Let us stop quibbling over definitions. We know the world knows that the Jews are a separate and distinct people wherever you go that they will continue to be so and furthermore that they are not held together and identified as Jews only by their religion since vast numbers of them are known as Jews and have no religion, or at least do not practice Judaism. Then since we are separate and distinct and have for various reasons awakened anti-Semitism in every land where we have abided for any length of time, or became lost through intermarriage, the only real honest way to assimilate, and since we are generally considered a people without a country, yet possessing all the attributes of a nation, why persist in trying to convince the world that we have to endure injustice, insult, torture, death, spiritually and physically, in order to be the light bearers, the mission workers among the nations?

Zionism has enriched the souls of the poor and oppressed, inspired the heart of the rich and the mighty. It has brought dignity to the learned and caused the ignorant and indifferent to turn and read the pages of Israel's history, and in all, through the pains of the centuries, has been born a strong generation of Jewish noblemen.

*"We are in no little danger today of paying more attention to what others are saying against us than to what we are doing for ourselves."*

## ***New Albany Evening Tribune***

**November 4, 1911**

### **Self-Conscious Battle Within Does the Most Harm to Jews**

By Rev. Dr. Stephen S. Wise, Eminent Rabbi

The dignity of Jewish life is less marred by baseless attack from without than by CEASELESS SELF CONSCIOUS BATTLE WITHIN. We are in no little danger today of paying more attention to what others are saying against us than to what we are doing for ourselves. The wrong done to us is usually curable and may be borne without permanent hurt to our souls. The only irreparable wrong which can be done to Israel is done by Israel.

Among the UNWISE DEFENDERS of Israel are such as are ever on the scent of the faintest trace of anti-Semitism, and these anti-Semitism hunters are not seldom its begetters, doing not a little to cause the prejudices which they lament and to evoke the ill will which they vainly bewail.

Not the least of the ills of an unwise defense of Israel is the circumstance that Israel's third rate and fifth rate quasi defenders are permitted to use their SPURIOUS LOYALTY to Israel a stepping stone on which to rise to higher things for their own gain and benefit.

Instead of inhibitions and denials the defenders of Israel must strike a POSITIVE, MILITANT NOTE.

The surest method of defending the people of Israel is through the medium of its own self-respect. So long as the Jew guards himself within the refuge of self-respect and even of self-reverence the world without can do but little to offend him.

Judith Rice is a board member of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation

[www.JASHP.org](http://www.JASHP.org)