

our dreams and to meditate on the course of world events, are obliged to repeat the same things over and over again at meetings, when we feel the truths dearest to us turn into commonplaces on our own lips, then we begin to long for our former world of quiet. However, it is now our duty to go on until the end. And if we succeed in getting the [Jewish] people where we want, we shall once again put the vile imagination of our opponents to shame. What personal gain will we seek there [in the State]? There our people will decide its own future in accordance with its wishes and its abilities. Without a doubt speculators and politicians will also be present—certainly no fewer and hopefully no more than elsewhere. As for ourselves, we have only one desire: to return whence we came—to our desk.

Herzl, Theodor: Zionist Writings.

Essays and Addresses: Volume 1:
January, 1896 - June, 1898. trans. by

23

Harry Zohn

MAUSCHEL*

NY: Herzl Press

1973

(Die Welt, October 15, 1897)¹

MAUSCHEL is an anti-Zionist. We have known him for a long time, and our gorge has risen whenever we looked at him, whenever life brought us near or in contact with him. But until now, along with the disgust we felt, there had always been pity; we kept looking for charitable historical explanations for the fact that he is so spineless, repressed and shabby a chap. After all, he is a fellow Jew—even though there is not the slightest reason to be proud of this kinship. We told ourselves that we would have to tolerate him; indeed, that it was our lofty task to refine him, that all of us would develop through this task, and with a kind of romantic tenderness or weakness we took an interest in him because he was a scoundrel. When *Mauschel* did something shabby, we tried to hush it up. When *Mauschel* was really vile, we reminded the world of the great men of our people. When *Mauschel* compromised all of us, we were ashamed, or we fumed in secret—but we kept silent.

But now *Mauschel* has finally done something that deserves praise, that does us honor and compensates us for many things that we had to endure on his account. He has broken with us. *Mauschel*, that was nice of you!

But we have spoken of *Mauschel* without having properly introduced him. Who is this *Mauschel*, anyway? A type, my dear friends, a figure that keeps reappearing over the ages, the

* *Mauschel*, derived from a variant of the name Moses, has been a German epithet for a haggling Jewish trader, or a Jew in general, since the 17th century, and *mauscheln* has meant "to speak German with a Yiddish accent" or to speak the garbled German of such a tradesman. An English equivalent for *Mauschel* would be "sheeny," "yid," or "kike."

hideous companion of the *Jew* and so inseparable from him that the two have always been confused with each other. A *Jew* is a human being like any other—no better and no worse, possibly intimidated and embittered by persecution, and very steadfast in suffering. *Mauschel*, on the other hand, is a distortion of human character, something unspeakably low and repugnant. Where the *Jew* feels pain or pride, *Mauschel's* face shows only miserable fright or a mocking grin. In hard times, the *Jew* stands tall, but *Mauschel* cringes even more ignominiously. When times get better, the *Jew* regards this as an admonition to be gentle, to be tolerant toward others, to work for the general welfare; *Mauschel*, on the other hand, becomes insolent and arrogant. In his much-tormented heart the *Jew* bears an unquenchable longing to attain higher levels of culture; but *Mauschel* carries on his own dirty deals behind the masks of progress and of reaction alike. The *Jew* endures poverty with dignity and trust in God; in wealth his heart opens wide to all who labor and are heavy laden,² and he voluntarily imposes a tax on his prosperity by means of large donations. In poverty *Mauschel* is a despicable *schnorrer*; in wealth he is an even more despicable show-off. The *Jew* loves art and scholarly pursuits; often and for long periods of time these were his sole comfort in the isolation forced upon him by a hostile society. *Mauschel*, on the other hand, pursues even the arts and sciences only for the sake of vulgar profit. In every period merchants and artisans of profound yet modestly concealed culture could be seen among our people; in such guises did the *Jew* appear. One of them, named Baruch Spinoza, ground lenses and viewed the world *sub specie aeternitatis* [from the aspect of eternity.] On the other hand, one could, and still can, see rabbis, writers, lawyers, and doctors who are only crafty profit-seekers; that is the mark of *Mauschel*. The *Jew* is capable either of offering determined and honest resistance to the government of his country as a matter of conviction, or declaring his support of it. But when *Mauschel* does not like those in power, he cravenly hides behind the opposi-

tion most inimical to the state and secretly incites it; on the other hand, when he fears the revolution, he hurries to get police protection, and acts as an informer. That is why the *Jew* has always despised *Mauschel*, and *Mauschel*, in return, has called him a fool. Yet these two, who at all times have been separated by a profound antipathy, have always been confused with one another. Is this not a horrible misunderstanding?

These irreconcilable, inexplicable antitheses make it seem as though at some dark moment in our history some inferior human material got into our unfortunate people and blended with it. Because within human memory we have always been the weakest of the weak, it is *Mauschel*, rather than the *Jew*, who has been regarded as the representative of our national character. Strong nations are judged by their best sons; the weak, by their worst. The Germans are a nation of poets and thinkers, because they have produced Goethe, Schiller and Kant. The French are brave and brilliant, because they brought forth Bayard³ and DuGuesclin,⁴ Montaigne,⁵ Voltaire and Rousseau. We, on the other hand, are viewed as a nation of hagglers and crooks, because *Mauschel* practices usury and speculates on the stock exchange. *Mauschel* has always supplied the pretexts under which we were attacked. *Mauschel* is the curse of the Jews. The Jews have always felt this instinctively; often good Jews may have abandoned their people and the faith of their fathers because they were unable to endure this association any longer. Thus *Mauschel* has weakened Jewry from both within and without.

But there has come a time, our own time, when even flight from religion can no longer save the *Jew* from identification with *Mauschel*. Race! As if the *Jew* and *Mauschel* were of the same race. To be sure, it was difficult to prove that they were not, and to the anti-Semites *Jew* and *Mauschel* have always seemed to be permanently, indissolubly, and irremediably linked. In such times many a *Mauschel* becomes an apostate, but a *Jew* surely does not. Then Zionism appeared,

and both the *Jew* and *Mauschel* had to take a stand on this question. And now, now for the first time, *Mauschel* has done the Jews a moral service of unexpected magnitude. *Mauschel* is leaving the fold; *Mauschel* is an anti-Zionist!

Let us not be misunderstood. We are not as fanatical or demented as some would like to depict us. We do not brand every opponent of our views and our movement as wicked. There are very noble and respectable reasons why a Jew may be unable or unwilling, for his part, to join in this national movement; but that is no reason for him to denigrate and combat it. Actually, the position of a Jew who does not wish to join the Zionist movement follows of itself: he will keep aloof from it. He is so completely assimilated to an environment which holds different religious beliefs that the fate of the Jews no longer concerns him. It may have been only decency or pride that kept him from breaking the outward bond. He is no longer interested in his former fellow Jews, and so he can be sure that they are not interested in him either. But the farther he has removed himself from Jewry, the more respectfully must he observe the stirrings of a national consciousness now alien to him. He may realize, too, that this movement will improve rather than worsen. Zionism enables him to withdraw from his former people and to attach himself to another people, with which he feels a greater kinship, without any embarrassing concessions. He is not a Zionist, but neither is he an anti-Zionist; he remains neutral, cool, alien. If he has achieved a perfect inner equilibrium, he will, as a stranger, approve of the philanthropic intentions of the Zionists and support them, as do our Christian friends of many different nations.

Mauschel, on the other hand, is an anti-Zionist, and in a noisy, irksome way. *Mauschel* mocks, scolds, slanders, and denounces, for he senses that at last his goose is cooked. He guessed this immediately and most ingeniously, even before Zionism brought all its guns into action. *Mauschel* was quick to put forward an insidious catchword against the Zionists:

namely, that they are Jewish anti-Semites. We? We, who acknowledge before all the world, without consideration for our acquired positions and our advancement, that we are Semites; we, who cherish the cultivation of our national heritage, who stand by our unfortunate brethren? But *Mauschel* figured out with lightning speed what we are: we are anti-*Mauschel*.

Mauschel has as good as come to terms with anti-Semitism. After all, in civilized countries only the honor of the Jews is being attacked. *Mauschel* shrugs his shoulders. What is honor? Who needs honor? If business is all right and one's health is good, one can live with the rest.

If worst comes to worst, *Mauschel* has his eye on distant places—not on Zion, but on some country where he might slip in with some other nation. Once he is there, he will before long play the chauvinist, give lessons in his new patriotism, and cast aspersions on all those who are not like him. In doing this he is strangely inconsistent; he breaks with the Jews, but at the same time he speaks in their name. This is why we sometimes hear serious-minded friends of our movement say, "But the Jews themselves won't hear of Zionism." The Jews? Oh no; just *Mauschel*! No true *Jew* can be an anti-Zionist; only *Mauschel* is one.

All right, let him be one. This way we get rid of him. This is one of the first and most salutary results of our movement. We shall breathe a sigh of relief when we are completely rid of these people whom we have had to view with secret embarrassment as members of our own people. They do not belong to us—but we do not belong to them either! Is it not gradually becoming clear what a sound people's movement Zionism is and that we shall reach the point where we shall purge ourselves of these shameful elements? Away with unwholesome tolerances! We no longer need to blush at *Mauschel's* machinations, we no longer have to hush them up or nervously defend them. We are fools, are we? No, we are not crazy enough to take responsibility for *Mauschel* any longer. More

than that, an enemy should be treated like an enemy. *Mauschel*, get off that pulpit which you have been misusing as a Protest Rabbil We shall not attend services again until the synagogues have been cleansed and rabbis who are good Jews may also pray on behalf of the poor. *Mauschel*, get out of all posts in which you represent the Jewish people, whom you claim you do not know! And if it is true that only the downtrodden and not the mighty cling to Zionism, then let the combined strength of the unfortunates be mustered. We will see how things will turn out when we call a boycott against *Mauschel* in every sphere.

When we formally slough off all those who oppose our national community, these rejects will be recognized as a motley crew. There is the financier who has so many skeletons in his closet* that he is afraid of an equally suspicious *Mauschel*, the blackmailing journalist, and pays him off. There is the lawyer with a clientele that moves on the periphery of the law. There is the pinko politician who currently pursues, exploits, and cheapens Socialism. There are the shady businessmen, the falsely respectable persons, the pious hypocrites, the mendacious men of honor, the resourceful exploiters . . .

Watch out, *Mauschel*! Here is a movement which, even the anti-Semites admit, is not contemptible. An emigration of unhappy people under serious economic and political threat to a permanent homeland is to be initiated under legal guarantees. Is that what you oppose, *Mauschel*? Is this what you seek perfidiously to prevent because you see in it no immediate advantage for yourself? What have you ever done for your "brethren"? You have dishonored and harmed them, and now that they want to help themselves, you try to stop them. *Mauschel*, watch out! Zionism could act as [Wilhelm] Tell did in the legend. When Tell prepared to shoot the apple from his son's head, he had a second arrow in readiness. If the first shot missed, the second was to serve for revenge. Friends, the second arrow of Zionism is meant for *Mauschel's* chest!

THE HUNT IN BOHEMIA

(*Die Welt*, November 5, 1897)¹

THE GREAT dispute in Bohemia about the language ordinances* presents the Austrian Jews in a peculiar position. They loyally follow those who were their most violent enemies yesterday, and will be again tomorrow. If the matter were not so terribly serious, it would be immensely funny. Many a nationalist Jew who has already fought his way to the recognition of his own peoplehood might perhaps laugh grimly at the spectacle of Jews clinging to the coattails of racial anti-Semites. But there would be a certain injustice in mockery and our attempt to understand the situation and mood of these Jews whose orientation is German-national will not dishonor our own convictions.

First let us class them according to their subdivisions. Among them are certainly those who are followers or fellow travelers solely for the sake of their personal advantage or their supposed security. They are wedged in, embedded like a mineral streak in an alien stratification. Even in tranquil times the surrounding majority regards them as foreign bodies. But when the national feelings of the majority are aroused, these Jews

* The population of Bohemia—which until 1918 was part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy—consisted of two nationality groups, the Czechs and the Germans, with the latter predominating in the Sudetenland region. During the latter part of the 19th century the Czechs were engaged in a bitter struggle for the recognition of their nationality group rights, primarily in such questions as local self-government and the status of Czech as an official language on a par with German. Legislation passed by Austria in April, 1897, placing Czech on an equal basis with German in Bohemia aroused violent opposition from the German element and resulted in the downfall of the Austrian government headed by Count Kasimir Badeni. Most of the Jews in Bohemia spoke German and considered themselves Germans in every respect despite the fact that Bohemia's German-National (*deutschnational*) party was essentially anti-Semitic.