

we Jews have an entirely different conception concerning the method and manner in which the Jewish question ought to be solved—and I also wish to state that the law, as it has now been formulated, and as I understand it, is even worse than the old law of Mr. Marghiloman—and that was bad enough. (The Marghiloman law was made in accordance with the Bucharest Treaty which the Germans forced upon Roumania). Our attitude toward the question has two points of view; one the Roumanian, and the other purely Jewish. Both are of the greatest importance and both demand that the question shall immediately be settled."

From the Roumanian standpoint, Dr. Filderman explained that the problem was to win the loyalty and confidence of over 700,000 Jews in the occupied regions, and that could not be accomplished, he said, unless these Jews saw that the Roumanian government was treating the 230,000 Jews in the old Roumania in a humane and friendly fashion.

Dr. Filderman then went on to present the case from the purely Jewish standpoint. First he deplored the fact that the Roumanian Jews were living in the only land in the world where there still remained a Jewish question. In France and in all the other countries, even in Russia and Bessarabia the question of naturalizing the Jewish inhabitants had been settled in a simple manner—all have become citizens. According to the laws of Russia and Bessarabia, all Jews who were born there or who resided there at the time of the commencement of the war, have become citizens without any formalities or any red tape. No exceptional laws or restrictions ought to be made against the Roumanian Jews. All those who were born in the country or who had lived there when war was declared, should be declared citizens. The only condition which would perhaps be acceptable would be that each one might be required to file a formal declaration, but no proofs of any kind. That and only that would constitute a true solution of the problem.

Mr. Filderman held that the proposed law was impracticable, and that it would be impossible to meet its requirements. The law demands that those who wish to become citizens prove by documents that they have never been citizens of any other country. "How can such a thing be proven? According to such a law, each Roumanian Jew would have to travel through the entire world, and to obtain from each government evidence that he is not its citizen, and if by chance the most insignificant little state should be overlooked—then all his would go for naught! Besides, there is no country which keeps a register of all its citizens. How is it possible to meet such a requirement?"

Mr. Buzdugan tried to argue that this condition in the decree did not require any documents which could not be obtained in Roumania itself—for instance, birth records, census reports, etc., would meet all the requirements; to this Mr. Filderman replied that even this interpretation would make it impossible for the masses of Jews to become citizens, because they would have to lose a great deal of time, and spend much money, as such papers could not be obtained without money. Moreover, such adjustments would take years—and most applicants would be dead and forgotten by the time their papers were ready.

Asserting that the decree was meant merely to cloud the issue for the Jews, and that it was not an honest attempt on the part of the government to reach a satisfactory solution of the problem, Mr. Filderman was evidently not friendly to the administration and had no confidence in it, and asked the other members of the committee, Dr. Ettinger and Dr. Mayersohn, if they had something to say. Both gentlemen replied that they were in entire agreement with Dr. Filderman.

For the space of a moment a deep stillness prevailed in the room. The ministers exchanged glances, and it could be seen from their expressions that this was not what they had expected. Finally, Premier Bratiano said in a bitter tone: "I regret that I must admit that I have entirely deceived myself. I see that you have not an iota of Roumanian sentiment. It pains me deeply." To this Dr. Mayersohn answered: "I beg your pardon, gentlemen, but we have not come here to make a display of our Roumanian sentiments or of our patriotism. The Jews and we ourselves have proven that long ago; on the battlefield where our men fell in the service of their country; at the front, where every one of us made every possible sacrifice! There we gave a reply to your wholly unjustified statement. We have come here to do something toward the solution of the Jewish question, and that we are prepared to do."

The Premier became strongly incensed at this, and said: "We cannot accept your standpoint. I see that you want to fight us. Good; we shall fight. But remember what you are doing. You will pay dearly for it."

Dr. Ettinger here interrupted with the words: "Mr. Premier: We have heard such words many times before. We are accustomed to threats. The sufferings we have had to endure in the past have hardened us. Up to now we have not lived in the Garden of Eden here, and we are not frightened at the Hell with which you threaten us. We are determined to settle our problem once for all, even if we must fight to our last drop of blood."

After remarks in the same vein by Dr. Mayersohn, Dr. Filderman again arose and said with great sadness: "Gentlemen, we Jews fought side by side with you in the war of 1877. At that time we saw that in Dobroged, which was annexed, all the Turks, Bulgars, Jews and others who lived there, were granted citizenship rights—only we remained foreigners. We who took part in the fighting in 1913 again saw how all the inhabitants of the Quadrilater (a strip of Bulgarian territory annexed by Roumanian in 1914) became citizens, and we were left out. Again we fought in the war of 1916. With the annexation of Bessarabia, Bukowina and the Hungarian provinces, all the Russian, Germans, Bulgarians, Serbs, Hungarians, Jews and all the rest became citizens. Must we still remain aliens? I cannot understand why we should always remain slaves! No one can demand this of us! We must not remain aliens in the eyes of others! We cannot be content with less than the Jews in the annexed territories have received."

Here the Premier sprung up out of his chair, walked over to the committee, looked hard at each one of them, and extending his hand said: "Gentlemen, we cannot reach an under-

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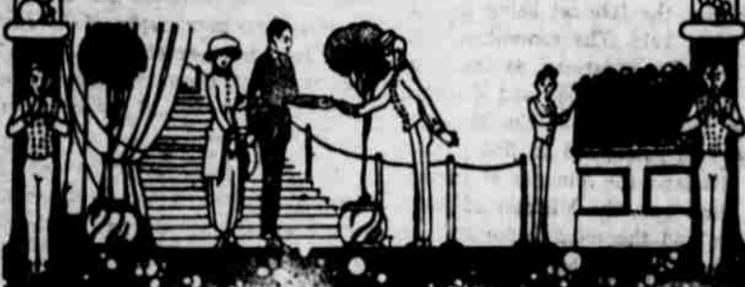
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