

NOTE: On September 10, 1919, while still serving in the Intelligence and Propaganda unit of the *Reichswehr*, Staff-Captain Karl Meyer, the unit commanding officer, asked Hitler to share his views on Jewry with another German soldier – Adolf Gemlich. Hitler replied on 16 September, 1919. This document is commonly referred to as the Gemlich Letter, and is believed to be the first time Hitler articulated his views in political form.

(September 16, 1919)

Dear Herr Gemlich,

If the threat with which Jewry faces our people has given rise to undeniable hostility on the part of a large section of our people, the cause of this hostility must be sought in the clear recognition that Jewry as such is deliberately or unwittingly having a pernicious effect on our nation, but mostly in personal intercourse, in the poor impression the Jew makes as an individual. As a result, antisemitism far too readily assumes a purely emotional character. But this is not the correct response. Antisemitism as a political movement may not and cannot be molded by emotional factors but only by recognition of the facts. Now the facts are these:

To begin with, the Jews are unquestionably a race, not a religious community. The Jew himself never describes himself as a Jewish German, a Jewish Pole or a Jewish American, but always as a German, Polish or American Jew. Jews have never adopted more than the language of the foreign nations in whose midst they live. A German who is forced to make use of the French language in France, Italian in Italy, Chinese in China does not thereby become a Frenchman, Italian, or Chinaman, nor can we call a Jew who happens to live amongst us and who is therefore forced to use the German language, a German. Neither does the Mosaic faith, however great its importance for the preservation of that race, be the sole criterion for deciding who is a Jew and who is not. There is hardly a race in the world whose members all belong to a single religion.

Through inbreeding for thousands of years, often in very small circles, the Jew has been able to preserve his race and his racial characteristics much more successfully than most of the numerous people among whom he has lived. As a result there lives amongst us a non-German, alien race, unwilling and indeed unable to shed its racial characteristics, its particular feelings, thoughts and ambitions and nevertheless enjoying the same political rights as we ourselves do. And since even the Jew's feelings are limited to the purely material realm, his thoughts and ambitions are bound to be so even more strongly. Their dance around the golden calf becomes a ruthless struggle for all the possessions that we feel deep down are not the highest and not the only ones worth striving for on this earth.

The value of an individual is no longer determined by his character or by the significance of his achievements for the community, but solely by the size of his fortune, his wealth.

The greatness of a nation is no longer measured by the sum of its moral and spiritual resources, but only by the wealth of its material possessions.

All this results in that mental attitude and that quest for money and the power to protect it which allow the Jew to become so unscrupulous in his choice of means, so merciless in their use of his own ends. In autocratic states he cringes before the 'majesty' of the princes and misuses their favors to become a leech on their people.

In democracies he vies for the favor of the masses, cringes before 'the majesty of the people', but only recognizes the majesty of money.

He saps the prince's character with Byzantine flattery; national pride and the strength of the nation with ridicule and shameless seduction to vice. His method of battle is that public opinion which is never expressed in the press but which is nonetheless managed and falsified by it. His power is the power of the money, which multiplies in his hands effortlessly and endlessly through interest, and with which he imposes a yoke upon the nation that is the more pernicious in that its glitter disguises its ultimately tragic consequences. Everything that makes the people strive for higher goals, be it religion, socialism, or democracy, is to the Jew merely a means to an end, the way to satisfy his greed and thirst for power.

The results of his works is racial tuberculosis of the nation.

And this has the following consequences: purely emotional antisemitism finds its final expression in the form of pogroms. Rational antisemitism, by contrast, must lead to a systematic and legal struggle against, and eradication of, the privileges the Jews enjoy over the other foreigners living among us (Alien Laws). Its final objective, however, must be the total removal of all Jews from our midst. Both objectives can only be achieved by a government of national strength and not one of national impotence.

The German Republic owes its birth not the united national will of our people, but to the underhand exploitation of a series of circumstances that, taken together, express themselves in a deep, universal dissatisfaction. These circumstances, however, arose independently of the political structure and are at work even today. Indeed, more so than ever before. Hence, a large part of our people recognizes that changing the structure of the state cannot in itself improve our position, but that this can only be achieved by the rebirth of the nation's moral and spiritual forces.

And this rebirth cannot be prepared by the leadership of an irresponsibly majority influence by party dogmas or by the internationalist catch-phrases and slogans of an irresponsible press, but only by determined acts on the part of nationally minded leadership with an inner sense of responsibility.

This very fact serves to deprive the Republic of the inner support of the spiritual forces any nation needs very badly. Hence the present leaders of the nation are forced to seek support from those who alone have benefited and continue to benefit from changing the form of the German state, and who for that very reason become the driving force of the Revolution -- the Jews. Disregarding the Jewish threat, which is undoubtedly recognized even by today's leaders (as various statements from prominent personalities reveal), these men are forced to accept Jewish favors to their private advantage and to repay these favors. And the repayment does not merely involve satisfying every possible Jewish demand, but above all preventing the struggle of the betrayed people against its defrauders, by sabotaging the antisemitic movement.

Yours truly,
Adolf Hitler