

Richard Gottheil

(Cont. from page 22) addressed: "Sehr geherter Herr Gottheil"; then, "Sehr geherter Herr College"; then "Mein Lieber Freund Richard." The signatures, too, var-

ied accordingly. The first were signed "Theodor Herzl"; then just "Herzl." The "mein Lieber Freund Richard" were signed "Benjamin." (Theodor Herzl's Hebrew name was Benjamin Dov.) The letters were written on different stationery — some on private, personal, others on "Die Welt," the official organ of the World Zionist Organization, others on Zionist Congress, and others on World Zionist Organization. One was on a letterhead of the "Neue Freie Presse," the newspaper on which Dr. Herzl served as a contributing editor. Undoubtedly the most valuable and lasting contribution that Professor Gottheil made to American Zionism was through his writings. He never spoke extemporaneously. His speeches, lectures and reports were carefully prepared and written out and invariably published either in a magazine or pamphlet. Thus he laid the foundation of the rich and varied American Zionist literature. In connection with the literary heritage he left behind, it is fit to cite his association with the Jewish Encyclopedia and the twenty-page essay on Zionism contained therein. One cannot adequately speak or write of that period without taking cognizance of the significance of the enterprise involved in the publishing of that twelve-volume Encyclopedia. It is no exaggeration to state that this undertaking as of that date, marks the most important cultural contribution made by American Jewry. Indeed, one will not impinge on veracity in asserting that as of today, the Jews of this country have not produced any literary work that equals, let alone surpasses this monumental undertaking. Professor Gottheil was on the Editorial Board and, except for two non-Jews, was the only one who held the post of full professor at a great university. Consequently, he was not just another member of the eight or ten who constituted the Editorial Board—he occupied a pre-eminent position. The twenty-page article on Zion-

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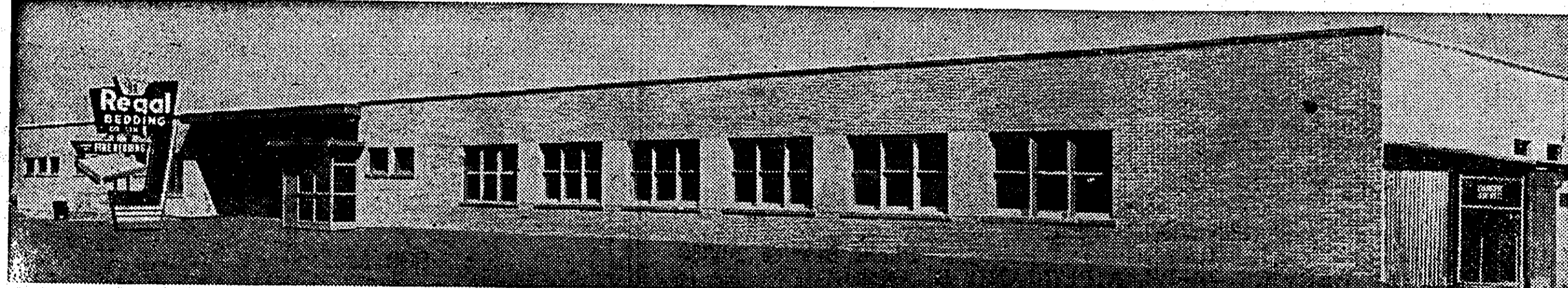
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ism was written by him. No other cause or movement is accorded that much space. The author begins by giving the Biblical basis for the Zionist ideal and its relationship to the Messianic ideal. He writes about such pioneer Zionists as the American, Mordecai Noah. He describes the aims and purposes of the Hovevei Zion. He deals with the development of the Nationalist sentiment and how this led to the early attempt at Palestine colonization. He reviews the contributions of Leo Pinsker and Moses Hess, two of the precursors of modern Zionism, and takes note of the stimulus the movement gained from George Eliot's famous historical novel, "Daniel Deronda." He explains the economic theories of Dr. Franz Oppenheimer, and the philosophy of Ahad Ha'am. After presenting all these positive elements, he submits the arguments of the opposition, their rejection of Political Zionism as an answer to and salvation of the "Jewish Problem" and calls attention to the role of the "Protest Rabbiner." He then turns to the Herzl era, as it developed following the publication of the "Judenstaat." He describes Herzl's manifold political work — the visits to the Sultan of Turkey in Constantinople; the meeting with the German Kaiser in Jerusalem; the many conferences with British diplomats — in short, a history in miniature of Herzl's astonishing diplomatic activities. Prof Gottheil also explains the composition, operations and significance of the Zionist Congresses, appearing in the foremost authoritative publication of that period! Dispersion afforded the Jewish people a Parliament of their own. He makes clear the purposes and the methods used in organizing such Zionist institutions as the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Colonial Trust. He even includes a summary of the budgets adopted during the preceding three years. In conclusion, he tells of the Zionist influence on current Jewish art and literature, singling out among others the work of Moshe Ephraim Lillien. Twenty pages of this warm, colorful account of Zionist thought, aspirations and dramatic achievements appearing in the foremost authoritative publication of that period! It is not difficult to imagine the depth of the rage and fury of the Woleseys, the Silvermans, the Philipsons and others of their ilk, when Zionism was first introduced to them. On the other hand, what this meant for a Zionist prestige and distinction. Had

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