

JEWS WHO FIGHT ZIONISM

BY MAURICE SAMUEL

AMONG the strange and tragic phenomena of our time few are more bewildering than the spectacle of Jews banded together to prevent other Jews from acquiring a National Homeland in Palestine. Were it not for the urgent practical bearings of the subject, these anti-Zionist Jews might be dismissed as a historical — and psychological — oddity. But the Jewish problem is deeply interwoven with the general problem of world stabilization. Failure to understand its peculiar rôle as an instrument of world reaction was a factor in the rise of Nazism; failure to grapple with it on statesmanlike terms tomorrow will leave uncured a dangerous centre of moral infection. And the Zionist program, the creation of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine, is urged as an integral part of the wider solution of the Jewish problem. Hence the seeming divi-

sion within Jewry must be disturbing to everyone concerned with postwar reconstruction.

The subject has just been brought prominently to the fore again by an article in *Life* (June 28) by Lessing Rosenwald, setting forth the basic objections which he and some other Jews have against the Zionist movement. Mr. Rosenwald, son of the famous mail-order merchant and philanthropist, does not himself bulk large in the American Jewish community. But his article provides a perfect case study, in that it reflects perfectly a certain type of Jewish mind, and for that reason deserves analysis.

Mr. Rosenwald sets out with a claim which calls for careful scrutiny. He writes:

Great numbers of Americans of the Jewish faith do not consider the establishment of a Jewish National State in Palestine, or elsewhere, to be part of a desirable or constructive solution

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of the postwar Jewish problems. In America this opinion is held by an organization known as the American Council for Judaism, Inc.

The following objective facts should be noted: of the thousand American-trained rabbis in this country, *i.e.*, rabbis who took their degrees in American seminaries, ninety-odd formed "the American Council for Judaism" about a year ago, and about half of them have since withdrawn. All these dissident rabbis belong to the Reform Rabbinate. But at the last annual convention of this body, held in New York in July, 1943, a resolution was passed by a large majority calling "upon our colleagues of the American Council for Judaism to terminate this organization."

In the Orthodox and Conservative wings of the American Rabbinate, constituting an overwhelming majority of the Jewish clergy, there are no anti-Zionist groups. The leading rabbis of America, like Stephen S. Wise, Louis Finkelstein, Solomon Goldman, Abba Hillel Silver, Israel Goldstein, James G. Heller, are unanimously Zionist. As to the attitude of the Jewish laity, it was expressed clearly in the recent elections to the American Jewish Conference, a democratically elected body; over 80 per cent of the delegates-elect are Zion-

ists and pro-Zionists, less than 5 per cent are openly anti-Zionists.

These are important facts. If the non-Jewish world is misled into believing that "great numbers" of American Jews are opposed to the establishment of a National Jewish State in Palestine, it will not think the project feasible or worthwhile. Despite the fears of a Jewish Homeland by men like Lessing Rosenwald, Jews are less divided on this issue than any other people in the world on any issue of major importance.

Aside from the claims of large Jewish support for the Rosenwald position, what of his arguments? These, of course, are not new. They express an attitude which emerged side by side with the emergence of the Zionist movement. They are, in fact, an almost letter-perfect repetition of the arguments which a group of English Jews used in 1917 in an effort to prevent the British Government from issuing the famous Balfour Declaration.

The parallel is instructive from many points of view. In 1917 the condition of European Jewry, though far better than it is today, was bad enough. The cry for an outlet, and for a chance to rebuild a free Jewish life in Palestine after the war, went up from millions of Jews. It was then that the British

Government, at the prompting of the Zionist movement, issued the celebrated Balfour Declaration:

His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

This statement of policy was not made unilaterally. It was the subject of long discussion between the Allies. It had the consent of the American, French and Italian governments. It was ratified unanimously in 1922 by fifty-one members of the League of Nations, and separately by the Congress of the United States. But it was regarded as a calamity by an English group of Jewish anti-Zionists.

There were not many of these Jews. But they were influential, and their opposition was fanatical. One was a member of the British cabinet — the only one in that body to fight the Balfour Declaration. Another was a member of the nobility. A third was a collateral descendant of the famous philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore. Significantly, all of them belonged to the upper crust of English

Jewry, the tiny, well-to-do, comfortably adapted fourth generation of immigrant forbears, spiritually, intellectually and socially out of touch with the great masses of suffering Jewry in Europe.

They did not want those other Jews to set up a Jewish homeland in Palestine. They were not content with disassociating themselves from the movement. They protested and they organized their opposition. But they were ignored by the British government, the League of Nations, and the vast majority of Jews.

The episode is recalled here for something more than the historic parallel. Since that time, a quarter of a century ago, the Jewish Homeland in Palestine has gone forward, under many handicaps. The Jewish population of the country grew from 58,000 to 600,000. A remarkable centre of civilization has been created in one of the world's derelict areas. Its future depends upon the benevolent assent of the United Nations. We are no longer dealing with what was, in 1917, a theoretical proposition. A great achievement, more than half a million lives within Palestine, millions more outside of Palestine, are dependent on the decision of the coming peace conference or conferences. Yet the

anti-Zionist arguments used by Jews are exactly the same in 1943 as in 1917. Let us examine them as they are set forth in *Life*.

II

Mr. Rosenwald argues that the idea of a National Jewish State is incompatible with the ethical concepts of Judaism. He adds:

Those of the Jewish faith who oppose a National Jewish State hold that it embraces the very racist theories and nationalistic philosophies that have become so prevalent in recent years, that have caused untold suffering to the world, and particularly to the Jews.

This is just a roundabout way of saying that advocacy of a Jewish Homeland is tinged with Nazism. However, there happens to be a world of difference between "racist theories" and "nationalistic philosophies." The former are pure delusions, the resort of demagoguery; the latter are ideal concepts capable of both good and evil. "The truth of history," says Mr. Rosenwald, "is that for centuries the Jews have considered themselves nationals of those countries in which they have lived." But if being nationals of the lands of their adoption is not a Nazi trait in some Jews, why should it be so in other Jews who want to be nationals in a Jewish homeland?

The second of the classic arguments against a Jewish State is presented thus: "The result must inevitably be that here in America, or for Jews elsewhere, the question of dual allegiance will be raised by men who, in critical times, lack discrimination and understanding."

From this it appears that the Jewish problem must be answered with a view to anticipating the objections of men who lack discrimination and understanding. Apparently when statesmen, past and present, of the calibre of Balfour, Wilson, Milner, Smuts and Roosevelt support the idea of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine, the answer of the Jews must be: "Thank you, but *we* must take our cue from the rabble-rousers."

This is the very ecstasy of fear. Who has ever heard that any group, people or faith shall be urged to abdicate its moral judgments *lest immoral people be provoked*? What does it matter whether the provocation exists in "critical times" or in normal times? Like all panicky proposals, this one to abandon the idea of a Jewish Homeland, to which decent people assent, in order that indecent people may be deprived of an argument, is worse than futile. Anti-Semites are not likely to desist from persecution simply because no Jewish

Homeland exists. When these timidiities were urged in 1917, the London *Times* wrote:

Only an imaginative nervousness suggests that the realization of territorial Zionism, in some form, would cause Christendom to turn round on the Jews and say, "Now you have a land of your own, go to it."

It should be noted that this "imaginative nervousness" is confined to a small group of Jews, precisely those who are furthest removed, in memory and experience, from the actual horrors of anti-Semitism.

Mr. Rosenwald goes on to voice the fear that, in supporting the creation of the Jewish Homeland in Palestine, American Jews will become involved in issues of world policy, to the detriment of their own country. The answer is that no loyal Irish-American, or Swedish-American, or even German-American, is estopped from taking a special interest in the welfare of the land of his origin. To retain a sentiment of attachment to the old country, to wish that country well, to work for its freedom and advancement, is evidence of a warm heart and a wholesome disposition. These qualities enhance a man's value as a citizen; they bespeak an attitude wholly compatible with the highest concepts of Americanism. It is enough to recall that the Jewish supporters of Zionism

have included, in this country, men of the standing of Louis D. Brandeis and Felix Frankfurter, to place the suspicion of "dual allegiance" in its right perspective.

III

A third classic argument is then raised by Mr. Rosenwald. Should a Jewish State be established, "both Palestine and Jewish residents of those European countries would be caught between the nether and the upper millstones. Migration pressures would militate against both." That is to say, the existence of a Jewish State would inspire anti-Semitic governments to press for the migration of Jews to Palestine in larger numbers than Palestine could absorb. Again one asks: has the absence of a Jewish Homeland ever deterred anti-Semitic governments from exerting pressure on their Jewish subjects? Real population pressures are not created by the knowledge that there exists an outlet. They are created by local conditions. But when the pressure is there, and is applied to Jews among others, it can be sensibly diminished if Palestine is able to siphon off a large number of Jews annually.

Mr. Rosenwald writes: "The problem of the Jew is part of the

total human problem. It must be solved as such, and it must be solved in those places where it exists." Certainly it must. The creation of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine is not a denial of the rights of Jews to be accepted as loyal citizens wherever they are, any more than the creation of the Irish Free State is an invitation to all Irish Americans to return to Eire. Mr. Rosenwald himself adds:

Many, through necessity or from their own choice, will seek to locate in other lands. It will be imperative to find adequate areas . . . where men can start life anew under conditions where they can carve out their own destinies as free men, with the assurance that their new homelands will provide for them Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

The chance to "carve out their own destinies as free men" is exactly what millions of Jews look for in the creation of a Jewish Homeland. "Palestine is capable of absorbing even more settlers, to the advantage of themselves and their Mohammedan neighbors," Mr. Rosenwald states. He should have added that this absorptive capacity was created by the Jews; that the optimum density of population for Palestine is still a long way off; that two or three million "settlers" can find room there; that, if these opportunities are used to the full, a Jewish majority would be created

in Palestine within ten years, and that a Jewish State would automatically follow.

Mr. Rosenwald will not take these logical steps. He merely says:

Palestine has made a great record. Palestine's achievement should not be wasted. Palestine should be *one* of the countries selected for resettlement. But a National Jewish State not only is not essential to such a purpose; it will be a detriment to such a service. In all probability, little if any difference of opinion exists regarding Palestine as a place of settlement. It is very likely that it is the demand for a National Jewish State in Palestine that engenders the opposition of King Ibn Saud.

This passage touches on the crux of the practical problem. The demand of the Arab politicians of Palestine, and Arabs outside of Palestine playing for their support, is *for the total cessation of Jewish immigration into Palestine*. There is no ground for saying that "in all probability little if any difference of opinion exists regarding Palestine as a place of settlement." In its policy of appeasement to the pro-Axis Arab politicians, England has, in fact, declared that after 1944 there shall be *no* Jewish immigration into Palestine. This policy may, and "in all probability" will, be reversed. But it does not help to pretend that the Arab leaders, as distinguished from Arab masses

who are benefitting by Jewish immigration, would welcome Jews in limited numbers.

"Palestine has made a great record," says Mr. Rosenwald. He means, of course, the Jewish colonization of Palestine, since the progress of the Arab population has been entirely dependent on Jewish achievement, as one sees at a glance by comparing the developing Arab life in Palestine with the static conditions in Syria, Irak and Saudi Arabia, King Ibn Saud's territory. But why has Jewish Palestine made this great record? The answer is extremely simple, though it does not figure in Mr. Rosenwald's statement, and contradicts his entire thesis. *It is because the Jews who went to Palestine were, in the vast majority of cases, moved by a deep and resolute Jewish nationalism, which carried them through one of the most grueling pioneering tasks in history.* They would not have gone there, they would not have endured the conditions they found, if they had not believed that they were the pioneers of a National Jewish Home.

But the nationalism of ~~Zionists~~ must be understood in its right historic context. It was and is a religious and Biblical phenomenon. It is saturated with the social consciousness of the Prophets. It in-

sisted upon the rebirth of the very language of the Bible — classical Hebrew. It imposed upon the *Chalutzim*, or pioneers, the incapable duty of building a just society. This blend of tradition and hope produced in the Jewish pioneers an incomparable morale, without which they would have given up the struggle.

These pioneers died, by the hundreds, of malaria, of sub-tropical diseases and of malnutrition. The survivors held out until they and the land had been transformed in a parallel process, so that even anti-Zionists can write today: "Palestine has a great record." But they would take away from the movement the springs which made that record possible!

The same lack of understanding operates here as in the theory of the appeasement of anti-Semitism. It is peculiar to a small group of Jews who do not know whence the Zionists drew their strength, just as they do not remember the obstacles they themselves have placed in the way of Zionist achievement.

IV

Mr. Rosenwald says that "between the years 1920 and the rise of Hitlerism, 1933, the Jewish population increase in Palestine (immigra-

tion less migration) was negligible." Hence, he argues, only necessity, and not a national ideal, brought Jews to Palestine. The official figures contradict the basis of the argument. In 1919 the Jewish population of Palestine was 58,000; in 1933 it was 230,000. This is a more than fourfold increase in fourteen years.

Could it have gone faster? Yes, if the rich Jews had not left the providing of funds to the middle classes and working classes. With a few notable exceptions, like Baron Edmond Rothschild of Paris and Felix Warburg of America, the small class of wealthy Jews averted their gaze from Palestine, fearing that their position in the lands of their adoption would be compromised by an interest in a Jewish Palestine. The movement suffered chronically from shortage of funds. Incredible as it must sound there are, as Mr. Rosenwald well knows, rich American Jews who will not even contribute to the general overseas relief fund called the United Jewish Appeal, because part of the money goes to the building of the National Jewish Home. More than this, the anti-Zionist Jews have never ceased to dissuade the British government (itself grown lukewarm on the proposition) from promoting the

growth of Jewish Palestine in the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. For such Jews to remark — inaccurately, be it noted — that the growth of Jewish Palestine between 1920 and 1933 was "negligible" is adding insult to injury.

The Jewish colonization of Palestine is a unique achievement of its kind. Not all the money in the world, not all the political support, could have raised the tempo of colonization beyond a certain rate. A Jewish Palestine of 58,000 inhabitants, which has to redeem new land from swamp and desert, and has to train the newcomers from the ghettos, does more than well if it doubles its population in seven years, quadruples it in fourteen. Today Jewish Palestine, with its 600,000 inhabitants, can raise the tempo of growth. It can absorb 150,000 to 200,000 newcomers annually, which is more than the rest of the world combined is likely to absorb from stricken European Jewry in the postwar years.

It is perfectly true that once the initial difficulties were overcome, Palestine attracted numbers of Jews whose Zionist sentiments were less intense than those of the pioneers, and in some cases were entirely absent. The more than 100,000 German Jews who have found refuge in Palestine since 1933 have

had reason to bless the nationalist passion of those who preceded them, even though, like Mr. Rosenwald, many of them could not share it. They have changed a great deal, as I have had occasion to notice during my many visits to the Jewish Homeland.

Something more must be said regarding Arab opposition to Jewish immigration. It flourishes among political leaders who, with every increase in the Jewish population, see their immemorial hold over the country weakening. They see the medieval, semi-feudal economy yielding to modern methods of agriculture and industry, and modern social concepts. The Nazi leanings of the principal Arab anti-Zionists, the open collaboration of the Grand Mufti (who is now in Berlin) with Hitler and Mussolini, indicate that the opposition of Arab politicians to Jewish immigration into Palestine is part of the world-wide struggle between totalitarianism and democracy.

This brings us to one of the most important aspects of the Zionist program, which links it with the world picture. The Zionist movement contemplates something more than the creation of a Jewish State

in Palestine. It is also concerned with the general postwar reconstruction, and with the creation of a centre of democracy in the Near East, which is economically, politically and ideologically, a potential centre of reaction.

In his statement of the Zionist case in *Life*, Dr. Wise reproduced the treaty made in 1919 between the Emir Feisal, the greatest Arab leader of modern times, and Dr. Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organization. The Emir Feisal dreamed of a united Arabia, and regarded a Jewish Homeland in Palestine as an asset of prime importance in the combination. Feisal was a man of imagination and courage. He foresaw a Pan-Arab Federation within which a Jewish Homeland would be the modernizing factor. His mind went back to the medieval period when Jews and Arabs cooperated in the creation of a great civilization, and he looked forward to a time when the episode would be repeated. Feisal's dream was shattered by the postwar fragmentation of the Near East. It can be revived to the mutual benefit of Jews and Arabs, and of mankind generally.



THE GREAT HINCKLEY FIRE

BY STEWART H. HOLBROOK

THERE was little of dawn about that morning in the woods of eastern Minnesota. Through the small hours blazing stumps of pine lighted up a logging road in the long swamp west of Hinckley village and gave the scene an air of peculiar and ominous beauty. These stumps and thousands more like them had smoldered unheeded through July and August, and now in September they began to blaze in a morning that had no dew or other moisture about it. The smoke haze lay heavy on the land, and oxen were heard to cough in the hovels of a score of homesteads and logging camps.

In Hinckley, metropolis of the region, it was just another smoky Saturday, the first day of September 1894. The whistle of the Brennan Lumber Company's big saw-mill said it was seven o'clock, but nothing else indicated that day had begun. It was all sort of gray-like,

neither day nor night. But men obeyed the whistle and the ten-hour drone of saws started cutting the lumber and shingles that made Hinckley an important station on two railroads between St. Paul and Duluth.

As the morning wore on, certain of Hinckley's citizens felt a sense of uneasiness. The pall of gray appeared to lift for a few moments, and everything looked as though bathed in a ghastly light of pale yellow that seemed not to be any doing of the sun. Human beings and objects looked unreal. The strange light passed and again the gray sifted down, deeper and darker this time. When the mill office clock pointed to noon, George Albricht, the bookkeeper, had a kerosene lamp going to see his figures. Falling ash dried his ink.

The noon hour came and went in a hush that men afterward said seemed complete. Not a bird gave

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