
THE OPEN FORUM



NAZIS AND THE LAW

SIR: I have just finished the article in the August issue written by S. Miles Bouton entitled "Our Mistakes in Germany," and must confess I found it infuriating. I hope that you will publish an answer from someone who can answer Mr. Bouton authoritatively. Mr. Bouton's constant comparisons to judicial practice in this country are, at least to me, out of order. The laws in this country are based on consent of the governed through their elected officials. Germany is a conquered country and is being treated far better than the Nazis ever treated any country in Europe that they overran. The general tone of the article is what annoyed me. The poor Germans, repeats Mr. Bouton, nobody understands them, they are suffering horribly. Have the conquerors installed crematoria ovens, concentration camps, and have they embarked on a policy of depopulation as did the Germans when they ruled with an iron fist? It is the opinion of news commentators that I have heard on the radio, notably Elmer Davis, that the major difficulty in the present German plight, if one does exist, is to be found in the refusal of the farmers to sell their products to those living in the cities. I know from personal experience that many people in this country send large packages of food and clothing to relatives in Germany, so they can't be so bad off. To an ex-GI, Mr. Bouton's article, which is so full of hindsight, is far from satisfactory.

M. S. TAUBMAN

New York City

SIR: That no act may be made a crime by a law passed after its commission is a fundamental principle of the jurisprudence of all civilized nations. Because it stood in the way of despotic rule, the Hitler government ordered the German

courts to disregard it. That order was denounced by the press of all free countries. It is shocking to hear an American demand that we also shall abandon the principle.

The casuistry employed to make it appear that American and Allied courts in Germany were proceeding on the basis of existing laws has been refuted by distinguished jurists, but at least there was an effort to make it appear that we still did homage to the rule. Mr. Taubman is franker — and more honest.

S. MILES BOUTON

Ashville, N. Y.

PLACE NAMES

SIR: May I draw to the attention of Mr. James W. O. Swift, who bubbled over into print with his place-name whimsies, a map of the state of Pennsylvania. [See the July "Soap Box."] There he will find a town called Husband. If Mr. Swift is still "all for facing facts," he will rejoice to find also a village called Intercourse. These are facts; in small print but definitely in the script. From there on your Jimmy will have to ad libido.

D. G. B.

Metuchen, N. J.

THE PALESTINE MESS

SIR: I have spent six years in the Middle East, North Africa, Turkey, Greece and Italy, and I am familiar with the politics of that corner of the world. I submit that William B. Ziff, whose article, "Behind the Palestine Mess," appeared in the August *MERCURY*, has victimized your magazine by selling it an article studded with the most glaring and obvious errors. He has

drawn inferences from false statements of fact, plucked quotations out of their contexts, and leaned on half truths that are bound to amuse even those persons who agree with his support of a Zionist state. . . .

Mr. Ziff's early contention that the United States has followed a blind course of backing the British Empire's interests willy-nilly under all conditions ignores the head-on clash over Palestine, only lately resolved by compromise, which very nearly ruined both the interests of Britain and the United States. It ignores such items as the *coup* of American businessmen in obtaining the prized Saudi Arabian oil concessions.

But to pass on to more specific matters. Mr. Ziff says that Farouk of Egypt seeks to restore the Caliphate — or, we presume, to be the Caliph — by deposing Ibn Saud, Abdullah and the king of Iraq. The contention is an old wives' tale never proved by any public action or utterance of Farouk. Is Mr. Ziff unaware that the Caliphate is a religious office which happened to reside with the Sultan of Turkey but survived briefly his temporal power. A new Caliph — and there is not going to be one — would have no more temporal power than the Pope, and probably less.

"Non-believers are continuously terrorized. Butcheries of Jews and Christians are common and very little different from the Russian pogroms organized in Tsarist days." The truth is this: During this century the persecution of minorities has dropped in the Arab area and except in the case of the Assyrian Christians violence has not been a Christian problem. Until Zionism began to distort thinking and to play into the hands of bigots the Jews had a peculiarly good position in the Arab world and were treated better than anywhere in Europe. During the last six years exactly four riots and incidents have resulted in the loss of Jewish lives in all the Arab League countries and Libya. Of these, riots in the Yemen, Aden and Libya were the direct result of the almost hysterical fear created in Arab breasts at the thought of a wealthy, expanding Zionist state, threatening, as they see it, the meager income with which they sustain life. The riots in Iraq during the Gailani (or Khilani) revolt were directly inspired by Nazi — German — provocateurs, and the stoning of Stephen Haas in Cairo (on which details are still lacking) may have been an anti-American rather than an anti-Jewish outburst. This is not a good record — one such incident is too many — but the riots were not caused by responsible governments in the manner which

I have always believed Russian pogroms were. The Khilani government was a purely Axis baby, quickly overthrown. The Libyan riots were condemned by all important Arabs of that country. Neither Mr. Ziff nor I is competent to discuss the details of the Yemen affair, as it is not always clear just who does constitute the government in that unhappy little feudalism. But is it fair to tar the whole Arab world?

"Americans employed by the American-Arabian oil company dare not wear European clothes," says Mr. Ziff. A cursory look at photos of oil operations there will disprove this. The company has avoided church services in a backward-bending effort to avoid offense, not to Ibn Saud, but to the fanatical Wahabbi over whom he exercises an uneasy control.

Great Britain exerts wide indirect control over the area — we will pass the parallel with Russian satellites, but the allegation that the Arab Legion contains few natives of Transjordan is utter buncombe. The personnel is overwhelmingly Arab with a few Syrians, Palestinians, and Iraqis filling out the ranks in addition to the Transjordanians.

His quotation of Lawrence against the Arabs is an old saw, often used out of context, and refuted by the life of a man who gave up all personal honors because he felt the Arabs he fought with had had a raw deal.

The next paragraph, which tries to prove that even the British regard Arab troops as unreliable, is false. Egyptian soldiers had charge of all ack-ack defense at Cairo and Alexandria. They were not used at the front for the obvious if somewhat euphemistic reason that Egypt was neutral at the time, but more pertinently because the Egyptian army was not the type of effective fighting force needed at that moment.

During World War II three prominent Arabs — the Mufti, Kawukji and Jamal Husseini were Axis agents. One good by-product of recent events in Palestine is the discrediting of all three. Must I name all the others who were not Axis agents? Azzam Pasha, Nokrashy Pasha, Abdullah, Abdul Illah, etc. The failure of the Khilani revolt in Iraq — a ten day wonder of a military *coup* — was sealed because most of the army and the Regent did not go along with Khilani and even the attempts to stir the people in revolt failed miserably. Is that the implication of Mr. Ziff's statement? The charge that Ibn Saud even thought of joining the Germans is a weird pipe dream — he got his oil royalties and some money as compensation for bases and assistance granted the Allies.

Mr. Ziff's neck is out furthest when he says that 40 per cent of Alexander's effectives in North Africa were Jewish boys from Palestine. I presume he means the Middle East and not North Africa, since the number of American troops in the other theatre would have reduced the British army to something less than zero and have wafted the Free French into thin air.

The Eighth Army had attached to it a Palestinian Pioneer Corps which was a mixed Jewish and Arab outfit, with the Jews generally in the majority. It did not fight but did very good work as a sort of engineer unit. The number of persons in this very valuable outfit was not great — I have to estimate it now, but I should judge 15,000. Out of half a million fighting and non-fighting Allied personnel under Alexander and a fighting force approaching 100,000 this does not constitute a basis for Mr. Ziff's statement.

Many Jews, chiefly British and French citizens from various parts of the Middle East, including Palestine, volunteered and served in the regular British and Free French forces. Jewish girls (and a few Arabs) joined the WAAFs and the ATS. However the total involved in the British forces would not have touched 1 per cent, and I would estimate 20 per cent in the Free French. Recruiting did not go well in Palestine due to an understandable difference between the British command and the Jewish Agency. The latter wanted an all-Jewish outfit with its own officers — the British, fearing that the unit might one day be used for other purposes, at first refused. In the final stages of the Italian campaign the Jewish Brigade at last became a reality and did very well indeed.

The Jews did good work in many, many ways in the last war and there is no ground for criticism — but does such an obvious falsehood aid their case?

This could be wearying, but bear with me while I quickly touch on one or two of the more obvious mistakes.

The entire discussion of the strategic factors ignores what I supposed every newspaper reader knew by now — that the main British defense line is now the central Africa line from Accra to the Sudan; hence the frantic British efforts to keep the Sudan. Mr. Ziff also ignores the terrain of Greece and North Italy which makes both good defense bets for a nation with predominant airpower, and the almost total lack of roads in Turkey, south Russia, Iraq and Persia, a factor which, when combined with poor Russian transport might make it possible for an army to hold out against a southward Communist thrust

despite dependence on sea transport. The Germans, faced with a similar and seemingly much easier problem in Africa never quite made the grade although the Allies had only long sea routes as a means of supply.

Mr. Ziff neatly ignores the dependence of the Marshall Plan on Middle-East oil; the plan has to work this year and the next, not at some future date when, having expended all our own oil reserves, we turn to production from oil shale.

He grants Russia some very fine motives in its Palestine stand, perhaps forgetting that almost every Middle-East expert predicted that Partition would cause war and trouble and that Russia thrives on war, trouble and unrest. He seems unaware that the present governments of the Arab League lands are chiefly moderate groups sitting, not on the peasants, who are yet politically quiescent, but on the very extreme nationalist groups which we all deplore. Revolution in the Middle East will bring reaction, not reform.

What Arabo-British policy has to do with Armenians is not made clear. Most Armenians today reside either in the USSR or Turkey. Those in the Middle-East Arab lands came as refugees from Turkish massacres and have been given homes and a chance at livelihood through a mixture of Arab hospitality and American charitable effort. The Soviet Union has certainly sold the Armenians a bill of goods, but that is rather beside the point of Mr. Ziff's article.

Civil liberties are not what they might be in many Arab lands, but those that contain "intellectuals and leaders" (we presume he means other than tribal leaders) have allowed a steadily increasing amount of political and intellectual freedom. Punishments, when meted out, have been mild, and nobody has been "butchered and brutalized."

Before I write an article of my own or get involved in protests against the highly exaggerated and often completely inaccurate statements on British policy, I'm going to stop. . . .

GRANT PARR

New York City

SIR: Taking Mr. Parr's allegations in order, the head-on clash between the United States and the British Empire is a glib propaganda generality which as far as I am aware is borne out by no details. That various members of the Congress of the United States and others have not been able to stomach some of the more brazen acts of the British government and have compelled

the Anglophiles in the American State Department into some degree of caution in their all-out backing of British maneuvers, is true. But if this is the "head-on clash" to which Mr. Parr refers, I scarcely see how it "nearly ruined both the interests of Britain and the United States."

As to the ambitions of Farouk of Egypt, these are well known to any student of the Middle East. To say that they have not been proved by any public utterance of Farouk himself is exactly the same as to say that Mr. Stalin has never admitted his plan for conquering the entire world. However no sound man doubts Mr. Stalin's ambitions. Mr. Parr seems unaware of the nature of theocratic government in the Middle East when he states that the Caliphate is only a religious office. Moslem religious and civil law represent a common pattern of view. As practiced in Arabia, Moslemism is not only a religion but an exclusive way of life.

Mr. Parr's disclaimer of any terrorization of Jews and Christians in Arab countries is amazing, though he does admit that there was some violence to the Assyrian Christians. As it happens, the Assyrians are the only large Christian minority in Iraq. Taking Iraq as an example, since it is supposed to be the most modern of these countries, I point out that the great Assyrian writer, Yusuf Malek, in his book, *The British Betrayal of the Assyrians*, gives a bitter account of what happens to a Christian minority in Iraq. In 1933 there was a mass pogrom in which in the town of Sinel alone 4000 Assyrians were butchered by the Iraqi army after having first been disarmed by the British. That this situation still holds today is made very clear in the agonized petitions which are being currently sent to the United Nations by Assyrian leaders pointing out that their people throughout the Moslem countries, including Iraq, are being regularly terrorized, degraded and slaughtered.

The same is true in regard to the Armenians, for whom life has become so hopeless that during recent years they have looked to Russia for rescue and are moving en masse to Russian territory. If further authority be needed to verify this point, there is the strongest possible statement made by Archbishop Ignace Moubar, religious head of the Lebanese Christians, who told the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry on Palestine that the Lebanese Christians were in constant danger from their intolerant neighbors, and that the very survival of Christian Lebanon depended upon the existence of an Israel with whom they could be allied against the continuous threat of the Sword of Islam. The Archbishop, incidentally,

is an exile in Rome as a result of his stand, a type of intimidation which has extended to the head of the Nestorian Church, the Mar Eshai Shimun, who is in exile in the United States and is forbidden to set foot in Iraq even for the purpose of consecrating his bishops. As for the Jews, butcheries have been common in all of the Arab countries. In many of them like Yemen and Saudi Arabia, they possess no human rights whatsoever and are at the mercy of every passing ruffian. In Iraq during World War II after Baghdad had been reconquered from its pro-Axis rulers, a horrible massacre of Jews took place under the eyes of the British, who made no move to interfere. At least 400 were known to have been killed and their possessions sacked. The excuse was that the Jews had been pro-Ally.

If any further need be said on the subject of terrorization of minorities, the records of the old League of Nations and the present United Nations are replete with information. The *Shia* Moslems who perhaps are the majority Moslems of Iraq, regularly sent protests and petitions to the League referring to their Sunnite rulers as "savages whom Britain has imported from the desert to terrorize us."

As for the statement I made in reference to the religious life of Americans in Saudi Arabia, I should like to quote Dr. Carl Voss, extension secretary of the Church Peace Union, writing a few months ago in the *Churchman*. "There is no church of any kind in the Aramco community," states Dr. Voss. "It is feared that any outward show of Christian faith might offend Arab sensibilities. . . ."

The charge that I have quoted Lawrence out of context is fantastic to those actually familiar with Lawrence's work. No one who has read Lawrence can fail to be aware of the fact that he was completely contemptuous of the Arabs as a fighting force. Again and again, he makes it clear that the few thousand who fought in World War I, did so for gold and loot and nothing else. He states that whenever there was a head-on fight his Arab allies invariably vanished into thin air. The British author, C. S. Jarvis, in his book, *Three Deserts*, moreover quotes Colonel Wilson, Lawrence's associate and the British representative at King Hussein's Court, as referring to the Arab forces as "a cowardly and undisciplined rabble," a view which Lawrence nowhere disputes.

Mr. Parr seems to argue somehow that the Transjordan force is not a British force but a real Transjordanian Arab force, in short, that this little, poverty-stricken nation of 300,000 nomads

is capable of putting a modern, mechanized army in the field. Need I remind him that the officer who led the Arab assault on Jerusalem was Brigadier Lash, an English officer. Lash's chief was Major General Glubb, also a British officer. Recent statements by captured Legion members are all to the effect that they were forced into battle "by their British officers."

Need it be mentioned also that when Israeli planes raided Transjordan's capitol, Amman, in retaliation for Abdullah's invasion of Israel, the British promptly notified Israel that Amman was a British stronghold and that if any further raids occurred all Israeli planes would be shot out of the sky by the RAF!

The remark that Egyptian soldiers were not used at the front, despite the fact that Egypt had been invaded by the Germans and Italians, because "Egypt was neutral at the time," is difficult for me to understand. So is the observation that "the Egyptian Army was not the type of effective fighting force needed at the moment." Just what rôle are Egyptians supposed to play when their homeland is invaded unless they are in the mood to consider the invaders as "rescuers," which happens to have been the fact. Egypt, together with all of the Moslem states in the Near and Middle East, was strongly pro-Axis during the war. John Gunther tells us in his book, *Inside Asia*, that the cry, "Heil Hitler!" was a common greeting among the Arabs.

As for the great rôle played by the Jewish boys from Palestine, which Mr. Parr plays down, it is merely necessary to refer to Mr. Van Paassen's book, *The Forgotten Ally*, in which a full expression of Israel's contribution is recited.

Mr. Parr's optimism in reference to Greece and Northern Italy as providing good defense bets for a nation with predominant air power is completely unsound. I know of no competent military man who would agree with his estimate. As for the Marshall Plan dependence on Middle Eastern oil, I believe I covered this in my article, mentioning what Mr. Parr ignores, that Middle East oil can be purchased anyway on the open market in peacetime, whereas in wartime it is more than doubtful that these installations can be successfully defended against the first headlong rush of Russian advance. It is pure fiction to imagine in any event that this oil is controlled by the Arab states. Its control is vested in British and American finance and in British warplanes, which guarantee its production and delivery short of a world war. . . .

WILLIAM B. ZIFF

Chicago, Ill.

POE AND VIRGINIA

SIR: William Hines and Edward Cottrell, the authors of the article on "The University of Virginia," which appeared in the August *MERCURY*, twice misspelled the middle name of Edgar Allan Poe, one of the most familiar names in American letters. One of the authors was designated in your biographical note as a copy editor for the Department of the Army. It looks as if the Army and the *MERCURY* are both in a bad way for copy editors.

Otherwise the article was delightful reading, though I am left in doubt as to how seriously the authors take the Virginia gentleman and his "honor system." No picture could be more fantastic than the one given.

W. B. PHILLIPS

Mt. Rainier, Md.

SIR: In transmitting Mr. Phillips' letter you stated, "I am afraid to look at the issue, for fear the complaint of Mr. Phillips might be a sound one. If we really did misspell Poe's name, all of us ought to duck our heads in the Potomac for 35 minutes."

We checked, and found Mr. Phillips to be right. Inasmuch as we can't even plead ignorance, we consider your suggestion most reasonable. Might we suggest, however, that we defer our baptism until spring, so Mr. Phillips can have the shade of Japanese cherry blossoms to shield him from the sun while he sits on the bank of the Potomac keeping time on us?

As to Mr. Phillips' question about our personal views on the honor system, we are astounded that anyone sufficiently conversant with journalism to know what a copy editor does would be apparently ignorant of the fact that a reporter's opinions are of vast unimportance. All we did was report the existence of the honor system. Our views *pro* and *contra* are a trade secret, not included in the 25-cent price of a copy of the *AMERICAN MERCURY*.

WILLIAM HINES
EDWARD COTTRELL

Arlington, Va.

LIFE UNDER SOCIALISM

SIR: I have read "Life under Socialism in England" by H. W. Seaman [in the August *MERCURY*] with much interest. In decrying the policies of the Labour government, Mr. Seaman refers to the sweet and lovely country that was. I would advise him to read Jack London's ac-

count of his investigations of the London slums in 1901. In London's *People of the Abyss* he can get an idea of what England was like before it had social security. . . .

LUCY P. EASTMAN

Minnewaska, N. Y.

SUGGESTION

SIR: In "The Soap Box" for August, Grace O. Potter wonders if it would be an imposition to ask radio stations to announce the IQs of their commentators. My experience in listening to some dozen of them in one day, over a variety of stations, has been that they all put out the same propaganda — often in the very same words. Better have them tell us who tells them what to say, and give his IQ, if any.

GLEN F. BAILEY

Maquoketa, Ia.

STATE CAPITALS

SIR: Writing in "The Soap Box" of the July MERCURY, contributor Arthur Matheson decries the fact that in these United States "we have picked the wrong cities to be capitals." "The city in each state with the greatest population," he says, "should be the capital." He cites Boston as the sole exception to our refusal to name major cities as capitals.

In the first place, it seems to me, this argument ignores the question of geographical location. In the second place, it is based on false information. Many great cities *are* capitals. What about Denver, Richmond, Phoenix, Atlanta, Little Rock, Jackson, Des Moines, Boise, Hartford, Providence, Salt Lake City, Indianapolis, Oklahoma City and Cheyenne? I am sure that the inhabitants of the above-mentioned cities, all of which are capitals, do not regard their homes as whistle-stops. . . .

LEWIS W. WARNER

Tucson, Ariz.

NON-SPELLERS

SIR: Falk Johnson's article in the September MERCURY ["Should Spelling Be Streamlined?"] was excellent. But he did not mention the most tragic loss resulting from our illogical spelling.

Over a period of twenty years of trying to teach English, I have seen hundreds of our most promising college students fall by the wayside because they rebelled against the course in freshman English. . . .

A case in point: Last fall I had in my freshman English class a young man who had failed the course twice. He was ambitious to become a veterinary surgeon. Seeing sense in most of his courses, he applied himself with assiduity. But paragraphing as taught in college (and rarely used in the magazines he read) did not appeal to him. Nor did the slavish devotion to our spelling seem sensible. Deciding that the boy was worth saving for education, I overlooked a few misspelled words. When the paper was filed for inspection by the head of the department, I rued the action. She pointed out to me that some words were not checked; that I had failed to deduct three points for each of several misspelled words. I argued that in this case the boy was worth more than the spelling, but was overruled. Soon the boy dropped out of school to sell used cars. His dream of being a veterinarian was gone. He couldn't spell. . . .

Sometimes I think a fitting inscription over the door of every college would be: ENGLISH'LL GET YOU IF YOU DON'T WATCH OUT!

LOIS G. MORRISON

San Antonio, Tex.

SOLUTIONS

from page 575

BUNKER HILL

1. de B ar
2. ro U te
3. ti N ny
4. fa K ir
5. cr E am
6. co R al
7. us H er
8. po I se
9. sa L ve
10. so L on

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RUTHERFORD B. HAYES

*19th President of the U. S.*

Dear Mercury Reader:

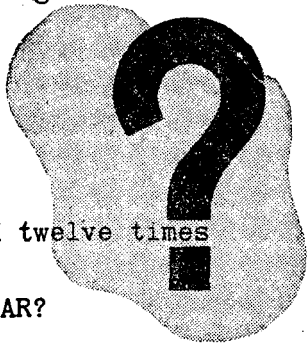
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# REMINDER

*(Courtesy Mother Nature)*

THE TURN OF SUMMER into fall is Nature's most poignant reminder of another year gone by.

It's a reminder that should make you think, seriously, that you yourself are a year closer to the autumn of your own particular life.

What steps have you taken... what plan do you have... for comfort and security in those later years?

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