

# The Need for a Jewish Homeland

By JACOB H. SCHIFF

IN the International Relations Section of the *Nation* of April 5 there is reprinted, under the title, "The Jews in Poland," a letter written by the Berlin correspondent of the Amsterdam *Handelsblad*. The author of the letter had been sent by his paper to Galicia to learn the truth about the alleged Polish attacks upon the Jews. The conditions, he reports, are frightful indeed. The horrors and cruelties practiced in the Middle Ages were apparently hardly comparable to what is now going on in Poland and part of Galicia, under the very eyes of the Government. Conditions in Rumania, in Lithuania, in the Ukraine, and elsewhere in the Near East are reported as not greatly different from those prevailing in Poland; there is little doubt that the life of the Jewish population in the Near East—embracing several million souls—has become hard and terrible almost beyond human endurance.

The efforts now being so energetically made before the Peace Conference at Paris to assure to the Jewish people equal rights with the rest of the population of each and every country, and the demand that the protection of these rights shall be assured at all times by the proposed League of Nations, must not be abated, and should finally be successful unless the Conference is prepared to stultify itself. But it will remain an open question whether in the Near-Eastern countries, where the Jewish population is so shamefully persecuted, and where anti-Semitism in its ugliest and most brutal form appears to be inbred in the people, any mandate of the Peace Conference concerning Jewish rights and protection will have any greater practical effect than the similar solemn covenant in the Treaty of Berlin has had, so far as Rumania is concerned. Up to this time that country has simply ignored and defied the obligation imposed upon it by the Treaty for the granting of civic rights and protection to its Jewish population. Should it therefore, in any event, not be made possible for the Jew to leave these inhospitable countries? Though he and his forbears have lived in them for centuries, yet instead of becoming home to him, they have grown for the Jew almost into a hell.

But whither can he turn? Everywhere—even in the United States—immigration is being curtailed, and it may no longer be possible for a multitude of foreign elements to flow into this country without considerable restriction.

No land, it will readily be conceded, has so magnetic and great an attraction for the Jew as Palestine. The reasons for this are generally understood, and it is not necessary to recapitulate them here. But Palestine cannot in its present state take care of and support any large population. This will become possible only if the land be—so to say—made over, through irrigation and other modern processes. This being done, it is the opinion of experts that Palestine with its hinterland—particularly Mesopotamia and the Euphrates Valley—would be capable of supporting a population of upwards of five millions.

Here then it is where great cultural work for the lasting benefit of suffering Jewry, in the countries of its persecution, can and should be undertaken with every promise of success. Not by continually dangling before the eye of the Jew the chimera of the foundation anew of a Jewish nation and the reestablishment of a Jewish state in Palestine—at present a land with hardly any Jews—but rather by a restoration of the land to its former high state, making it once more such as it has been—a land flowing with milk and honey again capable of gradually receiving and providing prosperous homes for a multitude of Jewish people. Under the benign control of Palestine by Great Britain, such a proposal should not offer insurmountable difficulties, even if it may take time to carry it fully into effect, and here it is that the Zionist Organization can do great and practical constructive work.

But to obtain such coöperation, its political agitation and aspirations must cease, and in coming decades, after the population of Palestine shall have become overwhelmingly Jewish, the Jews actually there can determine for themselves what kind of government to choose; for a state cannot be supplied ready made, but must be developed, nor can a nation be built solely upon the basis of past glory.

The sooner practical steps are taken to create in Palestine a homeland pure and simple for Jewish people who may desire to settle there, the sooner the Jewish question will begin to come nearer its solution. So long as national aspirations remain in the foreground, so long real progress will not be made, so long shall we continue to hear of pogroms, persecution, and intense prejudice against the Jew, wherever he finds it necessary to segregate himself from the rest of the population, as is the case in most of the countries of the Near East. So long also will it continue to be necessary for Western Jewry to collect huge sums with which to alleviate the suffering and misfortune of its Eastern co-religionists. Such suffering is unfortunately chronic; it has existed for years, and has only been accentuated and made more horrible by the war, because the actualities of the war, to so great an extent, occurred in the area so largely inhabited by Jews, against whom the meanest human passions have in consequence been brought into play.

With the first opening of Palestine to larger Jewish immigration, with a steady, even if at first a slow, outflow of the Jewish population from the scenes of its present suffering and persecution, a bettering of these conditions is likely to begin.

Political Zionism for the time being has fulfilled its purpose. Its leaders, from Herzl down, have deserved well of Israel, for the movement they have inaugurated and promoted has awakened in the Jew self-respect, self-consciousness, and perfectly justifiable race pride. It has swept away indifference and kept within Jewry many who were on the way to being lost to it. The task ahead of it, however, is still greater, if it is to be courageously undertaken, without any side issues. It is the redemption of Palestine in the practical sense of the word: a great system of irrigation, that shall make the land available to the husbandman; a system of popular and vocational education, in which Hebrew shall become once more a living language; and the provision of all the paraphernalia required in the upbuilding of a new country. Truly, here is a task worthy of the best efforts of great and efficient leaders, with whom all Jewry should join hands in this work.

Nothing, however, must and should at any time be permitted to alter the position of the Jew in those Western countries where for many years he has exercised the rights and duties of citizenship, and where he has become part and parcel of the general citizenry. He will ever remain in America an American, in England an Englishman, in France a Frenchman, in Italy an Italian, in Germany a German. Those who will choose Palestine as their homeland will probably in due time ask to be entrusted with the responsibility for the local government of the country, through autonomous municipalities under the sovereignty of Great Britain.

Palestine is, however, by no means to be a refuge or an asylum. On the contrary, it is to become the land where opportunity will present itself to the Jew to live under conditions which, freed from the materialistic influences of the western world, will make it possible for him to develop to the full those qualities which have enabled the Jew to make such valuable contributions to the highest assets of mankind. A Jewish homeland in Palestine will mean a reservoir for Jewish learning and for the further development of Jewish literature, of which the world already possesses so many great examples.

# The Federal Employment Administration

By WILLIAM E. MOSHER

THE Civil Service Reform League, so long the sturdy champion of expert administration in Government service, held its annual meeting at Philadelphia during the second week in April. The programme committee was evidently awake to the fact that the public mind is peculiarly receptive in these post-war days to "some new thing," and it therefore arranged an afternoon discussion whose topic was virtually the reformation of the Government service. The speakers were Representative Keating, Secretary of the Joint Congressional Commission on the Reclassification of the Federal Civil Service, Commissioner George R. Wales of the United States Civil Service Commission, Mr. Luther C. Stewart, President of the National Federation of Federal Employees, and Miss Ethel M. Smith, Executive Secretary of the National Women's Trade Union League, for sixteen years a Federal employee. Accredited spokesmen of the Government and the public, of the management and the employees, these four might properly have called an executive session and resolved themselves into an embryonic industrial council after the famous English model set up by the Whitley Committee. For they were actually chosen representatives of the various groups that are carrying on the real "business" of government. If a reform programme is going to be evolved and if it is going to be carried into effect, it is to such responsible specialists as these that the Government must turn.

The Civil Service Reform League deserves credit for creating the situation which brought forth a composite platform of such far-reaching policies as were developed by these speakers. It will immeasurably increase the debt of the American people to the League if it succeeds in marshalling public opinion to the support of some such platform. For its full realization will mean both the efficient and the democratic administration of public affairs—something that no single Government in the course of history has succeeded in achieving.

There is an increasingly urgent need that a constructive labor policy should be developed and adopted by American employers, both private and public. It is peculiarly incumbent on our Government, as the largest and most prosperous employer of labor in the world today, to become also the most enlightened and progressive. How far this is from being the case is proved by the unusual number of accessions of unionized civil employees to the American Federation of Labor from 1917 to 1919. Such action is to be charged—and there is unfortunately plenty of evidence to sustain it—to an unenlightened and, at times, repressive labor policy.

The fact is that the Federal Government, with its more than three and one-half millions of employees, has no consistent labor policy whatsoever, except as to the original selection and promotion of applicants by the Civil Service Commission. The functions of this Commission, the only employment department the Government can boast, are restricted to the conduct of examinations for selection and promotion among the rank and file of employees. The more important positions are exempt from competitive examination. Far be it from my purpose to belittle the noteworthy advances in efficiency that have been made since 1883 because of the Civil Service Commission. Commissioner Wales was doubtless justified in pointing with pride to the achievements of the Commission during the strain of the war period. But I submit—and in this I am giving the judgment of the speakers at the Philadelphia conference as well—that an employment department that is essentially a recruiting and selective agency falls lamentably short of what such a department should be.

Congress has evidently come to appreciate certain defects in present employment practice; for it recently appointed a standardization board, or reclassification commission, which is now

sitting in Washington. If this commission is to limit the scope of its work to the standardization of positions and wages and the introduction of service ratings in the various departments, as its title would imply, it will do no more than correct flagrant abuses and make it possible for the Civil Service Commission to perform its function of selection, placement, and promotion much more efficiently. Such action will still be far from making the Commission a full-fledged employment department.

The embryonic industrial council at Philadelphia, if I may so term it, was pretty well in agreement as to the points which a constructive labor policy should cover. It is to be hoped that these points will be given due consideration by the Reclassification Commission. Not the reclassification of positions in the civil service, but the reconstitution of the Civil Service Commission itself, should be the real issue. Government labor policy worthy the name can be satisfied with nothing less than the complete transformation of the Commission into a civil service employment department, responsible for selection and fitness for the particular position, indeed, but, far beyond that, responsible for the well-being of employees throughout the whole range of their interests, from decent wages to fresh air.

Concerning this fundamental policy there was entire agreement at Philadelphia, that the Civil Service Commission is the employment department of the Government and that it should be given the power to develop a centralized employment organization. Its functions would comprise the scale from selection to retirement or dismissal, from working conditions to recreation and housing, from suggestions to grievances. It would see to it that opportunities for self-expression and growth were afforded, thus making Government service "a sufficient career." In brief, its aim would be to become the human relations department of the Federal civil service.

To work most effectively along these various lines, the staff of the Commission would consist of trained experts in the field of employment administration. It would be materially increased, so that direct personal contact could be maintained with the whole force in all the various departments. For, as efficiency experts are gradually coming to realize, human relations cannot be "routinized"; they do not "stay put." Adjustments are the standard order of the day in a modern personnel department.

Second, if our present "merit system" is to become a "model system," to use a turn given by Representative Keating, it must become democratic. Centralized employment administration will make for efficiency, as is being proved in many progressive establishments today, but it does not necessarily make for democracy. In fact, it all too often takes a very marked turn toward paternalism. Our Government, however, having made the phrase "self-determination" ring around the world, can be satisfied with nothing less than democratic control of employment.

Assuming that democratic control is part of our constructive labor policy, as was definitely emphasized by two of the speakers at the Philadelphia conference, a reorganization of the personnel of the Civil Service Commission would naturally result. Its membership would be elective, chosen equally from departmental heads and representatives of employees' organizations of all departments, with members of Congress in the chair as representatives of the Government and the public. The Civil Service Commission would thus become a kind of industrial council directly representing the various interests involved in the conduct of the Government's business affairs.

To some, such a programme may seem revolutionary; to others it will appear to be only the logical and necessary development of a well-considered labor policy in this reconstruction period. However that may be, it is clear to any observer that the hit-or-miss method of handling personnel problems has had its day, in the field of both private and public employment. Appeals to loyalty and public condemnation of striking public employees no longer suffice to stay strikes, as witness the London "bobbies," the New York harbor workers, the Cincinnati firemen, and the New England telephone employees. A definite labor policy that will insure fair treatment and a measure of democratic control seems inevitable.