

Zionism Muffs Its Opportunity

THE recent Zionist Congress in Zurich only emphasized the real crisis in the Zionist movement which has been coming to a head ever since the 1936 clashes between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. On the surface, the debate at the Congress centered around the British plan to partition Palestine into a Jewish state, an Arab state as adjunct to Transjordan, and a British corridor from Jerusalem to Jaffa. One side, led by the president of the Zionist organization, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, camouflaged its support of the British plan by accepting it as a basis for "bargaining." Another faction, led by Dr. Stephen S. Wise and others, rejected the plan as fraud and mockery.

Was this, however, the real basis of the dispute? It seems not. No doubt the British proposal stunned a large section of the Zionist leadership and practically all of the rank and file. The Congress decision to accept the Weizmann line will not do much to relieve that apprehension. For the partition proposal has confronted the Zionist movement with the necessity of reexamining first principles, the very goal and content of the movement in a concrete form. For a long time, Zionists maintained comforting illusions rooted in vague formulas. These have now been swept aside.

The pro-partition faction at the Congress argued very simply that this was the best compromise available and, anyway, perhaps Great Britain would be more liberal about the boundary lines after some negotiation. Posing as "realists," these Zionists were ready to accept a plan which, according to *Davar*, Palestine's leading Zionist daily, "means a Jewish state without Jews and Zionism without Zion." The paper, in the first heat of disappointment, exaggerated somewhat. But the fact remains that the Jewish state, if and when it becomes a reality, will hardly amount to a homeland for most oppressed Jews in the outer world and will be confronted with tremendous inner contradictions.

In respect to the population problem, the Jewish state will be almost as large as Delaware, but it already has twice the population of Delaware. It must be remembered that Delaware is an industrial state while Palestine is not. In respect to future peace in Zion, the Jewish state will still contain more than two hundred thousand Arabs, a very sizable minority, having a much faster rate of natural increase than the Jews. It might almost be said that the new state will possess all the problems of the old, even though it will be in miniature.