

Palestine Under Britain's Heel

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THESE few years have been years of political unveilings. Many monumental structures whose stark outlines have been draped from public view by layers of diplomatic canvas, have suddenly been revealed to a startled world. In China, in Ethiopia, on the Rhine, fascism is showing its hand with a bluntness which is setting new fashions in international relations. Not that Adolph or Benito or Hirota are devotees of diplomatic plain-speaking. On the contrary. Their utterances have plumbed depths of transparent hypocrisy and humbug that the suave pre-fascist diplomats would have scorned. The latter aimed at a certain surface plausibility, however specious. The fascists are unhampered by such considerations. No statement is too absurd or contradictory for them. But their actions have a consistency and directness that more than makes up for their verbal mendacity. Their guns and bayonets thrust brazenly through the film of diplomatic gauze and the world understands at once what they are driving at.

The Jewish world—particularly the hundreds of thousands of Jews who have sought refuge from anti-semitism in Palestine and the millions of desperate Jews in Germany, Poland, Rumania and other central European countries who are looking hopefully to Palestine—is also learning the new diplomatic language. Two recent dispatches which have appeared in the world press, constitute an important revelation to the Jewish people, a message as frank and as cruel as the gospel that Japanese and Italian guns are preaching in China and Ethiopia. Taken together these two dispatches do more to illuminate the shifting British foreign policy on which Zionism is gambling the lives of nearly 400,000 Jews than anything that has come from Downing Street, not excepting the famous Balfour Declaration.

The first of these dispatches dated January 19 is by the inspired London correspondent of *The New York Times*, "Augur." Under the heading of "Palestine Gains as British Imperial Base," he says:

... In the sea of the native population of Arabia the Palestinian Jews stand isolated . . . if rightly used an element of strength for the Empire . . . by tradition British policy is favorable to the Arabs . . . but the benefits of British rule have not made the Arabs British-minded. Events in Egypt point otherwise. The great Saudi Kingdom is not really a friend of Britain. Its sovereign dreams of a United Arabian State. . . . The possibility is seen that the Jewish population will provide the physical force not only for its own protection but for the defense of the Palestine citadel against any attack from without. Military experts say a Jewish militia of 50,000 will be a reality tomorrow.

The second is an Associated Press dispatch from Paris dated April 15. Under the head-

ing of "United States of Arabia Planned by Britain," it says:

A proposal for a United States of Arabia [nationalist sources said today] is being promoted by Great Britain in an effort to align the Arabs against further Italian expansion in the Red Sea. . . . The dream of an Arabian Empire composed of most of the kingdoms, mandates and protectorates forming the Arabian peninsula, was believed by many nationalists to be moving rapidly toward fulfillment. . . . The inclusion of Palestine is regarded as less likely.

The dispatch goes on to quote the *Paris Le Journal* as commenting: "England which has often taken advantage of the dissensions of the Arabs in the past, deems it opportune to unite them at a time when Italy has shown itself stronger than London believed." What the astute *Le Journal* failed to add was that the item about the inclusion of Palestine being "less likely" was obviously inserted as a sedative for Zionist nerves. The idea of a United States of Arabia without Palestine is a political and economic absurdity.

What conclusions are Jews to draw from these two contradictory statements, both of which have every earmark of being officially inspired? Is one statement intended for the Jews and the other for the Arabs on the good old imperialist principle of divide and conquer? No. The key to these dispatches is the difference in their date lines. In the three intervening months the international situation had undergone a radical change and British foreign policy executed a *volte-face* of ominous importance to the Jews of Palestine.

On January 19 the struggle in Ethiopia was still indecisive and England seemed assured of French support against the ambitious Italian designs in Africa and the Near East. With the additional reinforcement of the prospective Jewish "physical force" she was developing in Palestine, England felt safely entrenched on the Suez Canal and did not see the need of concessions to the neighboring Arabian peoples.

By April 15 two interrelated events had occurred. The crisis precipitated by Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhine split the Franco-British front, and Italy—freed from the menace of a Franco-British Mediterranean alliance—struck out with its full strength and crushed Ethiopian resistance. Having lost French support as a result of its flirtation with Hitler, Britain is looking around hastily for available allies to bolster its precarious position on Suez Canal. Shall it be a Jewish Palestine with a mere 400,000 Jews or a United States of Arabia with a population of 12,000,000—a stroke that would win the loyalty of rebellious Arab Egypt and at the same time stir up unrest among the Arabs of Italian Tripoli and Libya? One plan necessarily precludes the other. Let the Pales-

tinian Jews face the fact and all that flows from it—Britain is contemplating a United States of Arabia.

Already something is beginning to flow from it—blood. Within a week of the publication of the United States of Arabia scheme, riots broke out in every part of Palestine. To date more than thirty Jews and Arabs have been killed and hundreds more wounded. A general strike has been called by the Arab Executive and the Jewish community faces a situation that may make the 1929 crisis pale into insignificance. The question is pertinent whether it is a mere coincidence that these fatal riots have followed so closely on the heels of Britain's shift of policy. I gravely doubt it. At all times, ever since the Balfour Declaration, the Arabs have been supplied by British imperialism and Zionist policies with ample reason for anti-Jewish bitterness. But it may be safely asserted that there have been no serious riots when the British Colonial Office wanted to discourage them. The proof is that during the last three years, though the British policy was pro-Zionist and the Jewish immigration quotas, which are the bone of contention between the two races, quadrupled—yet no serious anti-Jewish riots developed. And why, it is important to ask, were these quotas increased in 1933? Why this sudden reversal of policy on a matter about which the Colonial Office had been so intractable all these years? Was it out of tender solicitude for the Jewish victims of the Third Reich? An analysis of the Palestine Jewish immigration figures for 1932-35 shows a jump from 9,000 in 1932 to 30,000 in 1933 to 42,000 in 1934 and about 60,000 in 1935. But only 16 percent of the Jewish immigrants were refugees from the Reich. The great majority came from those ever-full, ever-present reservoirs of Jewish persecution, Poland and Rumania, which for years had fought in vain for larger Palestinian quotas from the British Colonial Office.

The explanation for the three fat years of Zionism in Palestine lies elsewhere. Hitler was merely a coincidence. The real reason is furnished by the "Augur" dispatch of January 19. In the course of the snarling over the Ethiopian bone it has come out that realistic "conversations" about the fate of Ethiopia were going on between the Italian, French and British Foreign Offices for several years. Italy was preparing for coming events, and so was Britain. What Britain's plans were, was not known at the time. But "Augur's" belated dispatch gives us an inkling. Among other things Britain was planning a formidable Jewish army in Palestine. That is why in three years more Jews, most of them of military age, were per-

mitted to enter Palestine than in the rest of the postwar period combined.

The turn of the international roulette unexpectedly brought Zionism within sight of its most distant objectives, a Jewish majority in Palestine, a Jewish-dominated government and even that Revisionist fantasy—a Jewish army. Another ten years of Jewish immigration at the prevailing tempo and those dreams would have been realities (that is what Zionism figured). But unexpectedly the international roulette has turned again. The Zionist leaders have gambled recklessly on the wheel of British foreign policy. They might as well realize that they have lost.

Britain has other plans now—both for the Jews and the Arabs. Imperialism is a heartless whore. Having coquetted with Zionism for a while, encouraged it to consider Palestine its own already, fed the flames of Arab resentment with the fuel of Zionist chauvinism and jingoism—British imperialism suddenly throws over its giddy favorite.

Possibly the wheel may turn again. But the dictates of imperial self-interest point otherwise. I have asserted before that there are no anti-Jewish riots in Palestine when the British Colonial Office does not want any. It is of interest that the most immediate demand of the Arab demonstrators is a cessation of Jewish immigration (which has already plunged considerably because of the depression in Palestine). It is just barely possible that this might coincide with the requirements of the new British foreign policy which demands conciliation with the Arabs at all (Jewish) costs. At any rate according to *The New York Times* (April 21) the British High Commissioner Sir Arthur Wauchope "recommended that an Arab delegation go to London to discuss

the matter with the British Colonial Office."

What is the prospect for the Jews of Palestine in a United States of Arabia, headed probably by the fanatical Ibn Saud, the Kemal of Pan-Arabia? Let us not mince words. The prospect is nothing short of extermination. Not the relatively gradual extermination which the Jews are facing in Germany and Poland but the kind of extirpation for which there is a recent political precedent in the Near East. I refer to the total slaughter of the Armenians of Anatolia who were the same sort of threat to the renascent Turkish nationalism. It is a ghastly irony that the Zionists, who have been attacking the promising Jewish settlement in Biro Bidjan as being exposed to the danger of a Russo-Japanese conflict, should have led the Jewish people into such a trap by following the will-o'-the-wisp of British imperialism.

The crisis calls for an immediate political reorientation on the part of the Jews of Palestine. Half a loaf is better than none, particularly if the whole loaf rightfully belongs to somebody else. The Zionists must renounce special rights in Palestine which they do not claim in other countries of which they are citizens and consider themselves Arabian in a proposed United States of Arabia. It may be difficult, but no more difficult than for Jews to regard themselves as Americans or Englishmen or Frenchmen. After all, though the Jews have forgotten it and the Arabs have forgotten it—they are fellow-Semites. The Balfour Declaration which envisages the Jews as the ruling race in Palestine with the Arab majority living "protected" in sort of Indian reservations, must be voluntarily renounced and denounced by the Jews. The British had no intention of realizing it when they issued it and it

has only served the purpose of keeping kindred races apart. The Jews who have consistently fought democratic home rule for Palestine out of fear of the Arab majority, must join with the Arabs in pressing for self-determination from England, even if it puts the Arabs in control of their own country. Let the Jews defeat British efforts to exploit Arab-Jewish differences by lining up with the Arabs against British imperialism. When political democracy is achieved let Jewish labor join the Arab peasantry in a struggle against the Arab Effendis and Jewish capitalists to achieve a Workers and Peasants government. In the final analysis in Palestine as well as in the rest of the world, the undeniably existing problem of the Jew can only be solved in a socialist society. The Soviet Union where anti-semitism is a political crime, has amply demonstrated that fact. Dr. Joseph Rosen, of the Joint Distribution Committee, says:

In contrast to the passive resistance, not to speak of the active opposition of governments which the J. D. C. has frequently been confronted with in other countries, the Soviet Government has not merely actively cooperated in the work, but has actually taken the lead recognizing the solution of the Jewish problem as a state problem.

The renunciation of a National Jewish State in Palestine may be a bitter pill for the Zionists to swallow, but the alternative is national suicide. The Zionist Executive is still too intoxicated by the dream of a Jewish State which was "almost" in its grasp, to retreat now. The only hope of the Palestinian Jews is that the powerful Histadruth, the Palestine Jewish Federation of Labor, will properly evaluate the changed situation and make peace with the Arabs before it is too late.