

PALESTINE: ARAB OR JEWISH

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The question of whether or not Palestine is an Arab country or a Jewish one presupposes the existence of a dispute over two basic points. These are (1) Do the Jews constitute a nation, and (2) Does this "Jewish" nation have a real claim to Palestine.

The first question is the more critical; the second follows from the Zionist affirmative answer to the former. It is these two basic questions that divide Zionism that anti-Zionism. All the other issues which put the Zionists and the anti-Zionists against one another are but extensions of the basic dispute on these two issues.

Certain manifestations of "Zionist" i.e. Jewish nationalistic ideas have a rather long history of development. In fact modern Zionists consider the twelfth century poet Yehunda Ha-Leni as "one of the first Zionists" simply because he expressed his longing for Jerusalem in his famous Hebrew verse: "Though I live in the West, my heart is in the East."

In modern times, there are several expressions of Zionist aims and different movements (i.e. Choneni Zion (lovers of Zion) in Russia).

These movements, however, lacked the practicality and the necessary utilitarianism to mobilise and Zionize a world Jewry. The movement took a sharp turn with the advent of the Austrian Jew, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) when he published in 1895 his pamphlet called *Der Judenstaat*, or the Jewish State. This work embodies the basic tenets of modern political Zionism; the Zionist state in Palestine is, to a very great extent, built in accordance with the doctrines which are propounded by Herzl. The Pamphlet in fact may be called or considered to be a laboratory manual "for Zionist work and Tactics."

It is Herzlian Zionism, therefore, that we are to discuss in this study, and when we refer here to Zionism, we mean political Zionism as conceived by this man and his disciples.

Zionism bases its claim to Palestine on three premises:

- (1) The Jews compose a nation or race;
- (2) This nation is a lineal descendent of the Hebrew nation; the Jews, therefore, have been living in exile since the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 A.D.;
- (3) Anti-semitism is bound to break out sooner or later; the mere existence of the Jews in a non-Jewish environment necessarily creates anti-Semitic reactions.

For tactical purposes, Zionism utilizes Biblical passages to prove that God has promised the Holy Land to the Jews. Finally Zionism has succeeded in obtaining the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917 and has been exploiting it as a charter for Jewish colonization of Palestine.

We shall proceed to examine these Zionist tenets very carefully: Are Jews a nation or race?

The racist theory of Zionism belongs to the rest of the racist theories -- such as Nazism -- which are in direct contradiction with modern scientific findings. Although it is enough to observe the physical characteristics of Jews from

different geographical localities to realize the ludicrousness of the racist theory) as for example the dark skin of the Yemenite and Indian Jews vs. the blondness and the blue eyes of Western European Jews), some scholars went to the trouble of studying the generic question as a science. Among these investigators are Dr. Leslie and Steven Dunn who write: "... each group of (Jewish) population varies within itself, as is shown by differing frequencies of blood groups and some genes. The same is, of course, true of all human populations."

Another scientist, Professor Harry L. Shapiro, writes the following: "The wide range of variation between Jewish populations in their physical characteristics and the diversity of the gene frequencies of their blood groups render any unified classification of them a contradiction in terms."

This, I trust, is sufficient to dismiss the racist theory of Zionism as anti-scientific. If moreover, the Zionists base their concept of the "Jewish" nation on the assumption that the modern Jews are direct descendants of the Hebrews. It is, therefore, necessary to meet the Zionists on their own ground. The discussion of this problem belongs to the second Zionist premise: that the Jews have been living in Galuth (exile) since 70 A.D.

2. The Relationship between the Modern Jews and the Hebrews.

The question belongs to history and can be resolved by using historical evidence.

There is no evidence that there was, after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 a dispersion of Semitic inhabitants of Palestine. Jews had always migrated out of Palestine and settled in other parts of the Mediterranean region. These migrations whether before or after A.D. 70, were undertaken mainly by the elite, the wealthy, the intellectuals, etc. who had the material means for undertaking such a costly enterprise. The majority of the population, i.e. the peasantry, remained on the land. They were converted to Christianity under the influence of the Church, and after the Islamic conquest of the seventh century, the majority of the population adopted Islam and the Arabic language. The Arabs of Palestine of today, like most of the Arabs of the present Arab world, are not necessarily the descendants of the indigenous population who, after the Islamic conquest, had adopted Islam and the Arabic language. This process of Arabization took place in all -- but only in -- the Hamito-Semitic regions of the middle East and North Africa. The Arabian armies did not replace the indigenous populations but instead, coexisted with them.

The point then is that the Arab refugees who have been expelled from their homeland by the Zionists are essentially the descendants of the ancient Semitic inhabitants of Palestine including the Hebrews (for the Hebrews were only one of the Semitic peoples that inhabited Palestine in antiquity).

What, then, is the origin of the modern European (and consequently the Israeli and American) genes who have "redeemed" their homeland?

It has already been pointed out that a number of Jews had settled in communities spread all over the Mediterranean area in ancient times. Judaism was, in antiquity and

early medieval times, an active missionary religion. The Jewish region attracted many a convert who found in it more spiritual satisfaction than he could find in the pagan religions. Professor M. Cary writes the following about the missionary activities of Judaism among the pagans of antiquity: "The political revolt of the Macabees against the Seleucids had entailed a revival of religious enthusiasm, and of missionary activity among the Gentiles. In the first century A.D. the cult of Jehovah had attached to itself a considerable body of converts who regularly attended the synagogues..."

The most spectacular conversion to Judaism, however, was that of the Khazars in the eighth century A.D.

The Khazars were a branch of the heathen Turks who occupied the northern and north-western regions of the Caspian. Their main city was Iril (near modern Askaniya in the USSR) on the mouth of the Volga. The Khazars are mentioned abundantly in the medieval sources including the Arabic sources.



Under the blows of the rising Russian power in the tenth century, the Khazar state disintegrated and the Khazars dispersed westward carrying with them their Jewish religion. The process seems to have been complete before the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century.

The Polish linguist Zajaczkowski who studied the dialects still spoken by the Karaite Jews of Poland and the Crimea, regards these Jews as the representatives of the ancient Khazars.

The Zionists who have "redeemed" Palestine, therefore, are essentially the descendants of the medieval Khazars and other peoples who had adopted Judaism in the Middle Ages and antiquity. Their relationship to Palestine and its ancient Semites is simply fictional.

The artificiality of the Zionist concept of a "Jewish" nation has become evident in the case of Father Daniel. A Jew by birth, Oswel Bufeisen adopted Catholicism and became a monk under the name of Daniel. He insisted on becoming an Israeli citizen under the Law of Return according to which any Jew is entitled to citizenship upon arrival. He argued that he was a Jew by nationality, a Catholic by religion. His argument is very sound according to Zionist logic. But it would present a dilemma to Israel and Zionism if the Jews compose a nation obviously religion is of no consequence. If a person has to believe in Judaism in order to be regarded as a Jew, then what about the Atheists and Agnostics who call themselves Jews? The argument of the Israeli state attorney against Father Daniel's request is this: "The attribute of a Jew is a common culture, and religion is the basis of that culture whether you observe it or not." This can hardly solve the problem for what on earth is common culturally, between an American Atheist who considers himself a Jew and an orthodox Jew from Yemen? Certainly there is none. Even if Israel the Yemenite Jew presents a color problem to the European Jews!

3. Is Anti-Semitism Inevitable?

We shall examine here the third Zionist Tenet: that anti-Semitism is inevitable as long as the Jews do not segregate themselves from non-Jews by establishing their own state.

Herzl based this conclusion on data drawn from conditions in Eastern and Central Europe during the Nineteenth Century. He observed that the migration of large numbers of Jews driven by anti-Semitism to countries which are free from anti-Semitism and where the Jews were fully integrated, immediately produced anti-Semitic hostilities in these countries. From this observation he concludes that the Jews carry with them the seed of anti-Semitism wherever they go. The only solution then, is to establish a "national home", a state, for

the Jews. Who can observe that hostilities are always provoked against large numbers of foreign immigrants. This was the experience of the Irish and the Italians in the United States. The anti-Irish and anti-Italian sentiments were not caused so much by the fact that those immigrants were Irish or Italian or Catholic as such, but by the frequently observed phenomenon that large numbers of foreign immigrants are viewed with suspicion by the established community. Those hostilities normally cease after one or two generations, depending upon the speed with which the newcomers can achieve integration and the degree of readiness of the community to absorb the new element.

The hostilities which Herzl observed to have been caused by the migration of Jews from eastern Europe must be explained in view of these sociological factors. Those Jews were under suspicion as foreign immigrants, rather than as Jews. Finally on this point, the "Jewish" culture with which Herzl was familiar was not shared by the free West European and Sephardic Jews. The "Jewish" characteristics -- culture or otherwise -- of East European Jewry are the results of the life in the ghetto. Each Jewish community may exhibit certain traits; but these traits are different from one community to another. They are the products of the interaction between the Jewish religious customs and the surrounding cultural environment. One cannot make sweeping generalizations about a universal, superterritorial Jewish peoplehood -- be it cultural, national or racial.

Having presented the anti-Zionist argument against the existence of a Jewish nation with a claim to Palestine, let us pay attention now to the Biblical "argument" which, as we have indicated, is a tactical device.

In the early stages of Zionist development Palestine was not essential for the "Jewish" nationalist movement. Many Zionists, including Herzl himself, were ready to accept another territory for Jewish colonization. But Herzl gradually began to see the emotional appeal Palestine had to the Jews. In his *Diaries*, Herzl writes the following about the advantage of including Palestine in the Zionist program:

"Against Palestine is its proximity to Russia and Europe, its small size, and its unaccustomed climate. In its favor, the mighty legend."

The Biblical "basis" of the Zionist claim to Palestine is derived from the Book of Genesis. Although no one is bound to take biblical utterances literally -- especially as regards modern political conditions -- it is remarkable that Zionism has been caught cheating even in this respect.

According to Professor Guillaume, the first explicit promise of Palestine to the descendants of Abraham was made in Genesis 12: 7: "Unto thy seed will I give this land." This becomes more explicit in Ch. 15:18: "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." Professor Guillaume argues that the expression "unto thy seed" inevitably includes the Arabs who can claim descent from Abraham on the basis of the Bible itself. Furthermore the prophecies concerning the return of the Jews to Palestine have already been fulfilled, according to Professor Guillaume, because: (A) After the exile, all the Jews who wished to return had done so; (B) The last of the prophets had died long before A. D. 70 and obviously there can be no prophecy of a second return.

But the most serious claim to Palestine by the Zionists is based on the Balfour Declaration of November Second, 1917 which reads as follows:

"His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavor 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."

The Zionists regard this document as a charter entitling them to colonize Palestine and establish a state.

It is not difficult to see the injustice embodied in this document. One need not be an Arab to recognize that it is contrary to all the basic concepts of justice for the Foreign Secretary of Britain to promise a national home for a religious group in a country where they do not dwell. Moreover, this was done without the consent of the inhabitants of that country.

Putting justice aside, a closer examination of the Balfour Declaration reveals the contradictory nature of this document and its vagueness.

(1) The declaration does not define the term "National Home". There is absolutely no indication that the term meant a Jewish state.

(2) The declaration is a unit composed of three main clauses. It promises the establishment of a "Jewish National Home", but at the same time it guarantees the civil and religious rights of Palestine's Arab inhabitants. The pro-

mise made to the Zionists without the consent of the Arabs of Palestine constitutes the first violation of the rights which the safeguarding clause seeks to guarantee. Furthermore, it is impossible to establish a national home for foreign groups of a particular religion in a country without injuring the religious rights of the inhabitants of that country, together with their basic civil rights. Since the declaration is a unit; and since it is impossible to implement all its clauses simultaneously one clause must nullify the others.

A careful study of Zionist literature from Herzl's time until the present reveals the fact that the Zionists have always been conscious of the aggressive nature of their movement and its lack of moral justification.

Herzl wrote in his "Jewish State": "In the world as it now is, and for an indefinite period will probably remain, might precedes right. It is useless, therefore, for us to be loyal patriots..." From its very inception Zionist envisaged the tragedy which has now befallen Palestine. Immigration continues, writes Herzl, "until the inevitable moment when the native population feels itself threatened, and forces the government to stop a further influx of Jews. Immigration is consequently futile unless based on our assured supremacy."

Ten years after the Balfour Declaration had been issued Weizmann confessed, "... every day and every hour of this past ten years, when opening the newspapers, I thought the British Government would call me and ask, 'Where are they, you Zionists?' ... The Jews, they knew were against us; we stood alone on a little island, a tiny group of Jews with a foreign past."

It was with this spirit of complete opportunism, cynicism and ruthlessness that the Zionists were able to take advantage of every opportunity and utilize it for the service of their cause.

It is outside the scope of this people to trace the history of Zionist methods and diplomacy which led to the tragic day of November 29, 1947, the day the United Nations unwittingly committed one of the most flagrant violations of human rights.

After the creation of the Zionist State, the favorite Jewish argument for the right of "Israel" to exist is the fait accompli argument. Many do not ever attempt to justify the creation of Israel on moral grounds. Yizhar Harari, a leader of the Liberal Party declared in the course of a debate concerning the Arab refugees, perhaps, if someone wants to turn history back, it may be that morally it was unjust to establish the state of Israel; there may be a morality of that kind." Harari goes on to say: "We have solved a refugee problem, of these refugees whose problem we have to solve, for whose sake the state of Israel was established." In the course of his argument against repatriating the Arab refugees, Harari declared: "Is this the solution - to bring a foreign people, with a strange language, a different language and culture, and expect them to take root and adjust themselves and to feel at home?" ... The "foreign people" which Mr. Harari is talking about are the Palestine Arab refugees!

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