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THE CASE AGAINST ZIONISM



AN ANTI-ZIONIST,

The Grand Mufti of Palestine, descendant of Mohammed, and leader of 500,000 Moslem Arabs, all of whom naturally disfavor the establishment of a Zionist commonwealth in the Holy Land.

TO MAKE PALESTINE a Zionist state would give no pleasure to Mohammedan or Christian and not much to a large number of Jews. Just where the proportion stands is not stated by Rabbi David Philipson, in the *Chicago Israelite*, who pleads for the internationalization of this land. Some comfort he takes from the fact that no specific mention of Palestine was made in the League of Nations covenant, leaving the matter to possible settlement in the treaty of peace with Turkey. Jews who oppose the nationalist program of political Zionism, he says, do so not because of lack of affection for the ancestral homeland of their faith, but because of their conviction that Judaism's mission is religious and not political. Non-Zionists, he maintains, would eagerly help any Jews to return to Palestine who desired to go there to find a home, on condition that "this land shall not be considered the national homeland of the Jewish people." He writes:

"Let the slander so industriously spread by Zionists to the effect that the opponents of Zionism have no love for Palestine be dismissed once and for all. We sympathize fully with the sentiment which thousands entertain for Palestine, but we are convinced that the Jewish question is larger than the Palestinian question and that the vital issue is freedom for Jews in all lands."

Other peoples besides Jews see a ground of objection to pinning the country down to one people of exclusive religious faith:

“To make of Palestine by fiat either a Jewish state, a Christian state, or a Mohammedan state would be intolerable in the first-named instance to Christians and Mohammedans, in the second to Jews and Mohammedans, and in the third to Christians and Jews. The only tolerable solution is that suggested by Dr. Finley and by others before him, viz., the internationalization of this most international of all of earth’s localities. He suggests, too, that Great Britain shall be the trustee into whose charge the civil government of the land shall be placed. That, too, seems fair and just, since it was British achievement which freed the land from Turkish misrule. The time may come when the principle of self-determination will rule there also and the Palestinian nation, composed of people of all creeds, will set up its own government. That government, however, must be based on the principles of freedom for all, no state church, but absolute separation of church and state. Better still would it be could Palestine be permanently internationalized under the suzerainty of the League of Nations. Then would this land stand out as the ward of all the world, even as all the world is indebted to it for the spiritual heritage which came from it. The term ‘spiritually internationalized’ sounds paradoxical, but it is the finest definition of what Palestine, as the spiritual homeland of three great religious communions, should really be.”

To Rabbi Philipson the strength of his argument lies in the fact that Palestine is a holy land for Christians as well as for Jews, and he turns for confirmation to a recent book called “A Pilgrim in Palestine,” by Dr. John H. Finley, who was the head of the Red Cross Commission in Palestine. From this book the reader may gather, so Rabbi Philipson asserts, what this land means for the reverent Christian:

“Dr. Finley is a broad-gage American of the best type. He is one of the leading figures in the educational world and in the public life of the country. He has no narrow prejudices. One can not read his thrilling story without being deeply stirred. He traversed the Holy Land from the seacoast to the Jordan and from the hills of Judea to the confines of Damascus. Every spot awakened recollections of the past as portrayed in the Old and the New Testaments. He traversed a freed Palestine, freed from centuries of Turkish tyranny and misrule by the exploits of the modern deliverer, General Allenby. The book is filled with Biblical references skilfully interwoven into the story. Toward the end of the volume Dr. Finley discusses the future of the land. He does this so dispassionately and so sympathetically that his words must appeal to all who can divest themselves of isms of every kind, be they Jewish, Christian, or Mohammedan. He urges the ‘internationalization,’ or, as he likewise calls it, the ‘mutualization’ of Palestine so that this country may be an international spiritual homeland for all the world. His attitude toward the Jews is very sympathetic. Altho recognizing the urge toward the land which is dominant in the desire of many Jews, he still feels that the Jew’s mission is the penetration into all lands. The entire passage is so significant that I am setting it down with a few omissions. Dr. Finley writes toward the close of his volume:

“We are, in our promotion of the theory of self-determination, encouraging the division of the earth into smaller and more numerous aliquot parts. It is an essential complement of this that somewhere there shall be symbolized the supreme international planetary whole of which these are but confessed national fractions. And where in all the world can a place be found more fit for this visualization than this spot, where this civilization has had its greatest prophets and noblest teachers?

“This little land should be kept as an “internationalized” reservation. Perhaps a better word would be “mutualized.”

“I am not concerned that this “internationalized” or “mutualized” reservation (the “old homestead” of civilization, the “abandoned farm” of a wide-spread family of nations) shall give support again to three or five or more millions of people by its recovered fertility or its stimulated industry. . . . If it were merely and solely a matter of raising more barley and wheat and fruits and vegetables, or of planting and nurturing again the orchards and groves of figs and olives and oranges and pomegranates, or of covering the hills with flocks and herds, I should not invite the thought of a reader to leave his Iowa farm, his California groves, his New York orchard, or even his New England garden; tho I hope nevertheless that the land will be made to “blossom again as the rose.” I should leave, however, the temporal interests of the agriculturist and the florist and the advice of their experts to look to that development. . . .

“I should like to see gathered in happi-

ness there as many sons of Abraham as can in such a sympathetic environment serve humanity better than through the nations whose life their genius has penetrated and permeated. I have long believed and often said that the Jew, by reason of this very penetration and permeation of his genius and the universality of his experience, was fitted above others to help the nations reach that internationalism, of practise as well as of spirit, through nationality. Perhaps in this their ancient homeland they will have a greater opportunity to promote this desired and much-sought end; but, as I believe, it is not to be by going alone, by segregating themselves from the nations they have helped so marvelously to make, and becoming again a "peculiar people" and a separate nation. Their mission even in going back to their homeland is, as I believe, to internationalize, not to intensify and extend nationalization.

"A homeland? Yes! But an international homeland, one which gives welcome to every earth-child who turns toward its holy hills with a pure heart and with clean hands—not one which narrows sympathies or accentuates differences of race or creed—a homeland whose tenantry shall be primarily those who, like the families of Gershon, Kohath, and Merari of old, care for the sacred things of humanity, which must now include the utensils of democracy—not a homeland to be peopled by persecutions or pogroms of other lands, for these can no longer exist, but a homeland repeopled by its own appeal to a humanity seeking not personal salvation nor ease nor pleasure, but a higher common experience and an "eternal excellence.""



A HATER OF ORTHODOXY,

Now pastor of the Community
Church, once Church of the Messiah,
Rev. Dr. John Haynes Holmes.