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102

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35

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111

American Council for Judaism, 1944.

Information Bulletin

of THE AMERICAN COUNCIL for JUDAISM, Inc.

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REFUGEE RESCUE AND POST-WAR IMMIGRATION

Upon the advice of the War Department, the House Foreign Affairs Committee has postponed action on the Wright-Compton Resolutions for free entry of Jews into Palestine and its ultimate establishment by the "Jewish people" as a free and democratic "Jewish Commonwealth."

At the same time that this was announced a number of congressional friends of the resolutions expressed the view that the postponement was only temporary. This gave clear indication that the Zionist nationalist propaganda will continue on an even more powerful scale than heretofore.

The interval provides an opportunity for responsible Jewish leaders to re-examine the purpose of the second section of the resolutions and with that to reconsider the full implications of the whole nationalist Zionist program.

Plainly that program is not primarily one of rescuing Jews who need to be rescued. The Zionists have already made it clear (see editorial in *Information Bulletin* of March 15th) that the abrogation of the White Paper is subordinate to the political objectives of the second part of the resolution.

With that point of view before them can American Jews fail to appraise the difference between the Zionist and anti-Zionist position? Can they refuse to re-examine the Zionist nationalist concept which, in the language of the *Congress Weekly*, "makes American Jews an integral part of that world-wide people which sees in the Jewish commonwealth its highest political aspiration"?

Can they overlook several important aspects which cry for immediate consideration before the damage to the position of the Jews—already considerable—will be beyond remedy?

One such aspect as revealed in the hearings before the House Foreign Affairs Committee was the free and easy, the cavalier, judgments of the numbers, and desires, of the surviving Jews of Europe. For the Zionists' testimony at the hearings implied, where they did not say so outright, that Palestine must be pledged in advance as a "Jewish Commonwealth" so that it could absorb some two to four

million Jews; and that there were that many Jews ready to leave Europe.

Thus a frightening picture was drawn of millions of Jews knocking at the gates of other countries; a picture that certainly left its impression, as may well have been intended, upon every restrictionist Congressman.

It is difficult to speak temperately of so devious and dangerous a propaganda. For propaganda it is, pure and simple. The voluntary post-war movement of people is here confused with the enforced migrations of the war-time and temporary flight from the Nazi hordes. The truth is that those who speak so recklessly of mass immigration after the war do not and cannot know enough of the vital statistics. Certainly they do not know of the desires of the survivors. Indeed, what facts we have justify no such inference about mass emigration. The sombre figures of the surviving Jewish population of Europe contradict the wild talk of millions of European Jews ready for mass emigration.

Tragic accounts of the wholesale slaughters indicate that there will not be many more than 2,000,000 Jews left in all of Europe, outside of Russia. Even Dr. Nahum Goldmann, the Zionist leader, Jewish Agency representative and spokesman for the World Jewish Congress, has given his estimate that not more than 200,000 Jews are alive in Poland—the most frequently spoken of source of immigration to Palestine. These are heart-rending figures. But their very horror imposes the obligation to treat the facts soberly and judiciously.

By what warrant do the American Zionists speak

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of the post-war intentions of those 2,000,000? By what authority do they impute to them—to the surviving Jews of France, Belgium, Poland, Hungary, Holland, Italy and the other countries—a mass determination to evacuate Europe and seek out their homes in Palestine? On what tenable ground does the Zionist leadership justify its loose talk which in effect means making Europe *Judenrein*?

If anything, the present facts would show the contrary. There is one large Jewish community which, within the past year and a half, was freed from Nazi domination: the community of Jews of North Africa. Has there been any indication that, once freed from Nazi domination, those Jews were willing to pull up stakes from the land in which they have lived for centuries and move to Palestine? Is there any reason to suppose that once the Nazi terror has been struck down, the Jews of Europe will wish to uproot themselves *en masse* from the lands in which they have lived for centuries?

What is the purpose of raising the bogey?

No doubt there will be Jews who will want to migrate, just as there will be other Jews determined to retain their place in their native lands. But as Rabbi Wolsey pointed out in his testimony:

“Will we not do a fearful injustice to the harassed Jews by implying, as unprecise language well may, that they may not look forward to these new vistas with the same freedom that their eager fellow citizens do; that instead their own aspirations must be channelized into something,

called in their behalf and without inquiring as to their consent, their ‘national commonwealth.’ Is this an expansion of opportunity to which these driven souls are entitled, or is it a restriction of opportunity? It is a vague, subtle, but none the less real limitation upon their freedom of choice.

“Will not the second part of this resolution make more complex or even preclude any serious attempts to secure *equal* opportunities for immigration elsewhere, since this resolution implies preferential immigration for Jews into Palestine?

“And then, if this is so, there is a realistic, humanitarian consideration involved. For by so inelastically linking Jewish rehabilitation to Palestine, rehabilitation, upon the basis of equality, becomes more difficult in Europe. It becomes also more difficult for them to escape elsewhere. The most optimistic figures suggest that Palestine cannot absorb more than 100,000 new immigrants a year. Forgetting any normal increase in the population of 2,000,000 Jews who may be left, that would require 20 years. During that time a substantial number of these people would be left in the untenable position of having their ‘nationality’ a matter of debate in the countries in which they live.”

These are considerations that Jewish leadership, genuinely concerned for our fellow Jews and untrammelled by any single political direction, might well have before them. Surely we have at least the obligation to our co-religionists abroad not to make their future more difficult by conjuring up in their behalf a frightening bogey of enormous mass emigration!

From the Statement by Rabbi William H. Fineshriber at the Hearings of the House Foreign Affairs Committee

I come to you to lay before you grave considerations in regard to the Resolutions that are here being deliberated. I come, in particular, to protest as earnestly as is in my power, against that section of your Resolution which speaks of “the Jewish People” constituting a so-called “Jewish Commonwealth.”

I confess that I may not quite understand what that means—so alien is it to my thinking as a teacher of Judaism, so bizarre is it to a preacher of God’s truth. I take it that it means that Palestine shall be made what would properly be called a “Jewish

Commonwealth.” But does this mean that all of the citizens of that “Commonwealth” will become Jews, just as we are all Americans by virtue of being citizens of the United States of America? And does it mean that Jews outside of that so-called “Jewish Commonwealth” shall, thereafter, cease to be Jews just as those, not native of this country or resident citizens are not American? Or does it mean some confused, mixed pattern, unlike anything else in the world political order, a puzzling, bewildering, intermixture tending to make Jews all over the world an abnormal concept?

What strange formulation is here being considered when the simple, the human, the urgent task is to help rescue people, to help expand freedom of opportunity?

What is this puzzling attempt to "reconstitute a Jewish Commonwealth" if it does not mean setting back the clock two thousand years?

For there was such a Commonwealth up to about two thousand years ago, a state like other states, only smaller and perhaps more helpless. That nation which had its own language, its own authorities, its own political development, with time went the way of all nations. It had its beginning, it had its flowering, it had its decline. During its history, it went through all of the vicissitudes of political structures; it had its conquest, it was in turn conquered more than once; it laid tribute upon others, it in turn paid tribute to other countries. It fought wars, it had internal strife, civil war, dissensions, political upheavals and finally, the enmity of its neighbors swept over it and the Jewish nation was obliterated.

One thing only survived; one thing that was greater than the nation and because it was greater, could hope to endure through the millenia that followed. For out from among the people living in that land of Palestine a great truth emerged that was fashioned and shaped into a great religion. Out from among these people came the vision of the Oneness of God and, consonant with that, of the eternal brotherhood of man. Out of those people came first, the Ten Commandments as a guide to ethical conduct and later, the exhortations of the prophets and seers. And those prophets and those who preceded them and those that followed them, gave voice to eternal truths.

In the literature of that people, later to be known as the Bible, there was the admonition: "Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself" (Leviticus 19.18).

The prophets of that Bible spoke of a vision of peace when the lion shall lie down with the lamb. The rabbis enjoined upon their religious followers "Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself" as a fundamental principle of their religion.

Rabbi Hillel said:

"Whatever is hateful unto thee, do it not unto thy fellow. This is the whole law. The rest is but commentary."

And the great prophet Micah summarized the concept of our faith when he said: "What the Lord doth require of thee: Only to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

From these deep spiritual wells, there gushed forth a great religion, a world-wide, a universal re-

ligion. That religion gave birth to a daughter religion, Christianity, which has since enriched the Western world. That religion profoundly influenced still another manifestation of the divine, in the religion of the Moslems. That religion, the religion of the Jews, Judaism, has survived and has sustained its adherents through centuries of religious conflict and hostility, through trial and agony, through persecution and exile. That is the touchstone of those who call themselves Jews. There is no other. It is a faith by which men have known how to die; it is the faith by which they have lived and can hope to live the good life.

Will you now take it upon yourself to turn the clock back, to revert that ancient and universal faith into secular channels, into the channels of Nationalism? It is, of course, true that much of the Jewish religion, going back to its ancient cradle in Zion, has local characteristics but as the years proceeded, those local qualities were transmuted and given a wider spiritual interpretation. They have become symbolic as religion must be, of man's eternal quest for the true and the good and the holy.

I know that in a period of great strain and stress and emotional confusion, under the pressure of contemporary tragedy, there is always the inclination to raise a hue and cry for false gods. But do not for a moment suppose that in the deep quiet of our hearts, we have anything to hold us together but our ancient faith.

The very messages you have received supporting this Resolution out of the compassionate concern for our fellow Jews, no doubt, speak to you in the name of "Americans of Jewish faith." Ask your Jewish fellow-citizens in this room or anywhere in the wide expanse of our beloved country, ask him what his religion is and he will say: "I am of the Jewish faith." Ask his nationality and he will speak with justified pride in the world's greatest title: "I am an American."

This being so, I pray that no act of yours, no act of the American people whom you represent will entangle this crystal-clear concept of a religion with the secular, the political complexities of a state or a commonwealth.

And just as I turn to you with my profound appeal not to let this wrong be done, so I turn to you with equal fervor to plead that you give expression to the purpose of the first part of the Resolution.

The doors of Palestine threaten to be shut to Jews as Jews. Our great ally has, alas, under the

pressure of darker times, permitted discrimination against Jews in immigration into Palestine and in their acquisition of land. Your voice may well have a determining influence upon them, your clear expression against discrimination may make all the difference.

The Jews of Europe and indeed, of the world over, have gone through a nightmare which will not fully be lifted until the powers of tyranny and brutality will have been utterly laid low. God alone knows how many will survive the systematic extermination which has been planned for them. Those who have survived must not be further shamed by the spectacle of a great democracy raising barriers against them as Jews; and of its great ally, the United States, standing by without protest.

The first part of your Resolution is consistent with the spirit of the statement by that great American, our Secretary of State, the Honorable Cordell Hull, who said that we must have a world in which Jews, like all others, "are free to abide in peace and in honor." By that worthy standard, I appeal to you in behalf of the purpose of the first part of the Resolution. And as a teacher of an ancient faith, I ask you not to blur the shining lustre of that appeal for equality by injecting complex, secular, confused and deeply controversial elements such as are found in the second part of your Resolution.

BRIEFS

*From the Congressional Record
of March 14, 1944:*

MR. FISH. "May I say right here and now that I am in favor of the resolution, but I want to get action and I am going to take a resolution in amended form striking out all reference to the establishment of a commonwealth so that we can repudiate the "white paper" in order to demand immigration into Palestine and the right of the Jews to go there, to own property, to live there and bring up their families there?"

MR. DICKSTEIN. "I thank the gentleman."

MR. CELLER. "I think the gentleman from New York, our distinguished colleague, speaks directly and wisely. If we can get that resolution past the House Foreign Affairs Committee without the use of the word "commonwealth," I certainly would be for that proposal. It is essential to open Palestine to refugees so that the hapless, hopeless, tempest-tossed Jews can find some haven of refuge, be it

only temporary. If we can get that resolution through, and thereby needle and spur England into action to withdraw this MacDonald "white paper" and to allow further Jewish immigration into Palestine, even for temporary purposes, we will have accomplished something. I want to congratulate the distinguished gentleman from New York, first, because he was the author of the original Fish resolution of 1922 and because of his remarks in that regard just presented to us."

"I speak with all consideration when I say that I believe the political Zionists at this moment, as distinct from the cultural Zionists who have built the noble Hebrew university of Mount Scopus and who know what a National Home must be, these political Zionists are the chief enemies of the Jewish interest in the world of tomorrow. What can they hope to gain by extricating their brethren from the prejudices of Europe only to build a community in Palestine which has to be protected by Western force because it is cradled in an environment of sedulously cultivated distrust and fear?"

PROF. WILLIAM ERNEST HOCKING
in the N. Y. Times Jan. 3, 1944

AMERICAN JEWISH
Gentlemen: V E S

I am in receipt of your Information Bulletin. It's the finest thing I receive on the situation you discuss. It tells in the fewest possible words a story so few seem to be able to put over in extensive arguments.

Since it is so convincing I was wondering if it would be possible to receive four or five of these bulletins. I have been sending my bulletin to a friend in the opposition camp and he's a convert now. I couldn't do it but the bulletin did.

HENRY GREENFIELD
Houston, Texas

Gentlemen:

I am enclosing a check and am most interested in becoming a member.

As a member, will I receive your Information Bulletin? If not, what do I have to do to get it? Also, would it be possible to get the complete set of back issues. Such lovely ammunition for occasional arguments is hard to come by.

Many thanks for the information and simple explanations. It's helped greatly to crystallize my thinking.

LOIS HAYS
Cleveland, Ohio