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Reader's Digest, article by F. C. Painton, 1944.

C O P Y

April 26, 1944

Mr. William Hard
1731 Eye Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Hard:

It's a long time since I last had the pleasure of meeting with you, though I had been hoping to see you again in connection with a number of matters.

If I am writing to you today, it is because I have just bought the May number of "The Reader's Digest," and have just read the article on Palestine by Frederick C. Painton. I am shocked by it. And I am also terribly worried about the incalculable harm which the article is bound to do the cause which is so dear to me, and I know it is to you. The article fairly bristles with mistakes, contradictory statements, distortions, half-truths, and downright falsehoods. Far from being an objective and balanced treatment of the problem, it is obviously one-sided as well as superficial. I am really amazed that a journal like the Digest should print such an article without giving the representatives of the Zionist movement an opportunity to submit our observations at least privately to the editors of the Digest before they decided to publish it.

Apart from the Zionists, there are people in this country who are authorities on Palestine, such as Dr. Walter C. Lowdermilk, Assistant Chief of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service, who has recently published a book on the subject "Palestine, Land or Promise," Professor William F. Albright, head of the Oriental Seminary, Johns Hopkins University, who spent about sixteen years there, neither of them being Jews, and there are others. I wonder why it hasn't occurred to the "Reader's Digest" to print a summary of Dr. Lowdermilk's book.

The article in question will, I am sure, create a terrible impression and be a severe blow to the Zionist cause. I appeal to you, dear friend, to do what you can to make good the damage. I know your heart is in the right place. Surely you can help us.

With warmest regards, as ever

Cordially yours,

Emanuel Neumann

M/

MEMORANDUM

To Chairmen of Local Emergency Committees' Date April 27, 1944

From Harry L. Shapiro

The May issue of the Reader's Digest carries a "Report on Palestine" by Frederick C. Painton. In many respects this is one of the most unfavorable -- and untrue -- articles on the Palestine question to appear in an American magazine. When we consider the tremendous circulation and influence which the Reader's Digest has both here and abroad, we realize how damaging a blow Mr. Painton's piece is to the Zionist cause.

The falsehoods and perversions in this article (and there are many) must be brought to the attention of the editors of the Reader's Digest immediately. Please have your people prepare and send a number of letters to the Reader's Digest. These should be addressed to:

Mr. DeWitt Wallace, Editor
Reader's Digest
Pleasantville, New York

Letters can be brief or lengthy in accordance with the wishes of the writer. Have them select one or more points of the following criticism and expand on them. In no case are the letters to include sentences which are lifted bodily from the criticism -- the words must be those of the letter-writer. It is imperative that these letters be sent immediately!

In their introduction to Mr. Painton's article, the editors of the Reader's Digest make it perfectly clear that they are solidly behind the opinions expressed by the author. They point out that while Mr. Painton's report was intended "solely as a memorandum to the editors, that they might intelligently appraise current articles on the subject," they found it "so informative and so important as to warrant publication."

This article, then, is in the opinion of the Digest's editors "the truth behind the passion and politics in the controversy over extending immigration to the Jewish homeland." Why Frederick C. Painton, the Digest's correspondent in the Near Eastern theater, is best qualified to present the true picture is not explained. Perhaps the editors were impressed with his assertion that the report is "as honest and objective as it is in my power to write." Let us, therefore, examine Mr. Painton's conclusions for "truth," "objectivity," and "honesty."

To begin with, Mr. Painton makes things rather easy for himself. He conveniently disregards the international implications of the Palestine question -- little items like the Mandate for Palestine which the League of Nations

conferred upon Britain "for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," the Joint Resolution unanimously adopted by the Congress of the United States favoring such a national home, the special treaty between the United States and Britain which declared that no changes could be made in the terms of the Mandate "without the consent of the United States." These and similar items appear nowhere in Mr. Painton's study. We presume that this was for the benefit of his readers. Why bother to clutter up people's minds with dry, factual stuff when it's so much more convenient to draw one's conclusions from conversations with "a government Arab official whom I cannot name."

Nowhere in the article is Britain's role in Palestine discussed. As a matter of fact, Mr. Painton chooses to regard the Palestine question as a "Jewish-Arab problem," with immigration the nub of that problem. The over-simplification is convenient indeed. If this is an "Arab-Jewish problem," then there's no need to draw attention to Britain's pledges to the Jewish people or to other international guarantees of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, there's no need to examine how well or how badly such promises have been kept, there's no need to indicate that such an institution as the Palestine Administration even exists...

As for Jewish immigration into Palestine -- Mr. Painton makes no mention whatever of the Jewish need for Palestine. The plight of the remaining Jews of Europe, for whom Palestine is the only place of refuge on this earth does not figure in Mr. Painton's analysis. That these uprooted, hunted people need one spot where they may rebuild their shattered lives, free from the plagues of anti-Semitism and homelessness which have tortured them for centuries, is never considered.

And because such "minor" factors are disregarded, Mr. Painton finds no trouble in dismissing the entire question of the White Paper and what it means to Jews seeking escape from the European hell with these two sentences: "The Arabs, for the moment at least, are content to stand on the White Paper. The Jews are vigorously and even violently opposing it, but because of the war a sort of armistice has been set up which, except for the extremists, has been reasonably well observed."

It would seem that Mr. Painton and the Digest's editors need additional facts to round out their "objective" study. Perhaps they will allow us to supply a few of these.

First, about the White Paper. Isn't it worth mentioning, why it was issued? Perhaps this information would make it necessary for Mr. Painton to revise his report somewhat. He would suddenly realize that there are other factors in the Palestine question -- that something called "Chamberlain appeasement" figured prominently in 1939, when the White Paper was issued, that his picture of "the unorganized Arab, who has no spokesmen and few arms....who is leaning on the British to protect him," etc. is not "as honest and objective as it is in his power to write."

For Mr. Painton's information, the White Paper was issued by Britain to appease certain Arab leaders who, under the influence of Hitler and Mussolini, had whipped up their people against the British and the Jews. Did Mr. Painton ever hear of the Mufti of Jerusalem, we wonder? That gentleman is now with his Nazi master in Berlin.

Mr. Painton tells us that the Arabs "are afraid of the Jews" because the latter

"have a world press and vast wealth, and have been smuggling in arms on a rather astonishing scale -- not only rifles, but also machine-guns and mortars...The Arab is unorganized, he has no spokesmen, and he has few arms." It follows, therefore, that it is the Jew who is the trouble-maker in Palestine. Not the feudal Arab leaders. Not the reactionary British Colonial Administration. But the Jew -- the pioneer who reclaimed barren wasteland for the blessing of all and the hurt of none. The Jew -- who revived an impoverished country, without the exploitation of others, and created a new and better life for all the inhabitants of Palestine. This same Jew is the villain in the piece, if we are to believe this "Report on Palestine."

Mr. Painton, perhaps unwittingly, has supplied the Mufti with ample material for a number of broadcasts over the Berlin radio. He should be reminded of one simple fact -- the Jews have never attacked Arab communities, and arms in the possession of Jews have been used only in defense of Jewish homes and communities against Arab terrorists.

There are, unfortunately, a few (we repeat, a few) Jewish extremists who are responsible for the recent outbreaks in Palestine. It should be pointed out, however, that in no instance were Arabs attacked, and that all responsible Jewish groups have condemned the actions of this handful of terrorists -- and in no uncertain terms.

Conflict between Arabs and Jews, negligible in the beginning, could have been kept that way had not the Palestine Administration vacillated and appeased (long before appeasement became fashionable in the mother country).

Before we move on from Mr. Painton's description of the Palestine Jew as a fanatic, who disregards all else in his efforts to achieve his nationalist aims, let us ask ourselves: Who in the Near East has kept faith with Britain and the other United Nations in this war? The Iraqi, who in Britain's darkest hour attempted a pro-Nazi revolt? The Egyptians, who refused to lift a finger to halt Rommel's approach to Alexandria? The Syrians, whose land has teemed with fascist spies? The Palestine Arabs, whose leader is doing Hitler's work openly? (And incidentally, if the Arab has no spokesmen, as Mr. Painton declares, for whom were officials of the above-mentioned countries speaking when they denounced the Palestine resolutions, introduced in the Congress of the United States, in such vitriolic terms?)

By contrast, the Jews of Palestine have created a real arsenal of democracy in the Middle East. More than 30,000 have volunteered for service in the British Army (this is equivalent to a volunteer enlistment of 8,000,000 in the United States) and the Jewish National Home is providing food, ammunition and other vital supplies to United Nations forces.

Again on the question of immigration -- Jews are quite willing to allow Palestine's "absorptive capacity" determine how many should be admitted. The Reader's Digest's footnote containing Dr. Walter C. Lowdermilk's opinion on this question states that, with irrigation, Palestine could support an added 4,000,000 people. Need we say more?

It should be noted, too, that within the past twenty-two years there has been a 40% increase in the Arab population of Palestine. This has been brought about by the declining Arab death-rate (due to improved health conditions) and the migration of Arabs into Palestine (to take advantage of the higher standard of living created there by the Jews).

Mr. Painton's survey contains so many misconceptions and distortions that it is impossible to cover them all here. (A full article would be required for this -- and if the editors of the Digest have a sense of fair-play, they will invite someone who is better qualified than Mr. Painton to present the facts in their next issue.) However, one or two of Mr. Painton's statements should be noted here.

He reports the Trans-Jordan people as saying bitterly, "moving the Arabs out of Palestine to let in the Jews is comparable to asking the people in Kansas to pick up and get out so that newcomers could settle on the land." The comparison with Kansas suggests an American rather than a Transjordanian source for this malicious allegation. The idea that Transjordanians know of the existence of such a place as Kansas is laughable. However, Mr. Painton's point is that Arabs object to being moved out of Palestine. The slightest enquiry on his part would have indicated that at no time have responsible Zionists proposed that the Arabs be dispossessed. On the other hand, Arabs have been moving into Palestine, not out of it, as was pointed out above.

Mr. Painton warns: "The Arab world will rise if the White Paper clause on immigration is rescinded." That is only one man's opinion. A New York Times correspondent recently reported from Palestine that Arab agitators are having a difficult time in stirring up even the Palestinian Arabs, because the latter are much too content with wartime prosperity. It should be pointed out, too, that on March 9th President Roosevelt declared that the United States "has never given its approval to the British White Paper of 1939" and that "full justice will be done to those who seek a Jewish National Home." Not one Arab protest was heard, let alone a revolt of the Arab world.

Mr. Painton's conclusion -- "the Palestine problem will die out by sheer lack of Jews who would give up their own homeland to plant themselves anew in the sterile hills of Judea" -- is as false as it is vicious (or ignorant).

He speaks of Jews "giving up their homeland." Where has Mr. Painton been during the past decade? Hasn't he heard yet that the Jews of Europe -- no matter where they lived -- have been uprooted and persecuted, that they are being annihilated, that they have no homes, that a majority of those who remain have nothing to return to but the graveyards of their loved ones? Which "homelands" are to be "given up?" Those countries in Central and Eastern Europe where Jew-hating and Jew-killing have been the national sport for generations?

And "the sterile hills of Judea" indeed! Can Mr. Painton actually have visited Jewish Palestine and returned with that phrase? If Mr. Painton is correct, then the terraced fields, the beautiful orchards, the modern cities created by Jewish sweat and Jewish blood are a mirage which a surprisingly large number of observers and visitors have witnessed.

The "Jewish problem" in Palestine (as Mr. Painton sees it) will not "die out" -- not until the solemn pledges made to the Jewish people have been fulfilled, not until Jewish hopes for Palestine have been realized. The voice of Jewry and the Christian conscience will not be silent.

May 2, 1944

Editor
Reader's Digest
Pleasantville, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

We would not normally take official cognizance of articles appearing in the press on the situation in Palestine. We feel constrained, however, to express our deep regret that a journal of the circulation and influence of the "Reader's Digest" should have lent itself to publicizing so partisan, superficial and unfair an account as the "Report on Palestine" by Mr. F. C. Painton, appearing in your May issue. The article is the more regrettable in that by stressing in the foreword its impartial, informative and important character, the editors of the "Digest" have lent it the authority of their approval.

The author of the article seeks to spike any criticism in advance by stating that no matter how honestly and factually the various arguments are advanced, protest will be aroused. Had Mr. Painton's arguments been presented in the manner suggested by him, we would not have complained even though the article were anti-Zionist in character. It is rare, however, for so many mis-statements of fact and such a distortion of the situation to be contained in so small a compass. We shall limit ourselves here to dealing with a few of the points made by Mr. Painton which are open to criticism.

In dealing with the Jewish case, which incidentally received much smaller space than does that devoted to the Arabs, the whole emphasis is placed on the millions of dollars alleged to have been poured into Palestine by the Jews, and on the uneconomic nature of the development for which they have been responsible. There is no indication of the great underlying issues. There is no hint of the century-old problem of the Jews of Europe which at the end of the last war induced the statesmen of the world, including those of our own country, to undertake to reestablish the Jews as a nation in Palestine, and which has reached a grim climax in the course of the last decade. Nor is there any indication that as a result of the Allied victory in that war, a victory of which the Arabs were probably the greatest single beneficiaries, vast Arab territories in the Near East -- more than one hundred times the area of that of Palestine -- are today independent, or about to become so.

Mr. Painton divorces the issue from its content and treats it as one purely between the Jews and Arabs of Palestine. The broad international aspects of the question he ignores.

Mr. Painton declares that Jewish Palestine is still an enormous philanthropic venture and points to the \$5,500,000. sent into Palestine each year from the United States. But it is surely elementary economics that in a rapidly developing country like Palestine the importation of capital from abroad is normal and indeed essential. That was a characteristic feature of the economy of the United States itself until the end of the last century. In Palestine, as the authoritative British Royal Commission pointed out, this necessary capital influx, on the basis of which assets of a permanent and constructive character are being created, has the great advantage that it requires no remittances in return for interest and sinking fund. Mr. Painton himself refers to a collective farm which he had visited in 1932 where at that time there was nothing but a few farmsteads providing a bare existence. Today, he states, this farm is self-supporting and its membership has increased eight-fold, an excellent example of the whole developmental process.

The Arabs of Trans-Jordan are quoted as saying bitterly that, "moving the Arabs out of Palestine to let in the Jews is comparable to asking the people of Kansas to pick up and get out so that newcomers could settle on the land". There is no hint in Mr. Painton's account of the fact that no responsible Jewish leader has ever suggested any such transfer of population. Nor does he indicate that the Arabs of Palestine had increased in numbers by nearly 100% during the period of Jewish development, while the population of Trans-Jordan had remained stationary in numbers, miserable in their standard of life, and (as many of us know from personal contacts), deeply envious of the economic progress enjoyed by their brethren in Palestine.

Mr. Painton's argumentation descends to the fatuous when he states that you cannot get enough to eat in Palestine and that he was hungry all the time he was there. The thought that this is a time of war and that in almost every country in the world today, outside the Western Hemisphere, there are critical shortages of food and other necessities of life, does not seem to have occurred to him. The fact is that but for the great development in recent years of agriculture and industry in Palestine, a development brought about primarily by the Jews, that country instead of constituting as it has a most important supply center to the armies of the United Nations in the Near East, would have proved a serious drain on their resources.

The British, says Mr. Painton, believe that they have lived up to the letter of the Balfour Declaration, which he adds, "said only that His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment of a home for the Jews in Palestine". Apparently he has not read the actual wording of the Balfour Declaration in terms of which the British Government undertook to "use their best endeavors to facilitate the establishment of a National Home for the Jewish

people" in Palestine. We venture to invite him also to read the Mandate for Palestine, by which, among other things, Great Britain undertook to facilitate Jewish immigration and land settlement. To stop all Jewish immigration and to prohibit Jewish land settlement in 95% of the area of Palestine, as laid down by the White Paper, hardly seems consistent with the idea that the British have lived up to the letter of their promises.

A small example of Mr. Painton's inaccuracies is the statement that if we were to increase the population of Palestine to five and a half millions (an arbitrary figure stated by him to be that at which the Jews aim, but the authority for which is not given), you would have a population density greater than that of Belgium. In fact, Belgium, which has approximately the same area as Palestine, has a population of eight millions. His bias, again, may be seen from his comparison of the density of population in Palestine with that of under-developed Oregon. A much fairer comparison in selecting an American state would have been with the partially urban, partially rural state of Massachusetts, the population density of which is very substantially greater than that of Palestine. Incidentally ^{also} it is apparently held against the Jews that only 23% of their numbers in Palestine are on the land. In the United States the comparable figure for the whole population is 19.3% gainfully engaged in agriculture.

Mr. Painton builds up a picture of the defenseless, unorganized Arabs who are in a helpless condition as compared with the Jews who have been smuggling in "arms on rather an astonishing scale". The latter is the kind of allegation with which it is very difficult to deal since obviously the facts are unavailable. It is to be regretted, however, that there is no slightest indication of the well-armed and well-organized campaign of terror conducted for three years before the war by the Axis supported gangs of the Mufti of Jerusalem (now in Berlin); nor any recognition of the great self-restraint exercised by the Jews in the face of almost intolerable provocation; nor finally of the dangers still besetting a minority population in an Arab country -- dangers to which the massacre of the Assyrians in Iraq bear eloquent testimony.

In suggesting that many refugees in Palestine will wish to return to Europe after the war -- an assertion for which the evidence as far as we know is all the other way -- Mr. Painton states that "the Jewish Agency people" fear that the skilled refugees will return to their native lands when the war is over. Leaders of the Jewish Agency have visited this country at different times during the war. In the light of what they have told us, we can only describe Mr. Painton's statement as nonsense. He points to the fact that fewer than 100 of the 5,500 American Jews in Palestine have given up their passports. But one is entitled to ask whether in the light of the vacillations and uncertainties which have afflicted British policy in Palestine and which culminated in the 1939 White Paper, Americans who love Palestine and wish to make it their permanent home, can be reasonably expected to give up their American citizenship.

There are other matters to which we might refer. We feel, however, that enough has been said to indicate the quality and nature of Mr. Painton's report.

4-Editor, Reader's Digest, 5/2/44

We can only express the hope that the "Reader's Digest" will find it possible to print another article by a better qualified and fairer critic.

Sincerely yours

SSW/ANS:LCK

Stephen S. Wise

Abba Hillel Silver
Co-Chairmen



C O P Y

THE READER'S DIGEST

Pleasantville, N. Y.
4030 Poinciana Avenue
Coconut Grove
Miami, Florida

May 2, 1944

Dr. Emanuel Neumann
Commission on Palestine Surveys
521 Fifth Avenue
New York 17, N. Y.

Dear Dr. Neumann:

I am still down here in Florida unable -- for reasons of health -- to return north.

I saw Painton's article and I at once wrote to Eliahu Ben Horin. He wired me in reply. I then telephoned our executive editor in Pleasantville, Mr. Kenneth Payne. He told me he would get in touch with Mr. Ben-Horin.

You must rest assured that Mr. Payne has no anti-Semitic animus whatsoever.

I told Mr. Payne frankly that the article seemed to me to contain many errors and many false conclusions. Mr. Payne said that he would go into the whole Zionist problem more deeply. I feel sure that he will. You will know, of course, that I did not see the article before it was printed.

I hope to get back north by the middle of June. I hope that you will then be there. I would like to lay some plans with you. My indignation against the Palestine Government grows deeper and higher every day.

With many regards,

Sincerely yours,

(signed) William Hard

by ECU

This letter will have to be signed for me.

May 5, 1944

(Confidential)

Mr. William Hard
4030 Poinciana Avenue
Coconut Grove
Miami, Florida

Dear Mr. Hard:

I have just received your most welcome letter of May 2nd and am wiring you as follows:

"WARMEST THANKS YOUR LETTER MAY SECOND CONFIDENTIAL BEN HORIN AN EXCELLENT MAN BUT UNFORTUNATELY CONNECTED WITH NEW ZIONIST ORGANIZATION ENTERTAINING CERTAIN VIEWS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE OFFICIAL ZIONIST MOVEMENT WOULD URGE YOU TELEPHONE OR WIRE PAYNE TO CONFER WITH US BEFORE TAKING FURTHER STEPS AM ENTIRELY AT HIS DISPOSAL PERSONALLY AND AS REPRESENTING OFFICIAL ZIONIST MOVEMENT PLEASE WIRE REPLY COLLECT THANKS"

To explain further: Mr. Ben Horin, whom I know personally and whose gifts I admire, is one of the leaders of the New Zionist Organization. They are the Revisionists, followers of the late Jabotinsky, who seceded from the Zionist Organization. They are regarded as entertaining "extremist" views, such as the forcible transfer of the Arabs from Palestine to Syria or Iraq, etc. Their following, especially in this country, is numerically insignificant, almost nil. The official Zionist movement in this country is represented by the American Zionist Emergency Council, which embraces all the major Zionist organizations, including the Zionist Organization of America, Hadassah, Women's Zionist Organization, the Poalei Zion (Labor Zionists) and the Mizrachi (Orthodox religious Zionists). These groups have a total dues-paying membership of over 300,000 and have the moral support and backing of most of the other major Jewish organizations in this country, including the American Jewish Congress, Bnai Brith, American Jewish Conference, etc.

It would therefore be a tactical mistake for the "Reader's Digest" to work with representatives of the so-called New Zionist Organization for it would be likely to further offend the sensibilities of the supporters of the official Zionist movement throughout the country.

I was happy, of course, to note that you reacted so promptly on your own to Painton's unfortunate article. I hear that the Editors had contacted Dr. Lowdermilk in Washington and shown him the article, but I suppose that he, not being very political-minded, did not react to it as vigorously as he might have, though evidently he expressed his dissent with regard to the argument on absorptive capacity, and this resulted in the footnote.

Mr. William Hard

May 5, 1944

I had to express myself rather vigorously in an article which I wrote for the Jewish "Day", a copy of which I am enclosing. The other day, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, one of our great leaders and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Zionist Emergency Council, referred to above, wrote officially to the "Reader's Digest", asking for publication of another article more sympathetic or at least objective in character.

I don't know whether you have seen Dr. Lowdermilk's book, "Palestine, Land of Promise", which contains a chapter entitled "The Jordan Valley Authority", outlining the great reclamation, irrigation and hydroelectric program. For the past year I have been at work, with the help of a group of distinguished engineers, studying these projects, and our work has now advanced to the blueprint stage. A technical mission is about to leave for Palestine to complete the studies on the spot.

Because of the eight years I spent in Palestine, both in official capacity (as a member of the Executive of the Jewish Agency) and as a private citizen engaged in business; because of the negotiations which I carried on personally while I was there with the Arabs of Transjordan, and particularly with Emir Abduallah regarding Jewish settlement in Transjordan; and particularly, because of the economic and engineering studies in which I have been engaged for the past year, I feel especially qualified to discuss the subject. However, I think you know me well enough to realize that I am not fishing for an opportunity to publish an article in the "Reader's Digest". This can be done by someone else equally or better qualified. What is important, however, is that the Editors should confer with us, the official Zionists, and try to work out the question in cooperation with us.

The "Digest" is so important and its influence so widespread that we all regard this matter as of major importance. I do hope you will act promptly on my telegram and advise me. God bless you and keep you well and strong!

With kindest regards, as ever

Faithfully yours,

Emanuel Neumann

EN/M
(Enc.)

American Zionist Emergency Council

CONSTITUENT ORGANIZATIONS

Hadassah, Women's Zionist Organization of America
Mizrachi Organization of America
Poale Zion-Zeire Zion of America
Zionist Organization of America

342 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.
Murray Hill 2-1160

June 2, 1944

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Silver:

The enclosed note from Kenneth Payne
would make it appear that the Reader's Digest
intend to give their forthcoming discussion of
Palestine the accent of a rebuttal to Painton.

Sincerely yours,

Marvin

ML:BI
Encl.

Marvin Lowenthal

June 7, 1944

Mr. Marvin Lowenthal
389 Bleecker St.
New York, N.Y.

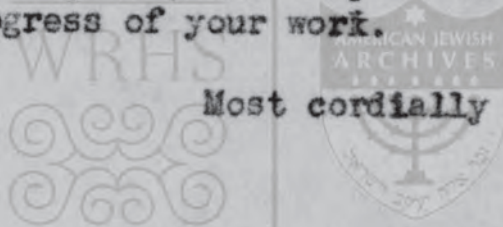
My dear Marvin:

I am returning herewith the letter of Mr. Ken Payne. I hope that the article which will appear in the July Reader's Digest will in some way atone for Painton's article.

Please follow up the organization of the Artists and Writers Committee aggressively in New York, and if necessary through an early visit to Los Angeles, and keep me in touch with the progress of your work.

Most cordially yours,

AHS:BK
Enc.



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The Reader's Digest

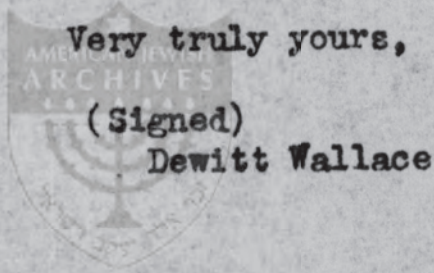
Editors - DeWitt Wallace - Lila Acheson Wallace

Pleasantville, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Wise and Dr. Silver:

At this late date permit me to express our appreciation of your thoughtful and informative criticism of Frederick Panton's "Report on Palestine". Your letter, together with others we received, provided facts and arguments which will appear as a summary entitled, "Dissenting Reports on Palestine", in the July issue of the Reader's Digest. I hope you will approve our presentation of the major criticisms of Mr. Panton's article and that it will demonstrate to you the sincerity of our effort to present both sides of controversial subjects.

Many thanks for your contribution to the discussion.



Very truly yours,

(Signed)

Dewitt Wallace

Dr. Stephen S. Wise
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
c/o American Zionist Emergency Council
342 Madison Avenue
New York, 17, New York

AN ANSWER TO THE READER'S DIGEST'S "REPORT ON PALESTINE"

by Emanuel Neumann

The Reader's Digest's article Report on Palestine, out only a few days, has already aroused a storm of indignation, judging by messages which have been pouring in from all parts of the country. That this indignation is, in my opinion, fully warranted, would appear from my own comment, but I would like to preface my comment with the following observation: It is, after all, no more than an article that we are dealing with, even if it does appear in a magazine claiming nine million circulation. It is unfortunate; it is harmful; but it is not a calamity. Now that the fight is on, now that the future of Palestine has become a burning question, we must expect and be prepared for hostile expressions of opinion as well as the friendly kind. Last week Collier's magazine, which also enjoys a large national circulation, published an excellent article, "The Jew as a Soldier", in which the Palestine question is treated from a sympathetic point of view; this week it is the Reader's Digest with the opposite trend. On the whole, Zionism has had a very favorable press in this country in recent months. If a blow is delivered now and then, we must take it on the chin without getting hysterical.

That the article in question constitutes an attack, cannot be doubted. It is supposed to give "the truth behind the passion and politics in the controversy." It is dressed up as an "honest and objective" treatment of the subject, but in fact and taken as a whole, it is as flagrant a piece of anti-Zionist propaganda as has appeared in a long time. The Reader's Digest apparently has no luck with Palestine. This is not the first tendentious anti-Zionist article which has appeared. Some years ago, while I was still living in Palestine, the Reader's Digest had an article about Tel Aviv which was so full of stupidities, inaccuracies and a thoroughgoing misunderstanding of the spirit of Tel Aviv as to leave us absolutely aghast. On the other hand, I do not recall that the Digest ever published an article on Palestine or Zionism genuinely objective in character, let alone sympathetic to Zionist aspirations. Whether this is an accident or design, I cannot say.

The article does attempt to state the Jewish cause, though inadequately. But it is significant that it devotes to it barely one page out of six. Practically all the rest is devoted to a refutation of the Jewish case, to the Arab point of view, and to distortions and misstatements generally. It is impossible in a short article to deal with all of these misstatements of fact and fallacious argumentation. I will only point out a few of them.

To begin with, the writer, Mr. Panton, conveniently disregards the broad international aspects of the Palestine question: the Mandate conferred upon Great Britain by the League of Nations, the Joint Palestine Resolution of the 67th Congress of the United States, the Anglo-American Treaty of 1925. Nor is the role of the British Administration in Palestine discussed. Mr. Panton chooses to regard the Palestine question simply as a Jewish-Arab problem, and he divorces it completely from its international context, including the desperate plight of European Jewry and the determination of the civilized world to provide the Jewish people with a National Home. Palestinian Jews are depicted as a fanatical lot, almost crazy, one would suspect, who are insisting on doing the impossible, backed by their "world press" and "vast wealth." The Arabs "are afraid of the Jews, who have been smuggling arms on an astonishing scale." In reckless disregard of the history of the past twenty-five years, it is implied that it is the Jews rather than the Arab extremists and terrorists who are the trouble makers in Palestine. Though it was the Arabs who were the aggressors and let loose murderous attacks in 1921, in 1929 and in 1936 to 1938, the Jew is somehow the villain of the piece, if we are to

believe this "Report on Palestine." And while on the one hand the Jews are depicted as such fanatical nationalists, the writer would also have us believe that they are waiting in large numbers for the termination of the war in order to rush back to the countries of their origin on the blood soaked continent of Europe. As evidence of the failure of the Jews to sink roots in Palestine, Painton cites the fact that only 100 out of the 5500 American Jews in Palestine have given up their American passports. It does not occur to him to ask himself the question whether these American Jews and many thousands of others might be reasonably expected to give up the protection of their present status as long as Palestine is run by the British Colonial Administration on a White Paper policy.

The writer quotes Arab statistics to show how important is the Arab stake in the land. Nobody questions it. But it is by this time well established and common knowledge that taking the economic life of the country as a whole, the Jewish community, though only a third of the population, is already the preponderant economic factor. In the industrial field, for example, the Jews have established and operate fully 80% of Palestinian industry. They contribute more than 70% of the country's revenues. The Jewish stake in Palestine is already at least as important as the Arab and is constantly growing at an ever increasing pace.

The assertion is made to our discredit that only 23% of Palestine Jews live on the land. Actually this is a tremendous achievement and a fairly satisfactory proportion. It represents a fundamental occupational readjustment on the part of city-bred immigrants. Moreover, the percentage of Jews in agriculture compares favorably with the situation in many other countries. In the United States only 19.3% of the total population is gainfully employed in agriculture; in Canada 27%; in Holland 20%; in Belgium 17%; and in England only 6.5%.

The author goes on to say that "it is still an enormous philanthropic venture ... the United States alone sends five and a half million dollars into Palestine each year." He does not seem to realize that the philanthropic contributions of the Jews to Palestine are mainly for the purpose of creating new agricultural settlements and not for subsidizing or maintaining the existing population. These contributions represent only a small part of the total capital import into Palestine, the overwhelming part of which comes in by way of private investments. The United States itself, the richest country in the world, was built up with the aid of foreign capital imported in great quantities throughout the nineteenth century. Until 1914 the United States was in this sense a debtor country and the gross foreign investments made here amounted to approximately \$5,000,000,000. Does that makes the United States a philanthropic venture? Foreign investments in other growing countries amounted to the following figures as of 1930: South Africa, £ 260,000,000; Argentina £ 635,000,000; Austria £ 753,000,000; Canada £ 955,000,000. The total investments in Palestine as of 1942 is about £ 120,000,000, of which at least five-sixths was private investment capital.

The author complains that you can't get enough to eat in Palestine today. He was hungry all the time he was there. That is too bad, but I have heard similar complaints from visitors to other countries affected by the war, by war-time inflation, by lack of shipping facilities. England, a great and rich country, is largely dependent upon foodstuffs imported from overseas.

More important is the argument concerning population density. The author compares Palestine's density with that of the state of Oregon without making it clear why he chose that vast and underpopulated state for comparison. Why not go further afield, compare Palestine with Alaska, Canada or the Antarctic regions? If Palestine has 144.5 population per square mile, Roumania has 172; Hungary 251;

Holland 650; while Egypt has a density of 1173 per square mile on its inhabited area. It is perhaps more to the point to compare Palestine with the neighboring little country of Lebanon, which has a density of 270 per square mile, almost twice the density of Palestine.

The further argument that Palestine has only 2,200,000 acres of productive and potentially productive land is equally superficial. Everything depends upon the extent to which modern technology, including irrigation, is applied to the land. It has been amply demonstrated in Palestine that one dunam of irrigated land is the economic equivalent of at least five dunams of unirrigated land. By utilizing the available water resources, the effective cultivable area can be more than doubled. By the same token, the agricultural population of Palestine could easily be doubled, not to speak, of course, of urban population dependent upon trade and industry.

The argument that Arab progress is due to the influx of Jewish capital and that if Jewish capital were withdrawn the Arabs' standard of living "would fall back to precisely where it had been" - all of this can only be described as stupid argumentation. It betrays the author's obvious ignorance of simple economic processes, of the permanent influence of capital investments and the permanent values created thereby. The only correct test to apply is whether the capital invested is productively applied, whether there is an increase of production commensurate with the invested capital. As to that, the statistics of Palestine are eloquent of its constantly expanding economy and production. Or does Mr. Painton think that the 600,000 Jews of Palestine, and perhaps a large part of the Arab population as well, are living on the dole? Would all the collections of Zionist funds, multiplied ten times, suffice to maintain such a population? Or is it not clear that the large investments in orange groves, in factories, in farms, in the chemical works, in the electrical industry, in transportation and in many other fields are basically sound and are providing a permanent livelihood for ever-increasing numbers of workers and farmers alike?

The article ends with the "consoling" thought, that the problem will solve itself through the fact that Jews are not going to go to Palestine in the future to plant themselves "in the sterile hills of Judaea." Mr. Painton doesn't tell us whether his friends among the Arabs share that view and if they do, why are they opposing so violently a Jewish immigration which is not going to take place. Judging by the article, the author knows little about colonization, economics, history or international affairs. It is not a serious contribution to the discussion but a superficial journalistic piece of shreds and patches. But for its appearance in a widely read journal, it would scarcely merit attention.