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THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT.

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**“We ask but a little portion of the green and ancient earth:
Only to sow and sing and reap in the land of our birth.”**

THIS refrain in “The Cry of the Little Peoples” echoes the longings of those Jews whom the world has learned to call Zionists. Young as the modern form of the movement is, it has already passed through various stages. At its birth it was received with a smile, and even with a certain amount of scorn. As it rapidly made its way, it was looked at with surprise. At the second Zionist Congress, the surprise turned into respectful attention. What strange forces were awakening among God’s ancient folk? What new spirit was being infused into the dead bones? What strange feeling had come over the wandering Jew? We stand in the shadow of the third Zionist Congress at Basle. No nation ought to give an ear to “the Cry of the Little Peoples” more readily than the American. It was itself one of them at a time not so far back as to make it forget its origin, now that it has grown to a place among the greatest. What, then, is the history of the Zionist movement; for what does it stand, and how far is it an expression of the wish of the Jewish people?

I have spoken of the modern form of the movement, for there is an ancient form as well. The Zionist idea, as the expression of the national hope of restoration to the national home of the Jew, dates back to the time of the Babylonian captivity. The prophets and psalmists of the exile are borne up by that hope in their preaching and in their singing. After the end of the second commonwealth, the same hope accompanied the Jew wherever he dragged his weary steps. He prayed for this restoration every

time he approached the Seat of Mercy. His poets sang of it, his philosophers wrote of it. His whole life, though lived in dingy Ghettoes and pent-up Judenstrasse, was fashioned after the life he had left behind. The Synagogue service was a poor model of the elaborate Temple Ritual. As a possibility, this hope of restoration receded further and further from his sight. But he never let it pass away entirely, even when the walls of the Ghetto tumbled and he was free to come forth. Only at the rarest intervals did he try to bring this hope to an actual fruition. The Reform movement in the Jewish Church, which commenced with Mendelssohn at the end of the last century, has ended in the excision of all mention of Zion and Palestine from the Reform prayer book. There was hope, in the days of Mendelssohn, that the world was rapidly advancing towards the stage when racial differences would be all obliterated, when the brotherhood of man would become a reality, and religious differences rather unite than separate the votaries of various creeds.

The Jews were among the foremost to grasp at the new fruit. It had hardly time to reach their mouths when its sweetness turned into gall. The universalism of Lessing and Goethe and Herder, the work of such men as Mirabeau, the redeeming features of the French blood-bath of 1789, the ideals of the martyrs of 1830 and 1848, soon made way for an individualism which showed itself in increased national feeling in every country of Europe. Jewish hopes were cruelly shattered. I was a student in Germany when the black spirit of the Middle Ages crept out of its grave once more to trouble men. I personally assisted Russian Jews as they fled in hundreds to Germany, in their endeavor to reach a haven of rest in America. I have seen in France, as I came there year after year, the work of a hundred years undone in less than so many months. I saw the Berlin treaty nullified and the rights of citizenship still refused to the Roumanian Jews. But why complete the tale? It has been told over and over again.

The May Laws of Count Ignatieff mark the beginning of the new Zionism. Instinctively, the Jew turned to his old home. Equipped with nothing but hope and an undaunted courage, many journeyed thither. Colonization societies were formed in Russia and Roumania—*Chovei-Zion* (Lovers of Zion) they called themselves for the most part. Similar efforts at colonizing Jews in Palestine had been made in the fifties by Sir Moses Montefiore,

by Lord Shaftesbury, by Laurence Oliphant and by Dr. Friedman. In 1870, the first real colony (*Mikiveh Israel*) was founded by Charles Netter, under the auspices of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*, an organization which has nobly pleaded the cause of the Jews wherever they were unable to do it themselves, and whose leaders were such men as Adolph Cremiaux and Albert Cohn. This, however, was a purely agricultural school. Here colonies soon grouped themselves near to it and spread out in other parts of the land. There are now as many as sixteen mother colonies, with other settlements attached which may bring up their number to twenty-five; around Jerusalem, near Haifa and Jaffa, in Galilee and now even beyond the Jordan. Their success is due to the splendid interest taken in them by Baron Edmond de Rothschild, who has spared neither expense nor trouble to help them through the experimental stage in which they were bound to remain for some years. Wine of various kinds is produced in the colonies, cognac, scent and soap. As soon as a proper market is found for these products, the colonies will all be self-supporting. In the year 1897, the first attempt was made to colonize also in the Island of Cyprus. For various reasons this island offers many advantages as a stepping stone to the coast of Palestine.

When the Jewish traveller, Benjamin of Tudela, visited the holy places in Palestine in the twelfth century, he could find there no more than a few hundred of his people. Now there are about sixty thousand Jews in Palestine. Schools have been founded there by the *Alliance*, there is a high-school in the City of Jaffa, and a national Hebrew library in Jerusalem. This Abarbanel Library, as it is called, has been founded almost wholly through the exertions of Dr. Casanowitz of Bialoistock (Russia), who spent all his own fortune in so doing, and often takes his fees in books, which he then forwards to Jerusalem.

This indiscriminate colonization, and what was worse, the massing of poverty-stricken Jews in Jerusalem, had been going on for some years when, in 1896, a pamphlet called "*Der Juden Staat*" appeared in Vienna. The writer of it, Dr. Theodore Herzl, was a brilliant member of the editorial staff of the "*Neue Freie Presse*" of Vienna. He was by no means the first to preach the ideas for which he now stands. In Russia men like Binsher,

in Germany men like Ruelf, had done this before his time. But it is his merit to have definitely laid down the lines upon which any movement of this kind must run. His merit is even greater than this. As a refuge from Anti-Semitism merely, Zionism would have only a negative value. Herzl has supplied the ideal, or rather has formulated it in a definite manner: the ideal of a certain home and of a renewed life in common for the Jews. At the inspiration of his word and through his unflagging energy, assisted by such men as Max Nordau, what was but the individual effort of a few societies has become a goal towards which the Jewish people may walk. He has brought the question before the forum of European thought and to the ears of those who have in their hands the making of history. Before the first Congress at Basle in 1897, there were in various parts of the world one hundred and seventeen societies whose aims were more or less Zionist. At the second Basle Congress in 1898, their number had risen to more than eight hundred. Before 1897, there were merely a handful of societies in the United States. The American Federation of Zionists now counts as many as one hundred and twenty-five societies; and there are quite a number of other Zionist societies not yet affiliated with the Federation.

The success of the Zionist movement presupposes the presence of such an ideal. The immense benefactions of the late Baron de Hirsch in the Argentine Republic can never, for the want of this ideal, prove of lasting value to the Jewish nation. They can only make a temporary asylum for a small portion of the race. Up to within a short time, the Jewish Colonization Society, the disburser of Baron de Hirsch's money, has given nearly all its attention, as far as affects colonization, to every other land but Palestine. Happily, a change has come over the leaders of that society, and now with an open hand and with an open mind, they aid and assist the work in Cyprus and in Palestine.

No such means are at the call of the Zionists. It has been a subject of reproach to us that in our ranks the great financiers, the men of great fortunes, are seldom to be found. The reproach touches them, not us. And in the end it matters little. Our strength lies in an idea: and in the long run ideas shape themselves out into history. At the last Congress it was resolved to found a company, which, working side by side with the Congress, should enable it to carry out whatever ideas it should

from time to time adopt. During the present year, the Jewish Colonial Trust was brought into existence under the English Banking Laws and with its chief office in London. The necessary working capital has already been subscribed—largely by the Jewish Proletariate. From every place into which Jewry is dispersed, the money has come, a free-will offering to the great work we have in view.

Nearly all the older *Chovei-Zion* societies have joined the movement of which the Basle Congress is the exponent. Some, however, have not. A large society in Lemberg, the English Zionist tents, and a few societies in Germany, still believe that simple colonization in Palestine is the only thing for which the Jews should strive. In this they show little insight into the changed economic conditions under which we now live. To make of the Jewish people simply an agricultural people, would be an attempt to turn back the hands of the clock; and to bring a large number of Jews into Palestine without at the same time assuring the stability of the new settlements, is to run a risk which the tremendous interests at stake do not permit. Yet, there are lines upon which the smaller force can work with no detriment to the greater, but rather as a help in bringing about the end which both have in view.

The Zionist movement looks into the future calmly and with assurance. A part of the great problem it has solved. It has come not purely as a religious movement, not purely as an economic one. It has found the basis upon which a higher religious life, as well as a higher economic life, can be built up for the Jew. For, starting with the economic question, it provides a ground upon which all shades of Jewish belief can stand. It were idle to deny the fact that such shades exist. Uniformity would mean death. It provides also a place for the large mass of the unchurched Jews, who remain Jews though they know not why. Jews the world over form one body, held together by a community of interests from within and by a common pressure from without. Were these interests purely spiritual and purely theological, the Jewish Church, as such, might come into existence and take its place side by side with the Protestant and Catholic Churches. But where Church lines run in the same deep grooves as do the social lines, and where intermarriage is undesired by both sides, a Jewish Church, as a church alone, is impossible.

Thus the first work of Zionism has been to find a common ground upon which a new Jewish nation can be built up. It has been signally successful in this. The Zionist Congresses at Basle have had all the signs of national assemblies. For the first time in two thousand years, the Jews scattered in the four corners of the globe have felt that, as such, they are part of a great body. For the first time they have been asked to do something for the Jewish people; to give up something for measures which do not concern their own little section, their own little state.

But not only as a solution of the Jewish Question, not only as a philanthropic plan, Zionism offers medicine and healing for the wounds from which Judaism is to-day suffering. Emancipation always works a certain amount of harm, together with the good it does. In the days of the Second Temple, the sanhedrin was the expression of the unity of Israel: at a later period this was passed on to the schools of Babylon. When the Jews entered Europe and settled in the various countries, this outer unity almost suffered shipwreck. During the long night which then set in, unity of thought, unity of practice, unity of suffering, unity of hope, held the Jews together by a strong though invisible bond. Emancipation broke this bond. Unity of practice, unity of thought, and, at times, unity of suffering were gone. Jews merged into the life in which they happened to be placed. They could not do otherwise. All attempts to bring back the original unity have failed. Various unions have been formed in Germany and America; synods have been held. All to no purpose! Religious views have gone too far apart and these unions were purely religious in character. The nearest approach to a restored unity was the *Alliance Israelite Universelle* in Paris. But not only was this distinctively French in its character; it was largely charitable and educational. Zionism alone has been able to restore the old unity. It has written boldly in its programme that the Jews are bound together, though they often do not know it, by the ties of race, by the ties of a common past, by the ties of a common opposition to what they consider religious error, by the ties of a common hope.

Why, then, has the whole Jewish world not become Zionist? Has the woeful misery in which five or six millions of their brethren in Eastern Europe live, no power to stir the blood of every one who bears the name Jew? Has this appeal made by

the Zionists not awakened a responsive chord in their heart? In any ordinary circumstances, it is of course difficult to move a large and a scattered community. In the case of the Jews the difficulty has been increased by the cross-purposes at which the various sections among them have been working. The Reform wing of my church still believes, or affects to believe, that Anti-Semitism is but a passing indisposition, even though that indisposition has lasted for some twenty centuries. Like the plague, it makes its appearance whenever the conditions are favorable—that is, whenever the Jews flourish and are likely to become a power. In Russia and Roumania it is governmental, in Austria and France political, in America social. It is the same disease, though in varied forms. In this very year we have seen outbreaks in Nicolaieff (Russia), in Machod (Bohemia), in Jassy (Roumania). In Vienna the society for combating Anti-Semitism, a society made up of non-Jews, has practically laid down its arms, acknowledging its inability to do anything. In France, will even the rehabilitation of Dreyfus undo the work of the “*Libre Parole*” and “*L’Anti-Juif?*” And yet the Reform Jewish Church still believes that in the advancement of science, in the progress of thought, a brotherhood and a love will be produced which will triumph over all social and economic conditions. Under certain circumstances this might seem but another evidence of Jewish optimism. Yet, in the meanwhile, the denizens of the Eastern European slums must quietly abide their fate. The optimists have not yet offered to share it with them; they simply deal with such words as “humanity,” “the brotherhood of man,” “human fellowship,” as if they were so many magician’s wands with which to conjure up better times. The more religiously inclined among them have adopted the shibboleth of the “Mission of Israel:” which they understand in the sense that a suffering Israel must exist, scattered among the nations of the world, in order to preach true righteousness and to advance the Kingdom of Heaven. A perversion of Scripture, which they attempt to read into Scripture! A perversion of ideas, for they themselves are not suffering! Suffering Israel is thoroughly Zionist.

The other great wing of the Jewish Church, the Orthodox, pray *ex cathedra* a certain number of times each day for the return to Palestine. The Zionist body finds the largest number of its recruits within the Orthodox camp, for it has remained in

closer contact with its people and with its past. Every orthodox Jew is by nature a Zionist.

To many of the unchurched Jews Zionism is a rude awakening. They happened merely to be Jews. They cherished the hope that they could slip out of Judaism in the second or third generation with none the wiser. Zionism comes to them with the request to declare their intentions openly; to be within the circle or outside of it. Many have answered the appeal and have found their way out of an equivocal position. Those who have not are lost to the Jewish cause.

For this reconstructed nation or people a home must be found. It is as idle to suppose that the nations of the world will look with respect upon the people who are at the whim and the mercy of every demagogue who raises his voice above the crowd, as it is for us to feel for a man without a country. The issue is plain. As long as the Jews refuse the essential condition of "assimilation," intermarriage, and that on a large scale, they will remain practically defenceless against all such attacks; which, while they remain within the strict bounds of the law, are no less destructive to the peace and well-being of a community. If once such a home be found, the Jewish nation will take its place among the nations of the world. Its voice will demand a hearing; and, being in its own land, competition with other nations will run in natural lines. A centre will be established to which all Jews, wherever they may be placed, will turn; getting therefrom not only actual help but that spiritual force, ennobling and enlarging, which the true pride of race and of nationality carries with it. The Jew must cease to be an anomaly.

The Palestine of the Zionist dream is not the Palestine which we know from Sunday School books and missionary reports. In the Westward march of Empire, Asia is once more to be brought into the line of the world's thought and commerce. From two sides the sound of the twentieth century has made itself heard in that slumbering continent. Through Japan on the one side and Russia on the other, influences have been sown which are bound to bear fruit before many decades have passed away. The partition of China will bring the active commercial rivalry of Europe into that bee-hive of humanity. The trans-Siberian railway and the threatened absorption by Russia of Armenia and Persia, will rapidly drive away the sleepy pall which has hung

over the whole country. When the Euphrates Valley railway shall have been completed, Mesopotamia will awake from its lethargy. When that country once more supports a teeming population, as it did in the times of the old Babylonian and Assyrian Kings, the hour for a new Palestine will have struck. The nearest outlet for Asia Europewards, is the border land of the Mediterranean Sea. That inland ocean will once again be covered with merchantmen, as it was in the days of the Italian Republics. In that up-building work, the Jewish people in Palestine will find an occasion to use those powers which have been generated in their midst during the long centuries of exile. Already the puff of the locomotive is heard in the Judean valleys and Assyrian hills. Joined once more to the soil from which they were so violently snatched, the Jewish husbandmen will till the fruitful places. As the waste country is built up again, greater needs will make themselves felt; factories will take the place of the old feudal ruins; an active commerce will make of the Jews not only producers but also mediators between the East and the West; but not mediators as in the Middle Ages, foot-sore and wandering, forced beggars for the world's grace; rather open sharers in the work of building up a new century which shall be a fitting follower of the nineteenth.

It is idle to speculate as to the form which such a commonwealth will take on. Time will work that out in a manner befitting its own needs. The world cannot go backward, but must ever move on to greater perfection. Is it too much for those who have Judaism as a religion at heart to hope that then the Jewish church will become a reality? Free from the *onus* of conditions through which it cannot break, at liberty to develop upon its own lines, it can show what seed is in it. It will be able to answer its own questions in its own way; to throw off what is useless and what is the product only of the cramped life of the Ghetto, and to realize the "beauty of holiness."

Is this nothing but a dream? How great a call is here made upon the resources, physical and spiritual, of my people! I cannot but feel that the power which could withstand the onslaughts of the Middle Ages and the blandishments of the nineteenth century, will be equal to the task. Only "Israel must choose, in order that God may again choose them." A free choosing coupled with the grand ideal! Will the people who walk in darkness see

the new lights? If they do not, they are all unworthy of the heritage which is theirs; undeserving the rich past of patriarchs, prophets and priests; of heroes, martyrs and teachers; of the sobs of children and the hot tears of mothers; of the blood of those who died that their faith might be transmitted to posterity

But not alone! Ten millions of Jews, even though every one were inspired, are but a drop in the bucket of the world's working force. Turkey, the Suzerain of Palestine and Syria, must come to see the value of gaining the affection and the loyal support of such a people, tried in the world's cruelest crucible, bringing the ripe experience of past ages with them, putting new life into the soil and using all the glorious conquests of machinery and electricity over the dumb forces of nature; giving fullness in place of want, life in place of death.

And the Christian Powers of Europe? Without their aid, too, the Zionist ideal cannot be realized. It is said that the Christian sentiment of Europe and America will never permit that the Holy Places in the Holy Land should be in the possession of the Holy People. The suggestion is almost a libel on all that is best and truest in modern Christianity. Will the Church, by a new Crusade, perpetuate the wrong, which is now centuries old? Will it not rather right that wrong by active aid, in making it possible for the Jews to take up their history again in the land of their birth at the point where they let it go? Self-interest, too, dictates a policy on lines similar to such an ideal. No matter what its genesis, no matter what its cause, the Jewish question is of the most serious import to the statesmen of Europe. It can be solved if the Jews will lead the way, either renouncing their traditional hopes and giving the death-blow to their own history, or realizing that Judaism and Zionism in the end are synonymous. If they choose the latter course, what a grand lesson the nations of the daughter faith could give to a twentieth century Peace Congress, in showing a love for the people of the mother faith which is really desirous of Israel's good. Then might the two faiths work together to realize the Kingdom of God on earth, and the triumph of that righteousness for which both faiths pray.

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