

CURRENT MAGAZINES

THE PALESTINE QUESTION: THE BOLDEST HISTORIAN:
SOUTH AFRICA AND THE NATIVES.

WITH the situation steadily deteriorating, with both Jews and Arabs taking up more and more extreme positions, and with Britain throwing the whole matter into the lap of the United Nations, it is but natural that the Palestine question should be the subject of many current articles. On the whole there seems to be a tendency to ask, although sympathizing with European Jewry in its present plight, just why we should expect the Arab world to solve a problem that is mainly Christian in origin. One notes also a fear among friends of Jewry that the extreme demands of Zionists and their truculent, dictatorial tone, and the senseless atrocities of the underground may soon destroy what sympathy the Jewish cause has heretofore aroused among Gentiles.

Saturday Night (8 February) publishes two letters setting forth the opposing claims simply and briefly. Mr. Marvin Gelber states the Jewish cause. The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry last spring recommended the admission of 100,000 Jews into Palestine during 1946, with further immigration to follow, but this promised flow and relief has been checked. The Labour Government, not the Zionists, have made the problem of immigration hinge on a political solution; moreover, a federal plan can please neither Jew nor Arab. Mr. Gelbert, while admitting "the high purposes of British statemanship concerning Palestine", charges that permanent British resident officials and Arab politicians have thwarted these aims and have done everything to prevent a compromise. For Mr. Gelber, the fact that European Jews wish to escape from that continent cannot be blamed on Zionism. Zionists do seek not entrance for Jews into Palestine only; indeed, for years they have been trying to gain admittance to North America for their suffering brethren. The Labour Government in its concern for the Arab population has not considered the underpopulated areas of Palestine, such as the Beersheba Subdistrict, which though representing 45% of the area of the country had in 1931 a population of only about 51,000. A mere Jewish bridgehead in

Palestine is not feasible; partition must be the solution. "Statesmanship and not policemen must establish the foundations of the peace in Palestine." With that view one can easily agree, but one might ask for a few more signs of statesmanship on the part of Zionists and less tendency to becloud the issue than Mr. Gelber has shown.

Mr. M. S. Massaud, Director of the Canadian Arab News Service, presents the Arab point of view in the other letter. Arabs do not hate Jews because the latter are Jews; indeed, they are willing to bear a fair share of solving the problems of European Jewry. They fear, however, the present and future claims of Zionism, and it was this fear, joined with the treachery of Britain and the United States, that brought into existence the powerful Arab League, which has set its face against partition. The Arab League agreed a year ago to accept 100,000 Jews, provided these people were distributed among Arab-speaking communities; this offer, Mr. Massaud contends, was refused because the Zionists want not merely shelter, but political power. The writer asks what would happen if the 40,000 Polish soldiers admitted to Canada should insist on setting up a distinctive Polish state here. The Arab world seems on the verge of a great renaissance, but Arabs feel that if they lose control of Palestine, the commercial gate to the East, the incipient renaissance would be killed. Finally, any attempt to enforce partition will lead only to bloodshed.

Such are the arguments of representatives of the peoples involved. Articles in the *University of Toronto Quarterly* (January) and the *Atlantic Monthly* (February) set forth more impartial points of view. The first article is by the Rev. Claris Edwin Silcox, a Toronto clergyman who was formerly Secretary of the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews. Mr. Silcox feels that the right approach to the claims of the Jews is from history. The fact that the prophets of Israel foretold a return to the homeland gives no real claim to the Holy Land, nor does any amount of optimism about such a return give any legal or moral right to land lost centuries ago. Indeed, Mr. Silcox feels that this very nostalgia has contributed to the growth of anti-Semitism because it kept the Jews a distinct, unassimilable people; it might even be argued that the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the activities of the Zionists have brought into the open this latent hostility to strangers who insist on remaining such.

Mr. Silcox also notes that Palestine is a Holy Land, not

merely for Jews, but for Moslems and Christians as well. It seems rather absurd to ask members of two other religious groups to turn over to the Jews their holy places, not to mention the strategic commercial and political position of Palestine.

Perhaps the most interesting part of Mr. Silcox's argument is his examination of the Balfour Declaration. Why did Britain in November, 1917, at a time when it was clear that Turkish power was almost at an end, make the Balfour Declaration? Lloyd George gave an answer in *The Truth About the Peace Treaties*. The Eastern Front was crumbling, the United States would not be an effective combatant for some months; therefore it was necessary to bring Russian Jewry to the Allied cause. As a result of the Balfour Declaration, Lloyd George contended, Jewish-inspired guerilla warfare held down German troops in south-west Russia for many months. It is interesting to note that Lord Curzon was opposed to the move, for he said that the terms were too vague and promised everything to everybody, but finally he withdrew his objections and the Cabinet agreed to the Balfour Declaration, despite the fact that Britain, France, and Russia had already a secret agreement on the final disposition of the Holy Land, and that Britain had already made certain promises to the Arab world. The best that can be said for the British Cabinet is that the over-all picture of the world struggle was very ominous, indeed. One cannot blame the Arabs, however, for feeling that they had been deceived and cheated and for not showing any enthusiasm for the Allied cause in the second war.

Mr. Silcox is not impressed by the Zionist contention that a satisfied Jewry would be a loyal ally of Britain. Though the situation of Jews is pitiful, Zionists and extremists might realize that but for Britain's carrying on the war almost single-handed for a long period, Hitler would have quickly settled the Jewish question in his own way long before this. Nor do the actions of the underground in Palestine and the calumny heaped on Britain in New York and other centres suggest that Jewry would ever sacrifice its own interests and dreams to those of Britain. In neither the first nor the second World War did Jewish forces in the Near East ever approach British forces in numbers. The author fears that by their present tactics, Jews will lose any sympathy they still have and will find themselves without friends to work for the amelioration of their pitiful plight.

Professor W. T. Stace, author of the article in the February *Atlantic* to which reference has been made, is Professor of Philosophy in Princeton University. He approaches the subject from the philosophical point of view, and sees our handling of the Palestine question as a sign of how we shall approach even more involved problems in the years to come. If World War II had a moral issue, it was whether international relations were to be governed by force or law. Law means the application of principles of justice to disputes. Now justice raises the question of right and wrong. Even though the scene in Palestine shifts quickly, principles of justice are supposedly immutable and must not be sacrificed to solve temporary problems. The Atlantic Charter reaffirmed the view that nations have the right to determine their internal affairs without aggression from outside nations; this means that the affairs of a country are governed by the wishes of the majority, provided the rights of minorities are protected.

How do these abstract principles of international law, based on justice, apply to the present controversy? The Arabs have been in possession of Palestine for at least two thousand years and constitute the majority of the population. Therefore, the Zionists, abetted by Britain and the United States, are guilty of an act of aggression against the Arab population of Palestine. Moreover, Britain had no right to promise a (not *the*) home for Jewry in Palestine, as she did in the Balfour Declaration. Consequently, this Declaration confers no moral right to Palestine on the Jews and cannot be used to justify what is, from the point of view of justice, an act of aggression. A wrong or unjust promise ought not to be carried out and gives no right to demands that it be executed. Britain, in her hour of need, violated the principles of democracy and international justice, but this violation cannot be used as a pretext to force Britain or the world to overcome by force Arab opposition to invasion. Professor Stace is not impressed by the Zionist argument that Jewish brains and money are benefiting Palestine, for such an argument can be used to defend any aggression by an "advanced" nation against a more primitive one. Hitler, no doubt, was going to improve the countries he set out to conquer, and Mussolini was bringing the benefits of civilization to the "benighted" Ethiopians.

The author is sympathetic with the suffering Jews of Europe and feels that the world as a whole must solve the problem. In domestic law we accept such a principle: a starving person

has a claim against his country and his countrymen. Jewry has a like moral and humanitarian claim against the civilized world—but not against one country or one race of people

The two letters in *Saturday Night* are interesting because they show clearly how irreconcilable are the conflicting views. Mr. Silcox's and Prof. Stace's articles will repay very close reading, for they approach the problem in an unbiased spirit and with wide knowledge of the principles involved.

THE BOLDEST HISTORIAN

Perhaps it was the announcement of the impending publication of a shortened one-volume edition of Arthur J. Toynbee's *A Study of History* that moved Mr. Granville Hicks to write an article for the February issue of *Harper's*, entitled "Arthur Toynbee: The Boldest Historian". Mr. Hicks is an acute American critic. Of New England stock, he graduated from Harvard and became the literary editor of *The Universalist Leader*. Reading of Marx led him to the editorial staff of *The New Masses* and to the Communist fold, where he remained from 1934 to 1939. Still a Socialist, he has been described as a Yankee moralist with his roots in 19th century New England philosophical interests. Be that as it may, Mr. Hicks is admirably equipped to assess the importance of Mr. Arnold Toynbee's mammoth work.

Three volumes of *A Study of History* appeared in 1934, three more in 1939, and we are promised three or four more. If such a comprehensive work is possible of achievement, Mr. Toynbee would seem to be the ideal author, for he is well read in literature, the classics, and the histories of various civilizations. To prove a point he may draw on Blake, Goethe, a classical author, or a bit of folklore. His style is fresh and imaginative, unlike the jargon used by most scholars. Yet Mr. Toynbee demands the constant attention of his reader, for he is no vulgariser, eager to tickle the palate and the vanity of the lazy and inattentive. For those who know only Western European history, with a vague remembrance of Gibbon for the earlier periods, *A Study of History* will come as a great surprise.

Civilizations are never static; they are always growing or disintegrating. The course of every civilization is like a drama of two acts. Act I might be entitled "Growth"; at the end of this act comes a challenge, to which the civilization fails to respond; that is the moment of breakdown. Act II, "The Disintegration", is usually longer than Act I and is more interesting

because it concerns rallies and agreeable interludes. Unlike most historians, Mr. Toynbee places the moment of breakdown very early in the history of a civilization. Whereas for Gibbon the apogee of Mediterranean civilization was in the time of the Antonines, the second century after Christ, for Mr. Toynbee that period was an Indian summer. For him, Hellenic civilization began to break in 431 B.C.—four hundred years before the founding of the Roman Empire—with the Peloponnesian War, which represented a challenge that was not met. The Athenians could not see that economic forces had changed the old order and that the city state was antiquated. So began a time of troubles—a period in which civilization was confronted again and again with a challenge and failed to meet it. Finally Rome was able to impose unity on the Hellenic world by force, but in disciplining its rivals it destroyed the civilization it had come to dominate. The Empire could not arrest the process of disintegration and its Golden Ages were merely Indian Summers.

Mr. Toynbee sees a similar pattern in the history of every extinct civilization. Now, of course, we usually find what we look for, and it is an open question to-day if all our "knowledge" is not merely the fruit of our tendency to impose our own sense of form and patterns on nature and past events. On various occasions Mr. Toynbee has been criticized for making his material fit his theories. Then, too, arises the problem of lack of clear evidence at certain crucial points in the story. Despite such dangers *A Study of History* is a monumental and provocative work. Believers in a world state will find comfort in Mr. Toynbee's masterpiece, as will Christians, for Mr. Toynbee sees some hopes of a revival of Christianity.

Mr. Granville Hick's article in the February *Harper's* forms an admirable introduction of *A Study of History*. It is to be hoped that many readers of the DALHOUSIE REVIEW will find an occasion to read the article, and, stimulated by it, will seek time to read *A Study of History*.

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE NATIVES

The Royal visit to South Africa inspired the editor of *The National Review* to publish three articles on contemporary South Africa. Of these perhaps the one of most interest to our readers is "Justice", for at Lake Success in the United States Marshal Smuts was refused permission by the United Nations

to incorporate South West Africa into the Union of South Africa. A few of the many recent cases given in "Justice" will show why the Union has such a bad name at Lake Success.

At Belfast, in February of this year, a European farmer was charged with the murder of a native. He was acquitted, although from the fact that he had fired three shots, one should have expected at least some reference to criminal carelessness in the use of fire-arms.

Four Europeans were charged with assaulting two natives. In finding them guilty, the magistrate remarked: "Europeans expect natives to respect them, and if you want them to respect you, you should not act like irresponsible barbarians." The "irresponsible barbarians" were sentenced to two months hard labor, suspended for two years, and a fine of £10 each or one month in jail.

In another case, a confessed murderer of a native child was sentenced to three months imprisonment for culpable homicide, suspended for a year subject to good behavior; the payment of £50 into the court by the end of a month, and £30 to the father of the dead child.

In August, at Durban, a European and four natives were accused of *sjambokking* a native to death. One native and the European were found guilty. The native's sentence was four year's imprisonment, whereas his white and equally guilty master was fined £25, or one month's imprisonment.

In September, at Harrison Circuit Court, a European was alleged to have shot and wounded a native. The white man's defense was that, having been defied by the black, he fired "in the general direction" of the native. Mr. Justice van den Heever, who tried the case, agreed with the jury's findings—an acquittal—"which was correct both in fact and law". There was no outcry from the Press, although one newspaper inquired, "May we now assume that this procedure is accepted as normal by the Supreme Court?"

Commenting upon the lenience of the judgment in another case in which a European was fined £10 or one month for assaulting a native who later died as a result of his injuries, the *Star* said in part, "There are, unhappily, too many precedents for this type of sentence to justify any moral censure in this particular case".

The Union of South Africa has more discriminatory racial laws and customs than any other country in the world. Her failure to administer justice according to a basis of full recognition of the abstract equality of human rights is the reason the natives of the South African Protectorates will never voluntarily incorporate themselves with the Union. The Rhodesian judge who said that a judge cannot go too far in advance of public opinion—white public opinion—was merely expressing what the Nazis, under the name of *Rassenrecht*, elevated to the dignity of a legal principle.

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