



## **The Iron Wall**

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### **Colonisation of Palestine**

### **Agreement with Arabs Impossible at present**

### **Zionism Must Go Forward**

It is an excellent rule to begin an article with the most important point. But this time, I find it necessary to begin with an introduction, and, moreover, with a personal introduction.

I am reputed to be an enemy of the Arabs, who wants to have them ejected from Palestine, and so forth. It is not true.

Emotionally, my attitude to the Arabs is the same as to all other nations – polite indifference. Politically, my attitude is determined by two principles. First of all, I consider it utterly impossible to eject the Arabs from Palestine. There will always be *two* nations in Palestine – which is good enough for me, provided the Jews become the majority. And secondly, I belong to the group that once drew up the Helsingfors Programme, the programme of national rights for all nationalities living in the same State. In drawing up that programme, we had in mind not only the Jews, but all nations everywhere, and its basis is equality of rights.

*I am prepared to take an oath binding ourselves and our descendants that we shall never do anything contrary to the principle of equal rights, and that we shall never try to eject anyone. This seems to me a fairly peaceful credo.*

But it is quite another question whether it is always possible to realise a peaceful aim by peaceful means. For the answer to this question does not depend on our attitude to the Arabs; but entirely on the attitude of the Arabs to us and to Zionism.



Now, after this introduction, we may proceed to the subject.

### **Voluntary Agreement Not Possible.**

There can be no voluntary agreement between ourselves and the Palestine Arabs. Not now, nor in the prospective future. I say this with such conviction, not because I want to hurt the moderate Zionists. I do not believe that they will be hurt. Except for those who were born blind, they realised long ago that it is utterly impossible to obtain the voluntary consent of the Palestine Arabs for converting "Palestine" from an Arab country into a country with a Jewish majority.

My readers have a general idea of the history of colonisation in other countries. I suggest that they consider all the precedents with which they are acquainted, and see whether there is one solitary instance of any colonisation being carried on with the consent of the native population. There is no such precedent.

The native populations, civilised or uncivilised, have always stubbornly resisted the colonists, irrespective of whether they were civilised or savage.

And it made no difference whatever whether the colonists behaved decently or not. The companions of Cortez and Pizzaro or (as some people will remind us) our own ancestors under Joshua Ben Nun, behaved like brigands; but the Pilgrim Fathers, the first real pioneers of North America, were people of the highest morality, who did not want to do harm to anyone, least of all to the Red Indians, and they honestly believed that there was room enough in the prairies both for the Paleface and the Redskin. Yet the native population fought with the same ferocity against the good colonists as against the bad.

Every native population, civilised or not, regards its lands as its national home, of which it is the sole master, and it wants to retain that mastery always; it will refuse to admit not only new masters but, even new partners or collaborators.



## **Arabs Not Fools**

This is equally true of the Arabs. Our Peace-mongers are trying to persuade us that the Arabs are either fools, whom we can deceive by masking our real aims, or that they are corrupt and can be bribed to abandon to us their claim to priority in Palestine, in return for cultural and economic advantages. I repudiate this conception of the Palestinian Arabs. Culturally they are five hundred years behind us, they have neither our endurance nor our determination; but they are just as good psychologists as we are, and their minds have been sharpened like ours by centuries of fine-spun logomachy. We may tell them whatever we like about the innocence of our aims, watering them down and sweetening them with honeyed words to make them palatable, but they know what we want, as well as we know what they do not want. They feel at least the same instinctive jealous love of Palestine, as the old Aztecs felt for ancient Mexico, and their Sioux for their rolling Prairies.

To imagine, as our Arabophiles do, that they will voluntarily consent to the realisation of Zionism. In return for the moral and material conveniences which the Jewish colonist brings with him, is a childish notion, which has at bottom a kind of contempt for the Arab people; it means that they despise the Arab race, which they regard as a corrupt mob that can be bought and sold, and are willing to give up their fatherland for a good railway system.

## **All Natives Resist Colonists**

There is no justification for such a belief. It may be that some individual Arabs take bribes. But that does not mean that the Arab people of Palestine as a whole will sell that fervent patriotism that they guard so jealously, and which even the Papuans will never sell. Every native population in the world resists colonists as long as it has the slightest hope of being able to rid itself of the danger of being colonised.



That is what the Arabs in Palestine are doing, and what they will persist in doing as long as there remains a solitary spark of hope that they will be able to prevent the transformation of "Palestine" into the "Land of Israel."

### **Arab Comprehension**

Some of us have induced ourselves to believe that all the trouble is due to misunderstanding – the Arabs have not understood us, and that is the only reason why they resist us ;if we can only make it clear to them how moderate our intentions really are, they will immediately extend to us their hand in friendship.

This belief is utterly unfounded and it has been exploded again and again. I shall recall only one instance of many. A few years ago, when the late Mr. Sokolow was on one of his periodic visits to Palestine, he addressed a meeting on this very question of the "misunderstanding." He demonstrated lucidly and convincingly that the Arabs are terribly mistaken if they think that we have any desire to deprive them of their possessions or to drive them out of the country, or that we want to oppress them. We do not even ask for a Jewish Government to hold the Mandate of the League of Nations.

One of the Arab papers, "El Carmel," replied at the time, in an editorial article, the purport of which was this:

The Zionists are making a fuss about nothing. There is no misunderstanding. All that Mr. Sokolow says about the Zionist intentions is true, but the Arabs know that without him. Of course, the Zionists cannot now be thinking of driving the Arabs out of the country, or oppressing them, not do they contemplate a Jewish Government. Quite obviously, they are now concerned with one thing only- that the Arabs should not hinder their immigration. The Zionists assure us that even immigration will be regulated strictly according to the economic needs of Palestine. The Arabs have never doubted that: it is a truism, for otherwise there can be no immigration.



## No "Misunderstanding"

This Arab editor was actually willing to agree that Palestine has a very large potential absorptive capacity, meaning that there is room for a great many Jews in the country without displacing a single Arab. There is only one thing the Zionists want, and it is that one thing that the Arabs do not want, for that is the way by which the Jews would gradually become the majority, and then a Jewish Government would follow automatically, and the future of the Arab minority would depend on the goodwill of the Jews; and a minority status is not a good thing, as the Jews themselves are never tired of pointing out. So there is no "misunderstanding". The Zionists want only one thing, Jewish immigration; and this Jewish immigration is what the Arabs do not want.

This statement of the position by the Arab editor is so logical, so obvious, so indisputable, that everyone ought to know it by heart, and it should be made the basis of all our future discussions on the Arab question. It does not matter at all which phraseology we employ in explaining our colonising aims, Herzl's or Sir Herbert Samuel's.

*Colonisation carries its own explanation, the only possible explanation, unalterable and as clear as daylight to every ordinary Jew and every ordinary Arab.*

Colonisation can have only one aim, and Palestine Arabs cannot accept this aim. It lies in the very nature of things, and in this particular regard nature cannot be changed.

## The Iron Wall

We cannot offer any adequate compensation to the Palestinian Arabs in return for Palestine. And therefore, there is no likelihood of any voluntary agreement being reached. So that all those who regard such an agreement as a condition sine qua non for Zionism may as well say "non" and withdraw from Zionism.



*Zionist colonisation must either stop, or else proceed regardless of the native population.* Which means that it can proceed and develop only under the protection of a power that is independent of the native population – behind an iron wall, which the native population cannot breach.

That is our Arab policy; not what we should be, but what it actually is, whether we admit it or not. What need, otherwise, of the Balfour Declaration? Or of the Mandate? Their value to us is that outside Power has undertaken to create in the country such conditions of administration and security that if the native population should desire to hinder our work, they will find it impossible.

*And we are all of us, without any exception, demanding day after day that this outside Power, should carry out this task vigorously and with determination.*

In this matter there is no difference between our "militarists" and our "vegetarians". Except that the first prefer that the iron wall should consist of Jewish soldiers, and the others are content that they should be British.

We all demand that there should be an iron wall. Yet we keep spoiling our own case, by talking about "agreement" which means telling the Mandatory Government that the important thing is not the iron wall, but discussions. *Empty rhetoric of this kind is dangerous.* And that is why it is not only a pleasure but a duty to discredit it and to demonstrate that it is both fantastic and dishonest.

### **Zionism Moral and Just**

Two brief remarks:

In the first place, if anyone objects that this point of view is immoral, I answer: It is not true: either Zionism is moral and just, or it is immoral and unjust. But that is a question that we should have settled before we became Zionists. Actually we have settled that question, and in the affirmative.



*We hold that Zionism is moral and just. And since it is moral and just, justice must be done, no matter whether Joseph or Simon or Ivan or Achmet agree with it or not.*

There is no other morality.

### **Eventual Agreement**

In the second place, this does not mean that there cannot be any agreement with the Palestine Arabs. What is impossible is a voluntary agreement. As long as the Arabs feel that there is the least hope of getting rid of us, they will refuse to give up this hope in return for either kind words or for bread and butter, because they are not a rabble, but a living people. And when a living people yields in matters of such a vital character it is only when there is no longer any hope of getting rid of us, because they can make no breach in the iron wall. Not till then will they drop their extremist leaders whose watchword is "Never!" And the leadership will pass to the moderate groups, who will approach us with a proposal that we should both agree to mutual concessions. Then we may expect them to discuss honestly practical questions, such as a guarantee against Arab displacement, or equal rights for Arab citizen, or Arab national integrity.

*And when that happens, I am convinced that we Jews will be found ready to give them satisfactory guarantees, so that both peoples can live together in peace, like good neighbours.*

But the only way to obtain such an agreement, is the iron wall, which is to say a strong power in Palestine that is not amenable to any Arab pressure. In other words, the only way to reach an agreement in the future is to abandon all idea of seeking an agreement at present.