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A JEW LOOKS AT THE WAR

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War is raging once again in Europe.

Bloodshed and destruction are the order of the day. Before their very eyes, millions of men and women see their homes destroyed, their farms laid waste, their sons and daughters fed to the monsters of war.

Here in America the warmongers are at it once again. They are working feverishly to pull us into war.

Once the youth of America are in the trenches it will be too late for the American people to ask themselves: "What have we got to gain from this war?"

The American people want to stay out of this war. They were fooled once before. They don't want to be fooled again. The Jewish people, particularly, remember the last war with its false hopes and glittering promises.

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Let's turn back the pages of history for a minute and take another look at the first World War.

THE CONTEST OF THE AGES

World War 1. was supposed to be a war "to make the world safe for democracy." It was to be a "war to end all wars."

The Jewish people were told then, as they are being told now, that they must pray and fight for a victory of the Allies. They were told that once the Allies had won the war a new day would dawn for the Jewish people. They would have freedom and equal rights everywhere. Their own homeland in Palestine. The end of pogroms and persecution.

Many Jewish leaders led the chorus. Dr. Stephen S. Wise,

in a speech delivered upon the entry of the United States, declared:

"What are we fighting for? My answer to mothers and fathers is: Envious, even glorious is your lot if you give your sons or bless their self-dedication to the highest and holiest of causes in which a people was ever engaged. . . . Remember, mothers and fathers, this is not a war. *It is the contest of the ages*, which we and our allies together can make the last holocaust if we be mighty in war and even mightier in the generousities and magnanimities of peace." (Italics mine—M.M.)

Thousands upon thousands of Jews, believing that this war was really being fought for democracy, gave their lives for the cause of the Allies.

The Allies won the war. The peace treaties were signed. Clauses dealing with the rights of minorities were included.

Poland, Hungary, Roumania and Austria all agreed "to assure free and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants . . . without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion."

On the basis of these minority rights clauses, Cyrus Adler, Louis Marshall and Nahum Sokolow wrote to Boris Bogen, the Administrator of Jewish relief in Poland, that they were certain that the minority rights clauses would at last relieve European Jewry "from the serious disabilities from which they had so long suffered and will forever end the grave abuses of the past. They will enable the Jews as well as all other minorities to live their own lives and to develop their culture."

That was in 1919.

Twenty-one years have passed and during that time catastrophic upheavals which have followed in the wake of one another have aroused the people to the realization that such a war and such a peace could only lead to more horrible and more devastating wars.

Twenty-one years have passed and the plight of the Jews

has increased a thousandfold and has become an agonizing tale of woe which defies description.

The promises made at the peace conference regarding the rights of minorities were torn up like so many scraps of paper.

Poland, Hungary, Roumania and finally Germany, with the rise of Hitler, carried through a ruthless program of Jewish extermination. Anti-Semitism was given free rein. Pogroms, economic boycotts, political and social discrimination became common occurrences condoned and in many cases executed by these governments.

Italy, the country which was always pointed to with pride as the classic example that fascism and anti-Semitism need not necessarily go hand in hand, soon followed suit with the result that the 60,000 Jews of Italy have been barred from all economic, social and political life.

On January 16, 1939, the Administrative Committee of the World Jewish Congress met in Paris and adopted the following resolution:

"The Administrative Committee of the World Jewish Congress records with deep anxiety the rapid and catastrophic deterioration of the status of Jewish communities in Central and Eastern European countries as well as in Italy. One government after another has violated the principle of the equality of rights of the Jews, recognized and confirmed internationally through the Peace and Minority Treaties; by means of anti-Jewish legislation and arbitrary administrative measures whole Jewish populations have been deprived of elementary political rights and the possibility of maintaining their material and religious traditions and subjected to a relentless economic pressure designed to compel the Jews to emigrate."

There were those who raised their voices against the first World War and warned the Jewish people that they had nothing to gain from the war; that it could only result in an intensified and heightened persecution of the Jewish people;

that it would only result in the spread of anti-Semitism.

Such people were branded as traitors, as agents of a foreign power, as spies. Anyone who was against the war was an ally of the Kaiser. Anyone who dared utter a protest wanted Germany to win.

Now that the war is a thing of the past they are ready to beat their breasts and cry: "I have sinned."

Thus, Abraham G. Duker, writing in the Sept.-Oct. 1939 issue of the *Contemporary Jewish Record*, organ of the American Jewish Committee, states:

"It is clear . . . that while the few advantages and privileges gained by the Jews following the concluded peace were either illusory as in the case of minority rights or were never fully realized as in the case of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, *the losses to the Jewish people were real, far-going, and in most cases irreparable.* The war was a calamity to the world at large; *to the Jew it was a disaster of stupendous proportions.*" (Italics mine—M. M.)

These were the gifts which the Allies had bequeathed the Jews—the new era of freedom and equality.

And what about Palestine? At least there England had dealt fairly with the Jews. Was it not magnanimous of them to offer the Jewish people a homeland in Palestine? Did not Lloyd George say in 1917:

"Great Britain extended its mighty hand in friendship to the Jewish people to help it regain its ancient and national home and to realize its age-old aspiration."

It sounds mighty convincing. But read the Royal Commission Report of July 1937 and see what it had to say about the sincerity of British promises.

"In the evidence he gave before us, Mr. Lloyd George, who was Prime Minister at the time, stated that, while the Zionist cause had been widely supported in Britain and America before

November, 1917, the launching of the Balfour Declaration at that time was 'due to propagandist reasons'; and he outlined the serious position in which the Allied and associated Powers then were. . . . In this critical situation it was believed that Jewish sympathy or the reverse would make a substantial difference one way or the other to the Allied cause."

Many Jews had sincerely believed England when she issued the Balfour Declaration.

Little did they know that similar promises had been made to the Arabs. Little did they know that Palestine was one of the strategic parts of the British Empire and that policy in Palestine would be decided not by what was beneficial to the Jews but by what was beneficial to the British Empire.

The ensuing years gave the Jewish people ample proof of what reliance upon British promises would mean.

Beginning with 1922 when the first White Paper was issued by Winston Churchill in which he stated that not Palestine as a Jewish homeland but a Jewish homeland in Palestine was what had been promised to the Jews, through 1929 with its Hope-Simpson Reports, through 1930 with its White Paper issued by Ramsay MacDonald and a Labor Government which already then issued restrictions on land sale, through 1937 with its partitions schemes and finally down to the present day with its land sales stoppage decrees, the Jews have witnessed one long series of White Papers, memorandums, commissions and investigations. Follow the role of Britain in Palestine and you will see how, by carrying out her traditional policy of "Divide and Rule" she has done everything in her power to disturb any pacific relations between Jews and Arabs.

"Balfour Declarations" was an old trick which England had developed not only for Palestine but for all of its colonial and mandated territories. What could be a better way of misleading and winning the confidence of a people than by demagogically appealing to the very deepest aspirations of a people, namely, their desire for freedom and the end of persecution?

JEWISH PEOPLES COMMITTEE
*for United Action Against Fascism
and Anti-Semitism*

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