

AMERICAN ZIONISM AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY 1942–1947

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PREFACE

The birth of the State of Israel on May 15, 1948, marked the climax of a vigorous campaign launched some six years earlier by world Zionism in the Biltmore Program. At the Biltmore Conference the Zionists had reason to proclaim openly their political intentions before the American public. Although political Zionism had long pursued the goal of a Jewish state, only the circumstances of modern history compelled the complete unveiling of Zionist intentions. Having once enunciated their program before the country whose favor was considered essential, the Zionist Organization proceeded to organize American Jewry behind the Biltmore Program. After some initial difficulty the Zionists could claim that they spoke for the majority of American Jews on the question of Palestine. It could now be argued that American Jewry demanded appropriate action by their Government. Taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the realities of American politics and capitalizing on a multitude of fortunate circumstances, the Zionists were able to organize a large segment of public opinion in support of their program. Eventually, not only was Congress led to endorse the essence of the Biltmore Program but even the President was somewhat reluctantly induced to follow suit.

But while the Administration was led to espouse the Zionist platform, numerous diplomatic, strategic and eco-

conomic factors tended to check and restrain this endorsement. Indeed, so far had these counter factors progressed before the death of President Roosevelt that there seemed every indication to believe that the Zionists were still far from achieving their goal.

The unexpected death of Roosevelt and his replacement by Harry S. Truman again allowed the Zionists to advance their efforts to secure stronger Congressional and Presidential endorsement. Truman's unfamiliarity with the wider implications of the Palestine situation, together with his strong humanitarian inclinations, led him at first to give his unqualified support to the Zionist program. Very shortly, however, as the consequences of this endorsement became more evident, Truman sought to employ the same techniques as his predecessor in order to straddle the issue.

Meanwhile, the full force of political Zionism had come to be concentrated in the United States. Since Britain had proved intractable, it was evident that only the militant leadership of American Zionism could weight the scales in favor of the Zionists once more. The shift in Zionist leadership occurred at the very time when the United States, acting through the United Nations, could be utilized as a ready tool. Eventually, in November 1947, a resolution calling for the partition of Palestine was secured from the United Nations with strong support both from the United States and the Soviet Union.

Afterthoughts on the possible international consequences of the partition resolution again led the Administration to seek a delay in resolving the issue. Nevertheless, despite the vigorous efforts of opposed interest groups, the Administration supported and then recognized the Zionist accomplishment. Thus, during the course of six years the Zionist Organization had succeeded in translating the Biltmore Program into American foreign policy.

The object of this book is to trace the development of the Zionist strategy and to set forth wherever possible the immediate links between Zionist activity and the development of American diplomacy. An attempt will be made to unfold the plan by which the Zionists succeeded in building up a strong and vociferous interest group which could utilize the American political system so as to have its program adopted as American foreign policy. Like many other interest groups which seek, with varying degrees of success, to have their programs embodied in American foreign policy, the Zionists have employed the means open to all groups in the American system. Although particular tactics might be deplored by opponents of this policy, the general procedures employed by the Zionists seem to be within the framework of democratic techniques. The author has no desire to make a general judgment on the policies pursued by the Zionist Organization. While the compass of this book embraces the techniques employed by the Zionist Organization, it does not at all negate the fact that Arab interest groups were simultaneously exerting strong but not nearly so effective pressures in the opposite direction. Moreover, the author does not intend to conclude that the creation of the State of Israel was entirely due to the direction taken by American foreign policy. Indeed, some would maintain that Israel owes its birth essentially to the activities of Haganah, the Irgun and even the Stern Gang, all of which would explain the British withdrawal from Palestine. If this latter thesis is maintained, then the influence of American foreign policy is reduced to a minimum. Since the proportionate weight of these various influences cannot now be assessed, the author seeks to demonstrate only that the Zionist Organization substantially affected American foreign policy through a given set of techniques.

The author is deeply indebted to the custodians of

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INTRODUCTION

Although the idea of Zionism had for centuries constituted an element of Jewish and Christian thinking, it was not until the twentieth century that it became a political movement. As a reaction to the assimilation of Jewry within Gentile society, certain Jews began to fear the loss of their identity as a people and organized to prevent such an occurrence. Like many other nationalist movements of the time, the Zionists felt that the Jews were also a people who could maintain their existence only through a political state. This nationalist sentiment on the part of certain Jews was stimulated by the growth of racist nationalism within Christendom which objected to Jewish assimilation. Another important element destined to play a leading role in the Zionist movement was the religious sentiment of Orthodox Jewish groups which now saw in Jewish nationalism the only bulwark for the preservation of the Jewish faith.¹ Almost from the start, however, opposition to political Zionism arose both within and without Jewish circles.

As a result of anti-Semitism aroused in France during the Dreyfus Affair, Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), an Austrian journalist, wrote his famous *Der Judenstaat* (1896) in

1. Hans Kohn, *Nationalism Its Meaning and History* (New York: Van Nostrand Company, 1955), p. 75.

which he demanded a land for the homeless Jewish people. Herzl suggested that either a part of Argentina or Palestine might provide a possible location for a Jewish state.² That Herzl considered Argentina as a possibility reveals that he was primarily interested in meeting the problem of anti-Semitism. The idea of a Jewish state as a fulfillment of prophecy came later and to some extent was designed as an emotional appeal.

In response to Herzl's pleas the First Zionist Congress met at Basle in August, 1897, and drew up a program destined to remain the essential foundation of Zionist policy for sixty years. The program proposed included, (1) the acquisition of an internationally recognized right for the Jewish people to colonize Palestine, (2) the promotion of large-scale Jewish colonization of Palestine, and (3) the creation of an organization to unite all Jews in support of Zionism. Although this program was in accord with the suggestions made by Herzl, the Basle Congress failed to declare that the purpose of Zionism was to create a Jewish state in Palestine. Rather, in view of the fact that many Jews, as well as the Turkish Government, would not favor the creation of a Jewish state, the Basle Congress declared the purpose of Zionism was "to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law."³ However, this does not mean that the Basle Congress rejected Herzl's views. It merely hoped to lessen antagonism while at the same time the ultimate goal

2. Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State, an Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Problem*, trans. by Sylvie D'Avigdor (New York: Scopus Publishing Company, 1943).

3. Jacob C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, A Documentary Record* (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1956), I, 209.

of statehood was not ruled out. Before adjourning, the Basle Congress also set up the apparatus of the World Zionist Organization headed by a permanent Executive.

As first elected President of the Zionist Organization, Herzl sought to secure support from the Kaiser and then from the Sultan of Turkey for the establishment of a Jewish colony in Palestine. Meeting with no success in these quarters, Herzl turned his attention to Great Britain. That Government rejected an appeal from the Zionist Executive for portions of the Sinai Peninsula, but offered instead the territory of Uganda for colonization in 1903.⁴ While Herzl favored the Uganda proposal as a temporary measure, the Sixth Zionist Congress did nothing more than send a commission to investigate. A year after Herzl's death in 1904, the Seventh Zionist Congress declared that Zionism was concerned solely with Palestine.⁵

Chaim Weizmann, an immigrant chemist from Russia, helped to intensify Zionist interest in Britain. Soon to become the recognized leader of the Zionist movement, Weizmann was earnestly seeking support from British political leaders by 1906. Arthur Balfour, although not then a member of the British Government, was profoundly affected by Weizmann, as was David Lloyd George and Herbert Samuel. Numerous Christians, perhaps from reasons best set forth by Arnold Toynbee, found much to support in the Zionist cause. But it was especially by associating Zionist goals with the needs of British foreign

4. Nahum Sokolow, *History of Zionism, 1600-1918* (London: Longman's, Green and Company, 1919), I, 295f.

5. Fannie Fern Andrews, *The Holy Land Under the Mandate* (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931), I, 303.

6. Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), VIII, 308.

tion, the first half of the Zionist policy was ended. Since various governments lent their support to the Balfour Declaration, it was now taken for granted that the "legal" right of the Jews to build a National Home in Palestine had been established. Indeed, this use of the word "legal," without reference to the inhabitants of Palestine, was to prove extremely useful in the effort to win over world public opinion to the Zionist cause.

As a result of the Allied victory and the establishment of the mandates system, Palestine, under British administration, was opened to Jewish immigration. At the same time the Jews were enabled to develop their own self-governing institutions by means of the Jewish Agency, an organ provided for in the text of the mandate.

In order to create machinery capable of handling the expanded operations of the Zionist Organization in its efforts to build up Palestine, a conference was called in February, 1919, by Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolow, a leading Zionist from the continent. This meeting, known as the London Conference, established a Central Office with headquarters in the British capital. A second conference which met in 1920 elected Chaim Weizmann as President of the Zionist Organization and then proceeded to concentrate on the second requirement of the Herzlian program—the colonization of Palestine. Elaborate plans were accordingly devised to create special funds which would facilitate a program of planned land acquisition.

The third requirement of the Herzlian program—that of winning the support of world Jewry for the cause of political Zionism—now occupied Weizmann's attention. In addition to winning support from non-Zionists, it was also necessary to unite those Zionist groups already exist-