

Arab
group

THE COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND
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THE HOLY LAND AND POLITICAL ZIONISM

Whether a man pores over his daily paper or gives it merely a fleeting inspection, whether he shows fidelity to every news broadcast and analysis or only haphazardly tunes in, he must almost certainly have noted what extremely fine coverage the self-proclaimed State of Israel has obtained. One can only suspect that good politics and good business rather than the naked justice of the Zionist cause have made this so. Then, too, anti-Semitism is a label all liberal Christians wish to avoid (we seem to forget the Arabs are Semites too). Since it is so popular nowadays to be a liberal and since it is so easy to be labeled anti-Semitic by even so much as hinting the Zionists' case is not clear-cut, it becomes even more simple to understand why it is such a pro-Israeli hullabaloo is carried on.

We would like to point out a few chinks in the Zionist armor of unsullied righteousness. And we are not thinking of historical claims or legitimate aspirations. We are concerned with current facts. First of all, it is not true that American Jewry is solidly behind Israel. Second, it is not true that Palestinian Jews are welcoming the Zionist influx with unalloyed joy. Third, it is not true that the Holy Places suffered at the hands of the Arabs before the truce, were respected only by the Jews.

Many a Jewish citizen of the United States is feeling keenly embarrassed by the claims of Israel to be the state and the homeland of the Jewish People. No matter how deeply they may sympathize with their co-religionists, thousands of these Jewish fellow citizens of ours wish in no way to be associated with political Zionist. The American Council for Judaism has emphatically denounced any claims on them by the State of Israel and has gone on public record "to make clear the sharp distinction between Judaism and Zionism and between Israelis and Jews who are citizens of other nations; to insist that no Jew or organization of Jews can speak for or represent all the Jews of America." Perhaps some politicians and some businessmen and some liberals have overlooked this fact.

Just as the Zionist backing in America is not as solid as it would seem, so in Palestine itself. For the past three decades Zionist emigrants have left the Diaspora and settled along side the Yishuv (Jews of Palestine) for whose orthodoxy they have had scant reverence. The breach between the Orthodox and the Zionist Jews is covered up, but the friction is rising. It is interesting to note that when the Jewish Agency wanted to mobilize native Palestinian Jews for the civil war, the Orthodox consented only on condition that they have separate units. Even then they had to insist on special religious safeguards. Widespread religious indifference on the part of latecomers and newcomers to Palestine does not mix at all well with the Wailing Wall tradition and the fierce

Orthodox clinging to observance of the Law. This religious schism is a factor the rah-rah boys for Israel might take into consideration.

Nor would it harm them, save perhaps to dampen their enthusiasm a bit, to consider that the Christian Holy Places in Jerusalem were violated not by Arabs but by Jews. At this writing three Catholic priests have been killed, one of them a Passionist Father, Father John Salah, who was killed by a bullet as he entered the Church of the Sisters of Charity on the Mount of Olives to say Mass. These priests died under Jewish fire. The blame for this and the military occupation or destruction of Christian shrines has been put squarely at the doors of the Jews, not by a few Arab-sympathizing ecclesiastics, but by the Latin, the Greek Orthodox, the Armenian, and the Coptic patriarchates, and by the Greek Catholic and the Armenian Catholic vicariates.

The Holy Land of all the lands in this wide world of ours should be a land of peace. The Prince of Peace lived His mortal life there. Christendom crusaded to make that land free of desecration. And now what was once Christendom falters as it watches two non-Christian peoples struggle for mastery of the Holy Land. This much is certain, no solution based solely on Zionist propaganda is going to be a genuine solution. Those who have been sold by this propaganda would do extremely well to re-examine an untenable position.