

Balfour Day Celebration.

Large Gathering in Zionist Hall.

There was a very large audience present in the Zionist Hall on Sunday night, when a mass meeting in celebration of the nineteenth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration was held.

Mr. A. M. Abrahams was in the chair and welcomed those present, particularly those who had "just escaped from that country which is the modern Egypt—Germany."

D.Z.A. Statement.

Discussing the position in Palestine, the Chairman read the following statement issued by the Dorshei Zion Association:—

On the nineteenth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, our first feeling is one of thankfulness for the end of the Riots. For six months the Jewish community of Palestine has been forced to watch its peaceful citizens murdered, homes destroyed, trees uprooted, crops burnt, and the normal development of the country interrupted. Under this provocation, the impulse to retaliate must have been enormous, especially in the earlier months before the Government at last took effective steps for public safety. The fact that the Jews did not carry out reprisals has by some been interpreted as cowardice. They have been accused of sheltering behind British bayonets. This is an odd charge to make against a group of peaceful citizens, who must look to the Government to keep law and order. In any event, it is remote from the truth. If our community had risen to defend itself, the situation would have been much more serious. What is more, our leaders knew that the trouble would be distorted into a "Jewish-Arab clash," instead of a purely Arab revolt against the present Administration, and that this would be an excuse to restrict the work of building up the Jewish National Home. Hence the spectacle of a proud and powerful community of 400,000 people deliberately holding itself in check under attack. This magnificent solidarity earned the fullest praise from the High Commissioner, the Colonial Secretary, the Prime Minister, and the Press of the world. It is to us the brightest aspect of this tragic business.

Now the attack is moving from the physical to the political plane, and the Royal Commission will sail shortly. We Zionists have little to fear from the facts. In the nineteen years since the Balfour Declaration, we have carried out, under great difficulties, a unique colonising work. The results are there for all the world to see, and in the midst of our problems in the Diaspora, give us a sense of pride which nothing else could have done. A tiny and barren Holy Land has been transformed. There are smiling colonies, expanding cities, a new agriculture, modern industries, a great electrification scheme on the Jordan, new roads and schools and hospitals, and a splendid University on Mount Scopus. The population has doubled, and the Administration has an accumulated surplus of £6,000,000.

What is even more remarkable is that this has been achieved in the teeth of an extraordinary vacillating and negative Mandatory policy, and a series of Arab outbreaks of violence from 1921 onwards, of which 1936

has been the longest and most vicious. To those who do not know the facts, this gives colour to the suggestion that all this wonderful progress has taken place at the expense of the Arabs—that they are being exploited and displaced. Therefore it is necessary to glance at the official data. The astonishing fact emerges that since the war, the Arab population has increased by over fifty per cent. (600,000 to over 900,000), due to better health conditions, an improved standard of living, and actual immigration in tens of thousands from surrounding territories. Furthermore, this increase is mainly in the Jewish areas of development. These figures hardly show that they are being driven out of the country!

As a fact, it is difficult to exaggerate the blessings which the Jewish development of Palestine has brought to the broad masses of the Arabs, after centuries of the most primitive conditions. Diseases like malaria are being stamped out. They are learning modern methods of agriculture, industry and sanitation. Their wage-level is three to four hundred per cent. above that of their Syrian cousins. Their orange-groves have increased from 20,000 dunams in 1922 to 140,000 dunams in 1935. Their illiteracy is steadily decreasing. In short, they are enjoying an opportunity to develop side by side with the Jews.

But their leaders reject this opportunity. They are drawn from the "Effendi" class, the great ruling families who hate the rapid development of the country by the Jews, since it is destroying their feudal power, and their dream of an independent Arab State ruled by themselves. To obstruct this progress, they are prepared to sacrifice the benefits their people reap from it. Hence the poisonous nationalist and religious propaganda which inflames their followers to violence.

We Zionists know that this gives the Mandatory Power a difficult task of government. We realise as well as anybody that racial co-operation in Palestine is essential to the future of Palestine as it is in South Africa. We also recognise that forcible suppression of Arab hostility is no permanent basis for the partnership. But we do not believe this hostility is inherent. We believe that the partnership is one for mutual benefit, and that it is only a matter of time before the other partner accepts that. Even in the last riots, there was plenty of evidence that the Arabs were far from united in their opposition. The friction is being artificially maintained by a reactionary class, and we can never consent to the future of the National Home being sacrificed to their political ambitions. That is too great a price to pay for a temporary truce. There is too much at stake for us, and our investment in men and money, on the strength of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, is too large. Experts tell us that so far from the absorptive capacity of the country being exhausted, it could double its population in the near future if the present development is maintained. Is this promise for both sections to be deliberately sabotaged for political reasons? Or will Great Britain have enough courage to take the bolder course, help for-

ward the development, and educate the Arabs to see where their true interests lie? It is these alternatives which are uppermost in our minds to-day.

Anti-Semitism in South Africa.

Dealing with recent happenings in South Africa, Mr. Abrahams said that the Jews here were used to hearing misstatements and injustices about their race; as long as these had been confined to illiterate and uneducated people they had taken no notice, but when so-called educated people, professors at Stellenbosch and Potchefstroom Universities identified themselves with these misstatements they had to take notice.

Mr. Abrahams dealt with the various charges that had been levelled against the Jews, and showed how false they all were. He maintained that it was a fallacy to say that there should be no immigration until everyone was employed, and argued that in the olden days, when there were no immigration barriers, unemployment was no greater than to-day. This country was crying out for people he said. Where there were people, needs were developed and these, in turn, developed employment. The people who had come from Germany ought to have been welcomed with open arms.

"This talk is just crass, stupid prejudice, and I throw that in the face of these professors," he said. "It is sheer jealousy, nothing but jealousy. It is a slur on the universities that these professors should adopt that attitude."

The Jews longed for peace, he added, and he hoped that the day would come soon when they would be able to live peacefully and look back on the present days as a nightmare.

Mr. B. L. Rubik said that Jews had reason to be glad that during the recent disturbances in Palestine they had been blessed with excellent leaders. At the helm stood Dr. Weizmann, and it was due to him and those who assisted him, that the demands of the Arabs that Jewish immigration should be stopped, were not granted. Another important factor was the heroic defence of the Yishub. Never for a moment was the constructive work in Palestine given up. The Jews in the Diaspora had also behaved splendidly. There was no desire for revenge to-day; the Jews felt they could honour the memory of the dead in a different way—by continuing the work of upbuilding the National Home.

There were certain positive features in the disturbances. A Defence unit had at last been granted to the Yishub and the importance of employing Jewish labour had been amply demonstrated.

It had also been clearly shown that England had no intention of betraying us. The Administration of Palestine was rotten to the core, but the last word lay with Downing Street, and there was every reason to believe that Britain would stand firm by the Balfour Declaration.

The Yishub had stood the test and helped us to emerge triumphant.

