

THE JEWISH AGENCY.

By J. BLUMENTHAL.

The subject of the Extended Jewish Agency one cannot approach but with a profuse shower of apologetics for touching same, for during the last five years since Dr. Weizman has been negotiating with the Marshall Group such a tremendous amount of oratorical and literary skill has been at work in elucidating the pros and cons of the case that it may be trying for the reader to hear some more about it. My excuse is that although this subject was dealt with at the recent S.A. Zionist Conference at Bloemfontein and will assume definite shape at the next World Zionist Congress in a few months' time, nevertheless it has not been treated fairly enough in the Zionist press of South Africa, as only one side, the sunny side, of the problem has been illustrated, whilst the other side, comprising our doubts and apprehensions in connection with same, has remained rather obscure. And in such a vital problem affecting the life of the Zionist movement, both sides have to be carefully weighed before one is entitled to a conclusion either this way or the other.

What are the reasons that cause such a lot of anxiety in the Zionist ranks? The most important of all is the feeling of mistrust which is permeating the hearts of Zionists towards their future partners. And the cause for their lack of confidence is well founded, for they are going to entrust their highest and dearest ideal to a companion who is not only not an avowed believer in that ideal, but is even partly opposed to same, and who is nevertheless prepared to accept same under his patronage and look after it (according to his conception, of course). The point is that the Zionist movement is about to enter an agreement of partnership with people who are non-Zionists and anti-Zionists.

Why our leaders, Dr. Weizmann and Nahum Sokolov, in whose devotion to our ideals one cannot have the slightest shade of doubt, are nevertheless trying to bring about this agreement, can best be answered by another question: Why have they allowed the prestige of the Zionist movement to be lowered to such an extent that an application made by the Zionist Executive—that body which in terms of the Mandate will be consulted by the British Government in all matters of vital importance for the welfare of the country—on behalf of a Haluzah who has been promised work by a Kioutzah in Palestine to grant her permission to enter the country—should be refused by a petty official like that of the immigration officer for two consecutive years with the same ridiculous excuse that next year the application will be considered? Is not the disgrace shouting to heaven? And the reply to the above question is, because the Zionist Executive has lost faith in itself and cannot assert itself. The leaders have also lost faith in the power of the Jewish masses to build up the country, and that is why they are prepared to take the risk of handing over the control of our affairs to people whose moods towards Palestine are, to say the least, very doubtful, against the hope held out to them of receiving greater assistance.

Now, whilst the danger of this undertaking is grave and obvious, the benefits which are believed to accrue are rather doubtful. The now famous manifesto issued at the meeting of representatives at the estate of Lord Melchett last year does not contain a guarantee for great sums to be raised for the purpose of advancing the welfare of the country, but simply the assurance that they will do their best to obtain a million pounds yearly. Let us hope this million means a million net, for no definition has been made in this respect and would in the contrary case not far surpass the paltry Zionist Budget, the state of which caused the panic-stricken mood of our leaders to go begging for the help of "Goirim" at any cost. In any case they do not hold out great hopes. One reason by which the champions of a "mixed" Jewish Agency seem to be influenced strongly is the belief that the great names of capitalists heading the list of the Marshall Group will have the beneficial result of drawing nearer other financiers. This pious hope, though, is not backed up by past experience, for no financiers have until now emulated the example of the millionaire, Baron Rothschild, who has for a number of years been investing millions in Palestine. Did any other financier follow suit? And is not it characteristic of the Marshall Group that its spiritual leader, Louis Marshall, himself contributed \$5000 to the recent Keren Hayesod campaign and \$100,000 only a few months ago for the Russian Colonisation Scheme? And what did those "Gvirim" do for Palestine during the whole period that negotiations have been carried on with them? Did they come forward with any practical assistance to help the Yishub come over the severe crisis of which they were well aware? All these deliberations are not very encouraging. But granted that things will change entirely after the Extended Jewish Agency has become an established fact. Granted they will obtain for us some new funds, but at what cost! At the cost of sacrificing the democracy of our movement, at the cost of discarding the masses, those masses who have brought Zionism to the heights of a political and economical factor to be reckoned with, in favour of a few "Gvirim" responsible to no one and bound by nothing. And the question appears in all its crudity: Is it worth and is it necessary? That it is not worth is clear to everyone who knows that Zionism does not merely mean the transfer of a few Galuth Jews to Palestine, a colonisation scheme after the style of Baron Hirsch's enterprise in the Argentine, but a transvaluation of values, a rebirth of the Jewish spirit on the base of the Jewish State. And this cannot be compensated or measured by £ s. d.

And that it is not necessary, not imperative to hand over the fate of our ideal to people opposed to same, is also clear to everyone who studied the economics of Palestine and noticed that hundreds of thousands of pounds have been invested and are still being invested in Palestine by people who have no interest what-

soever in the political aspect of Zionism but only in the dry facts of economics. And if there are people in the nature of the Marshall Group who claim to be willing to help Jews in Palestine and also new settlers, let them come along by all means. They are welcome, and their assistance will be highly appreciated, but why hand them over a thing they do not approve of, the political creed and aim of Zionism, which they are liable to distort and mutilate?

The scheme put forward by the Zionist Revisionists is certainly the only logical one. They propose that the Extended Jewish Agency should consist of two chambers: one having for its purpose the economical development of the country in which both Zionists and non-Zionists could collaborate in a peaceful atmosphere, and the other one concerned with the political aspect of Zionism to be under the control of Zionists only, to be elected by the Congress. This scheme is workable, whilst the other one spells disaster.

Even enthusiasts of the Jewish Agency as outlined by the Agreement Weizmann-Marshall have their fears and worries and try to safeguard the Zionist movement against eventualities. So the 14th Zionist Congress laid down the principle that the Jewish Agency shall be formed for a period of three years only after which the desirability of renewal of the agreement should be reconsidered. And the Grand Actions Committee, at their last session, decided to approach the British Government with a view of securing a guarantee from same that in case of dissolution of the Jewish Agency the Zionist Congress and Executive should revert to their previous recognised position. Zionists all over the world also are concerned about the presidency of the Agency; they want the president of Congress also to be president of the Agency. And many more vexatious problems are worrying the minds of Zionists who are very reluctant to part with traditional Zionism and to supplant the "Mixed" Agency in its stead, but who lack the courage to oppose openly the Zionist leaders and their policy.

For the peace of mind of Zionists all over the world, for the sake of our national youth whose enthusiasm is going to be given a terrible and disastrous blow, for the peace and harmony within the ranks of the Jewish Agency itself, for the successful advancement of the political aim of Zionism, we must give up the idea of "Mixed" Agency as contemplated, and replace same by the two-chamber Agency as proposed by the Revisionists. The fate of Zionism, the rate of our national future is at stake. Will not the Congress put a stop to the suicidal policy embodied in the scheme of Mixed Agency?

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