

# THE ZIONIST RECORD

THE ORGAN OF SOUTH AFRICAN JEWRY

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## Russia's Statement

IT is evident from the text of Mr. Gromyko's speech that his words were not in the nature of impromptu remarks, but the result of a careful study of the Palestine situation. He quoted at least two reports of Palestine Commissions and referred to Mr. Bevin's speech in the House of Commons. He touched not only on recent happenings but on events of the pre-war period.

Thus it may well be assumed that although he took the precaution of emphasising that the policy of the Soviet Government would be expounded after concrete proposals were made by the Fact-Finding Committee, his speech did, in fact, indicate the trend of Russia's policy.

The terms of reference of the Fact-Finding Committee are broad and extensive. While it is certain that the Mandatory Government will testify before the Commission, one wonders whether other great Powers will do so. Seeing that she is not represented on the Fact-Finding Committee, will Russia make representations or will she wait until the Committee has concluded its work as suggested by Mr. Gromyko? It would obviously be more conducive to a solution if all interests were consulted beforehand, otherwise there might be renewed deadlocks in September.

In the meantime, it is gratifying to note that Russia has expressed its appreciation of Jewry's links with Palestine and of Palestine's link with the problem of displaced Jews. Mr. Gromyko's speech has struck a blow at the impertinence of the Arab spokesmen, who denied even the right of Jewry's existence in Palestine and at the Anglo-American "experts" on power politics who supported them. It has certainly cleared the air of the Middle East of some of the petrol fumes with which it was being contaminated.

In its broader aspects, it should be emphasised again that Zionism has at all times refused to become associated with the intrigues of the great Powers. It was not the fault of Jewry, if according to allegations, certain Powers endeavoured to use Palestine as a tool for imperialist ambitions. We venture to hope that to-day the issue of Palestine will serve as a meeting ground rather than a bone of contention for the big Powers.

Mr. Shertok has made it clear that American help would be needed in the solution of the Palestine problem. If Britain is to abandon the Mandate, there will be need for international co-operation in order to settle the affairs of Palestine. For the past 25 years it has been a source of deep regret to the Zionist movement that while it had found understanding and sympathy among all nations, big and small, Russia had maintained a policy which varied between hostility and neutrality towards Zionism. We are now happy to note the measure of friendship displayed by Mr. Gromyko. Zionism is based on the highest principles of human progress. It thrives on understanding by all sections and all classes. That understanding, we hope, will continue to develop into full support for the rights of Jewry in Palestine.

It is premature at the moment to deal with the alternatives referred to by Mr. Gromyko. In any case he has not fully committed himself to either of them, although he seemed to stress the solution of a binational State. As the issue of Palestine develops before the Fact-Finding Committee, Jewry's representatives will no doubt deal with the various alternatives and thus place the issue in its proper perspective.

## Communal Discipline

THE statement issued by the S.A. Jewish Board of Deputies that no individual is entitled to speak on behalf of the whole community, expressed something which should have been self-understood. But apparently there is in some quarters a complete lack of understanding of the premise on which this statement is based and of the very structure of the Board of Deputies. Mr. Milne has told the Jewish press this week of his disagreement with the statement. He maintains that the Board of Deputies consists of "self-styled dictators" and that the statement was intended to suppress the views of the minority. Furthermore, he even questions the right of the Board to represent the community, because it is not democratically elected.

This is rather a strange argument, coming as it does from an individual member of the community. If the Board does not represent the community, individuals in Johannesburg or Cape Town certainly do not. As for the Board, its deputies are elected by a wide range of congregations, organisations and societies representing a fair cross-section of all classes of the community, at specially convened congresses held once every two years. Every month there are meetings of Deputies at which an opportunity is given to criticise the activities of the Executive Council and to make suggestions on policy and action. This is certainly not dictatorship; on the contrary, it imposes an authoritative body on the community and prevents that anarchy which would have existed if each individual were to take the liberty of making speeches, writing letters and arranging delegations on behalf of the community.

We emphasise the words "on behalf of the community." In his individual capacity every Jew is, of course, entitled to act in accordance with his own views and align himself politically with any section he likes. The Board has made it clear on numerous occasions that as citizens of this country Jews are entitled to belong, and do in fact belong, to various political groups. The task of the Board is to defend the rights and honour of the community as a whole. In this work it requires the support of every member of the community and it must be in a position to exercise a measure of authority over every Jew.

Decisions reached by the Board are the result of careful deliberations by people who are elected and appointed for that purpose. If individuals were to take it upon themselves to initiate schemes of their own on matters affecting the relations between Jews and non-Jews or between Jewish citizens and the Union Government it would lead to disorder and anarchy

## Rotary Chief Addresses Luncheon Club

"UNO does at least seem to set a time limit for the Jewish agony in Palestine," said Mr. G. A. Leyds, chairman of the Federal Union Society in Cape Town, and District Governor of the Rotary International of Southern Africa, speaking on UNO and Palestine at the Zionist Luncheon Club on Friday.

Mr. Leyds described his background, and related how as a child he had been placed by his father with a Jewish family in Pretoria during the Boer War troubles. There was a Jewish lad of his own age, called Yankele Kaganoff, staying with the family, and they used to go to Schul together, the ceremony impressing him very much.

His family, who were Hollanders, lost everything, and although he did not presume to sound the depths of degradation endured by German Jews, he did know how it felt to belong to a conquered and supposedly inferior people who were deprived of every opportunity of becoming equal with their conquerors.

Mr. Leyds said that the world's finest jurists were sitting at the International Court of Justice in The Hague, to which the Palestine problem should have been referred. Individual members of the United Nations were, perhaps, coloured by self-interest and not sufficiently trained to judge. UNO should make an appeal to The Hague to make a Jewish state in Palestine enforceable.

Mr. B. Gering presided.

## MR. MILNE CRITICISES DEPUTIES' STATEMENT

In a long statement issued to the Jewish press last week Mr. Joseph Milne severely criticised the announcement, published last week by the S.A. Jewish Board of Deputies, that no individual was entitled to express opinions or make representations on behalf of the community as a whole. Mr. Milne said that judging by the statement it might be thought that decisions made by the Board of Deputies were binding upon all Jewry "irrespective of whether or not such a decision might give offence to any political body at whom it might be directed."

Mr. Milne alleged that the Deputies' statement was evoked by the approach of certain individuals to the Nationalist Party. "Those individuals represent the many who feel that the deadlock now existing between the Nationalist Party is not in Jewish interests and that ways and means should be found to arrive at an arrangement which would have the effect of changing the opinion and policy of the Nationalist Party, an opinion which is an unhealthy one both for the Jewish people and for South Africans belonging to that Party."

He further maintained that the Board of Deputies was not run on democratic lines, not having been elected by "the vote of all South African Jewry." By "precluding anybody else from voicing an opinion or doing anything he can to break the deadlock with the Nationalists," the Board is exercising a form of rule similar to that of the dictators. Jews who have for centuries preached the doctrine of democracy and tolerance now find themselves by the action of the

## MOISEWITSCH PLAYED WITH THE PALESTINE ORCHESTRA

Mr. Benno Moiseiwitsch, the internationally famous pianist, who has arrived in Johannesburg on a two months' tour of South Africa, was born in Odessa and went to England in 1904. Later he studied in Vienna.

He returned to England, which became his domicile, yet apart from the periods of the two World Wars he has never stayed there for longer than a year at a time, travelling all over the world on concert tours.

In 1937 he played with the Palestine Orchestra conducted by Toscanini during the first year of its existence. He was asked to go again, but due to the war has been unable to do so, though he hopes to go soon. Many of his friends who have been to Palestine recently have told him of the tremendously high standard of the music played there.

Mr. Moiseiwitsch, who was confined to England throughout the war, gave 100 concerts for Mrs. Churchill's Aid to Russia Fund, six for Aid to China, several for Jewish charities, 314 orchestral concerts and 840 concerts in all.

Describing how the depressing, anxious times made the British people turn more than ever before to the emotional and cultural outlets to be found unmistakably in music, Mr. Moiseiwitsch said he had played more times than he could remember through air raids, with the bombs falling and the guns firing. The roof watchers signalled for the playing to cease when planes came directly overhead, and as soon as they had passed, the playing began again.

He played on September 7, 1940, at the last concert in the Queen's Hall, London, before it was blitzed, and was in his London home when it was bombed. Had he been sitting at the piano, the bomb would have killed him.

Mr. Moiseiwitsch, who toured South Africa in 1933 and 1936, is giving his first concert of this tour in Johannesburg to-night at the City Hall.

After his present tour is over, he intends to visit North America and Australia.

Board once more submitted to the decrees and opinions of their self-styled masters, as were our unfortunate brethren under the dictators.

Mr. Milne goes on to refer to a meeting which he had with officers of the Board in this connection, when the Board maintained that no one other than itself could speak on behalf of Jewry as a whole. He says: "It is my contention that nobody should be entitled to speak on behalf of Jewry as a whole."

Mr. Milne further maintained that the recent statements by General Smuts in regard to the immigration of Jews to South Africa showed "very clearly that the Government took no notice of representations" made by the Board of Deputies and that the Jewish people should therefore ask the Board to "return its representation and authority as it is doing no good at all."

"Ex-Nazis are being permitted to remain in this country, yet the gates remain closed to Jewish immigration. Even at UNO no firm stand has been made as far as South African Jewry is concerned. Obviously the South African Government and the United Party have no respect for the Jewish Board of Deputies," added Mr. Milne.

(See editorial "Communal Discipline" on this page).

and result in dangers which can hardly be foretold. The suggestion that "nobody should be allowed to speak on behalf of the community" will not be taken seriously by anyone. Jewry has moved a long way from the days when its affairs were handled by individuals, and the need for organised bodies has long since been realised in all parts of the Western world. The Board of Deputies was not born yesterday. It is a well-established institution both here and in England. Any reforms which might be introduced in its activities have to come from its constituent bodies, and have to be thrashed out at its meetings and conferences. Statements issued by the Board are directly or indirectly endorsed by the community and every Jew is in duty bound to carry out the Board's decisions and to accept the rule of communal discipline.