

# Tasks Before British Zionism

By Moshe Shertok

## "In Defeat—Defiance"

THIS week sees the close of a chapter in Zionist history. It marks the parting of the ways between British policy in Palestine and Zionist policy. It is not we who have been responsible for this change. We would have been happy to continue this parallelism and this great partnership brought into being by the Balfour Declaration. The Government's policy, I am convinced, is but a temporary deviation from that course marked out by the authors of the great document of 1917. The task before British Zionism, in a nutshell, is to bring back British policy to a living concept of the Balfour Declaration. That Declaration can never die. It is an act of history and it will live in history. We must make it a living reality in the day-to-day life of the Jewish people.

The task of correcting the path of British policy is no easy one. The Government seem determined to carry it through. But the British conscience will not rest. That conscience, alive in every Englishman, feels that we Zionists are right and that we are being let down by the Government. The Colonial Office decision will have to be tested at the bar of public opinion. And public opinion is not easily misled.

Zionists in Great Britain will have to re-orientate their attitude towards Zionist work. It was comparatively easy to support the upbuilding of the Jewish National Home in the country where this has always been the official policy of the Government. It may not be so easy henceforth when British policy is not to be governed by the original purposes of the Balfour Declaration. It will be perhaps more difficult but even more vital in the future for Zionists to support actively that movement which has made of the Jewish people a political entity, having its own will, its own course, and having its own policy to defend. Support that movement they must.

## The Yishuv Guards our Future

It is, of course, clear that, as in the past, the brunt of the struggle on behalf of the Jewish National Home will be borne by the Yishuv in the front-line trenches. The Yishuv is in fact the most powerful instrument of the Jewish people in their struggle for the defence of Jewish rights. This great weapon was in itself the result of two powerful political instruments, the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, forged twenty years ago. At that time we put forward claims and we enlisted sympathies—in the name of history. Then our cause lacked the background of physical reality. To-day we again speak in the name of history; but we have in addition that concrete achievement, the Yishuv. We cannot any longer be disregarded in Palestine. There are factors in that country over which we are already masters. To set up an Arab State now is not only unjust, void of all moral principle, and a gross betrayal of the Jewish people; it is a physical impossibility. We already number in Palestine almost half a million souls. There is a Jewish majority in the capital city of the country, Jerusalem. Haifa, the city of the future, gateway to the East, is already predominantly Jewish. The port of Haifa is used mostly by Jews. Tel Aviv,

with its nearly 160,000 inhabitants, and its new port, is entirely Jewish. Jews are responsible for 60 per cent. of the revenue of Palestine, and they participate to the extent of more than 60 per cent. in the country's productive capacity. The two main concessions, electricity and the Dead Sea Potash Works, are largely Jewish. Almost the entire coastal plain and the Emek, the Valley of Esdraelon, are settled by Jews. And where Jews own land, they till it themselves; they are not absentee landlords. Where there are Jewish settlements, the roads, traffic, and defence are in Jewish hands. There may in London be talk of "safeguards for the Jewish minority." The Yishuv rejects this idea. Their safeguards are inherent in their own strength. When in the Diaspora Jews say "we will resist," it indicates a frame of mind. It is tremendously important, since without the moral and material support given to Palestine by Jews in the Diaspora, the work of the Yishuv would be made far more difficult. But when the Yishuv itself declares "We will not acquiesce," that sentiment is immediately translated into reality. It indicates something more than a state of mind; it reveals a policy of action. When the Yishuv says it will refuse to accept any policy which restricts its growth and which seeks to place it under the domination of the Mufti and his clique, it foreshadows a period of insubordination so long as the Administration persists in such a policy.

## We Shall Not Be Defeated

The Yishuv will, of course, need to be supported by Jews in all the free countries of the world in their policy of resistance. Only in this way will it be shown that those who seek to impose the laws are themselves guilty of an illegal act, and not those who resist them. The secret of the strength of Palestinian Jewry lies in the fact that here are nearly half a million Jews, the whole of whose life-interest is devoted to the defence of Jewish rights and the Jewish future. They are defending, too, their own lives and the lives of their children. They did not come to Palestine to become subjects of an Arab State. Nor did they intend, when they made their sacrifices on behalf of the Jewish National Home, that their children would grow up to live as subjects not in their own free country but in an Arab-dominated State. To them, therefore, the safeguarding of the organic growth of the Jewish National Home is a matter of life and death. And because of it, Jews will succeed. It is not a matter of life and death to Britain that Jews should be prohibited from entering Palestine.

We believe that, historically speaking, the Jewish people are undefeatable. We may well be defeated in single battles; but in the war of history we will not be defeated. It may be said that in this latest battle on which we are engaged we have been defeated. Our reaction must therefore be defiance.

### Digressions in the Wilds

In the last few days we have heard much talk about British Guiana. It seems to me that once more people seem to be favouring another dispersal of the Jewish people. Some of our brethren are going to Shanghai, some to Australia. I have even heard of some seeking Not by bread alone does man live. To be successful, a settlement movement must have a driving spirit behind it. These qualifications obtain in Palestine alone. In my recent experiences among the Jewish masses of Poland I was struck by the appalling misery, and moral and material penury, in which men, women and children in the ghettos live. They walk about with the palor of death, helpless, hopeless. Yet out of that sea of despair I saw something that stood out as solid as a rock—the *chalutz* movement, that organisation of young Jewish men and women imbued with a single ideal and a single purpose, building up the Jewish National Home. There is in the Diaspora a vast reservoir of pent-up pioneering energy directed towards Palestine. With this movement in the Diaspora and with the Yishuv in Palestine there can be no failure and no defeatism for Zionism. We must succeed—we will succeed!

(The above is the substance of the address delivered by Mr. [Name] last Sunday evening.)