



THE ETHICS OF THE IRON WALL

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Let us go back to the Helsingfors Programme. Since I am one of those who helped to draft it, I am naturally not disposed to question the justice of the principles advocated there. The programme guarantees citizenship equality, and national self-determination. I am firmly convinced that any impartial judge will accept this programme as the ideal basis for peaceful and neighbourly collaboration between two nations.

But it is absurd to expect the Arabs to have the mentality of an impartial judge; for in this conflict they are not the judges; but one of the contending parties. And after all, our chief question is whether the Arabs, even if they believed in peaceful collaboration they would agree to have any "neighbours", even good neighbours, in the country which they regard as their own. Not even those who try to move us with high-sounding phrases will dare to deny that national homogeneity is more convenient than natural diversity. So why should a nation that is perfectly content with its isolation admit to its country even good neighbours in any considerable number? I want neither your honey nor your sting", is a reasonable answer.

But apart from this fundamental difficulty, why must it be the Arabs who should accept the Helsingfors Programme, or, in that matter any programme for a State which has a mixed national population? To make such a demand is to ask for the impossible. The Springer theory is not more than 30 years old. And no nation, not even the most civilised, has yet agreed to apply this theory honestly in practice. Even the Czechs, under the leadership of Masaryk, the teacher of all autonomists, could not would not do it.

Among the Arabs, even their intellectuals have never heard of this theory. But these same intellectuals would know that a minority always suffers everywhere: the Christians in Turkey, the Moslems in India, the Irish under the British, the Poles and



Czechs under the Germans, now the Germans under the Poles and Czechs, and so forth, without end. So that one must be intoxicated with rhetoric to expect the Arabs to believe that the Jews, of all the people in the world, will alone prove able, or will, at least, honestly intend to realise an idea that has not succeeded with other nations who are with much greater authority.

If I insist on this point, it is not because I want the Jews, too, to abandon the Helsingfors Programme as the basis of a future *modus vivendi*. On the contrary we- at least the writer of these lines – believe in this programme as much as we believe in our ability to give effect to it in political life, though all precedents have failed. But it would be useless now to the Arabs. They would not understand, and they would not place any trust in its principles: they would not be able to appreciate them.

II

And since it is useless, it must also be harmful. It is incredible what political simpletons Jews are. They shut their eyes to one of the most elementary rules of life, that you must not "meet halfway" those who do not want to meet you.

There was a typical example in old Russia, when one of the oppressed nations, with one accord, launched a crusade against the Jews, boycotting them and pogroming them. At the same time, this nation was fighting to gain its own autonomy, without any attempt to conceal it means to use its autonomy for the purpose of oppressing the Jews. Worse than before. And yet, Jewish politicians and writers, (even Jewish nationalists) considered it their duty to support the autonomist efforts of their enemy, on the ground that autonomy is a sacred cause. It is remarkable how we Jews regard it as our duty to stand up and cheer whenever the Marsellaise is played, even if it is played by Haman himself, and Jewish heads are smashed to its accompaniment. I was once told of a man who was an ardent Democrat and always whenever he heard the Marsellaise, he stood stiffly attention, like a soldier on parade. One night burglars broke into his house, and one of them played the Marsellaise. This sort of thing is not morality, it is twaddle. Human society is built up on the basis of mutual advantage. If you take away the mutual principle right becomes a falsehood. Each man who passes my window in the street has a right to live only in so far as he recognises my right to live; but if he is determined to kill me, I cannot admit that he has any right to live. And that is true also of nations. Otherwise, the world would become a jungle of wild



beasts, where not only the weak, but also those who have any scrap of feeling would be exterminated.

The world must be a place of co-operation and mutual goodwill. If we are to live we should all live in the same way, and if we are to die we should all die in the same way. But there is no morality, no ethics that concedes the right of a glutton to gorge, while more tempered people die of starvation. There is only one possible morality, that of humanity, and in practice it amounts in our particular instance to this: if besides the Helsingfors Programme we had our pocket full of concessions of every kind, including our willingness to participate in some fantastic Arab Federation od morza do morza (from sea to sea) negotiations with regard to them would still be possible only if the Arabs would first consent to the creation of a Jewish Palestine. Our ancestors knew that very well. And the Talmud quotes a very instructive legal action – which has a direct bearing on this matter. Two people walking along the road find a piece of cloth. One of them says: " I found it. It is mine:" But the other says: " No: that is not true: I found the cloth, and it is mine: " The judge to whom they appeal cuts the cloth in two, and each of these obstinate folk gets half. But there is another version of this action. It is only one of the two claimants who is obstinate: the other, on the contrary, has determined to make the world wonder at this magnanimity. So he says: "We both found the cloth, and therefore I ask only a half of it, because the second belongs to B. But B. insists that he found it, and that he alone is entitled to it. In this case, the Talmud recommends a wise Judgment, that is, how very disappointing to our magnanimous gentleman. The judge says: "There is agreement about one half of the cloth. A. admits that it belongs to B. So it is only the second half that is in dispute. We shall, therefore divide this into two halves: And the obstinate claimant gets three-quarters of the cloth, while the "gentleman" has only one quarter, and serve him right. It is a very fine thing to be a gentleman, but it is no reason for being an idiot. Our ancestors knew that. But we have forgotten it. We should bear it in mind. Particularly, since we are very badly situated in this matter of concessions. There is not much that we can concede to Arab nationalism, without destroying Zionism. We cannot abandon the effort to achieve a Jewish majority in Palestine. Nor can we permit any Arab control of our immigration, or join an Arab Federation. We cannot even support Arab movement, it is at present hostile to us and



consequently we all, including even the pro-Arab rhetorionomers, rejoice at every defeat sustained by this movement, not only adjacent Transjordan, and Syria, but even in Morocco. And this state of affairs will continue, because it cannot be otherwise, until one day the iron wall will compel the Arabs to come to an arrangement with Zionism once and for all.

III

Let us consider for a moment the point of view of those to whom this seems immoral. We shall trace the root of the evil to this – that we are seeking to colonise a country against the wishes of its population, in other words, by force. Everything else that is undesirable grows out of this root with axiomatic inevitability. What then is to be done?

The simplest way out would be to look for a different country to colonise. Like Uganda. But if we look more closely into the matter we shall find that the same evil exists there, too. Uganda also has a native population, which consciously or unconsciously as in every other instance in history, will resist the coming of the colonisers. It is true that these natives happen to be black. But that does not alter the essential fact. If it is immoral to colonise a country against the will of its native population, the same morality must apply equally to the black man as to the white. Of course, the blackman may not be sufficiently advanced to think of sending delegations to London, but he will soon find some kindhearted white friends, who will instruct him. Though should these natives even prove utterly helpless, like children, the matter would only become worse. Then if colonisation is invasion and robbery, the greatest crime of all would be to rob helpless children. Consequently, colonisation in Uganda is also immoral, and colonisation in any other place in the world, whatever it may be called, is immoral. There are no more uninhabited islands in the world. In every oasis there is a native population settled from times immemorial, who will not tolerate an immigrant majority or an invasion of outsiders. So that if there is any landless people in the world, even its dream of a national home must be an immoral dream. . Those who are landless must remain landless to all eternity. The whole earth has been allocated. Basta: Morality has said so:

From the Jewish point of view, morality has a particularly interesting appearance. It is said that we Jews number 15 million people scattered throughout the world. Half of them are now literally homeless, poor, hunted wretches. The number of Arabs totals



38 million. They inhabit Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli, Egypt, Syria, Arabia and Iraq – an area that apart from desert equals the size of half Europe. There are in this vast area 16 Arabs to the square mile. It is instructive to recall by way of comparison that Sicily has 352 and England 669 inhabitants to the square mile. It is still more instructive to recall that Palestine constitutes about one two hundredth part of this area.

Yet if homeless Jewry demands Palestine for itself it is "immoral" because it does not suit the native population. Such morality may be accepted among cannibals, but not in a civilised world. The soil does not belong to those who possess land in excess but to those who do not possess any. It is an act of simple justice to alienate part of their land from those nations who are numbered among the great landowners of the world, in order to provide a place of refuge for a homeless, wandering people. And if such a big landowning nation resists which is perfectly natural – it must be made to comply by compulsion. Justice that is enforced does not cease to be justice. This is the only Arab policy that we shall find possible. As for an agreement, we shall have time to discuss that later.

All sorts of catchwords are used against Zionism; people invoke Democracy, majority rule national self-determination. Which means, that the Arabs being at present the majority in Palestine, have the right of self-determination, and may therefore insist that Palestine must remain an Arab country. Democracy and self-determination are sacred principles, but sacred principles like the Name of the Lord must not be used in vain –to bolster up a swindle, to conceal injustice. The principle of self-determination does not mean that if someone has seized a stretch of land it must remain in his possession for all time, and that he who was forcibly ejected from his land must always remain homeless. Self-determination means revision – such a revision of the distribution of the earth among the nations that those nations who have too much should have to give up some of it to those nations who have not enough or who have none, so that all should have some place on which to exercise their right of self-determination. And now when the whole of the civilised world has recognised that Jews have a right to return to Palestine, which means that the Jews are, in principle, also "citizens" and "inhabitants" of Palestine, only they were driven out, and their return must be a lengthy process, it is wrong to contend that meanwhile the local population has the right to refuse to allow them to come back and to that



"Democracy". The Democracy of Palestine consists of two national groups, the local group and these who were driven out, and the second group is the larger.