

”והארץ לא תמכר לצמדות כי לי הארץ”

(ויקרא, כ”ה, 23)

“And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity;
for the land is Mine.”

Leviticus, 25:23.

SOME UNBIASSED ENGLISH VIEWS

on the

JEWISH NATIONAL FUND

(Keren Kayemeth Leisrael)

AND ITS ACTIVITIES.

Israel Va Ker Collection

JERUSALEM,

November, 1930.

THE OBJECTS OF THE JEWISH NATIONAL FUND.

1. To purchase land in Palestine with the voluntary contributions of the Jewish people, and to administer it as the common property of the Jewish people.
2. To dispose of this land only on the basis of hereditary leaseholds for agricultural purposes in the rural districts, and of hereditary building concessions in the cities.
3. To facilitate the settlement of working farmers without private means.
4. To assure the cultivation of the land by Jews.
5. To ensure the right use of the soil.
6. To prevent speculation in land values.

Keren Kayemeth Leisrael is the Hebrew rendering of
Jewish National Fund.

INTRODUCTION.

The attack in the Statement of Policy on Palestine by His Majesty's Government, October, 1930 upon the activities of the Jewish National Fund has been as unexpected as it has been astounding. Never before have the principles upon which this institution conducts its activities been criticised adversely by any responsible authority acquainted with its work. On the contrary, throughout the years of its activity the Jewish National Fund has been the object of numerous laudatory messages, not a few of them from Britishers.

In the following pages a number of statements are quoted made at different times by unbiassed Englishmen who have had opportunities of studying the activities of the Jewish National Fund at first hand. Included among them are Sir Herbert Samuel, Lord Plumer and Sir John Chancellor, the three High Commissioners who have administered the Government of Palestine since its inception, and Mr. N. Stubbs, Director of its Lands Department.

The list is by no means comprehensive. It comprises only a selection hastily made to enable the early appearance of this publication.

The italics in the passages are those of the editors.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR HERBERT SAMUEL, P.C., G.B.E.:

High Commissioner for Palestine.

"I remember the Valley of Jezreel before it was covered by the present settlements, and I must remark upon the great progress that has been made. I am very pleased to hear that the Keren Kayemeth is about to make further fresh purchases of land."

At the J.N.F. Stall at the Tel Aviv Fair and Exhibition, May, 1924.

"There cannot be a true National Home unless its roots strike deep into the soil. Industrial development is good, but agricultural colonisation is essential. Land for colonisation is available in plenty. It is almost all in private ownership, but is obtainable. Men and women also are available in plenty— young, healthy, capable, ready for any effort, eager to come. One thing more is needed. Money—to buy the land, to drain the swamps, to build the houses, to stock the farms, to plant the trees. Here the Jewish National Fund plays a leading part. Through its agency large sums have been supplied; the results are to be seen in Palestine to-day in many progressive villages and in thousands of happy Jewish homes."

Address on Parlophone Gramophone Record, July, 1926.

"The Jewish home in Palestine must be built upon land of its own. There can be no temporary or insecure tenure. *The soil, once purchased, must be possessed in perpetuity. Only by these means can the cultivators who labour to redeem it from the waste and to make it increasingly fruitful be certain that the land to which they have given their toil shall always be preserved for the cause to which they were devoted.*

The Jewish National Fund achieves this. It is the chief institution for buying the land in Palestine on which the Jewish villages are established. It may not sell and it may not mortgage. It holds the land as trustee for the future."

Foreword to the Programme of the Palestine Exhibition and West End Fair, London, May, 1929.

"When I first saw it (the Valley of Esdraelon) in 1920 it was a desolation. Four or five small and squalid Arab villages, long distances apart from one another, could be seen on the summits of low hills here and there. For the rest the country was uninhabited. There was not a house, not a tree. Along a branch of the Hijaz Railway an occasional train stopped at deserted stations. A great part of the soil was in the ownership of absentee Syrian landlords. The River Kishon, which flows through the valley and the many springs which feed it from the hillsides, had been allowed to form a series of swamps and marshes, and, as a consequence, the country was infested with malaria.

By an expenditure of nearly £E.900,000 about 51 square miles of the valley have now been purchased by the Jewish National Fund and other organisations; twenty villages have been founded, with a population numbering at present about 2,600; nearly 3,000 dunams (about 700 acres) have been afforested. Twenty schools have been opened. There is an Agricultural Training College for women in one village and a hospital in another. All the swamps and marshes within the area that has been colonised have been drained, and cases of malaria are proportionately rare. The whole aspect of the valley has been changed. The wooden huts of the villages gradually giving place to red-roofed cottages, are dotted along the slopes; the plantations of rapidly growing eucalyptus trees already begin to give a new character to the landscape; in the spring the fields of vegetables or of cereals cover many miles of the land, and what five years ago was little better than a wilderness is being transformed before our eyes into a smiling countryside."

Report of the High Commissioner on the
Administration of Palestine, 1920-1925.

REPORT OF THE PALESTINE ADMINISTRATION, JULY 1920—DECEMBER 1921.

"The largest transaction of the year was the purchase by the Jewish National Fund and the Palestine Land Development Company, Limited of seven villages in the Galilee district. The

area comprises 62,634 dunams and the purchase price was £E225,039. The rights of existing tenants were fully safeguarded."

FIELD MARSHAL THE RIGHT HON.
LORD PLUMER, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., G.B.E. :
High Commissioner of Palestine.

"The Jewish National Fund is a practical expression of the desire of the Jewish people to revive the land of their forefathers.

"The Government have constantly before them, in new settlements on the land, visible evidence of the great work which the Fund has performed during the past twenty-five years.

"The Government fully appreciate the benefits which have accrued to the country from the restoration to cultivation of land that was previously waste, from the reclamation of malarious swamps, and the settlement of Jews on the soil of Palestine."

Message to the Jewish National Fund on the
occasion of its 25th Anniversary, celebration
Jerusalem, November, 1927.

" . . . Of the value of this afforestation work in the name of Earl Balfour which we have inaugurated to-day there can be no doubt. Even a casual visitor remarks the striking need of trees in Palestine, and contrasts this condition of the country with the Bible descriptions of its woods.

"We welcome the assistance given to us by this project of a Balfour Forest, and I wish to assure all those who have contributed or will contribute to its fulfilment of its beneficial influence upon the country. I may say that it is a fine example of unselfish philanthropy for few of the donors can enjoy its advantages.

"I should like to thank all those who are responsible for initiating and carrying through this project, and on behalf of the Administration assure them of our appreciation of their assistance."

At the inaugural ceremony of the Balfour Forest,
Ginegar, Valley of Jezreel. February 23, 1928.

SIR JOHN CHANCELLOR, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., D.S.O.:

High Commissioner for Palestine.

"I must express my great admiration of this project of the Balfour Forest and the manner in which it is being executed. It has given me great pleasure to see the work, which I consider excellent. I shall visit Lord Balfour when in England during my summer vacation and relate to him the progress achieved with this living monument."

At the Balfour Forest,
March, 1929.

"From what I have seen during the tours which I have made through the country since my assumption of office, I can testify to the great value of the work that the Jewish National Fund is conducting in Palestine.

"The task which it has undertaken of reclaiming swamps, and rendering habitable and productive regions which have for centuries lain neglected and waste, is a worthy one; and in my opinion no more effective measures could be taken towards the realisation of the dream of the Jewish people to rebuild the ancient land of their forefathers.

"From what I have seen of them, I can state with confidence that the works for which the Fund is responsible, whether completed or in progress, will compare not unfavourably with similar enterprises of which I have knowledge in other parts of the world."

Message to the Jewish National Fund
at the opening of the Palestine Exhibition
and West End Fair, London, May, 1929.

N. STUBBS:

Director of the Lands Department of the Palestine Government.

"Will you allow me to give expression to my own appreciation of the work of the Jewish National Fund as I have had the opportunity to see it. During the last six years I have been in very close touch with that branch of this movement which deals with land purchase, and through the courtesy of the officials of the National Fund I have had the opportunity of visiting most of the areas which have been acquired during

that time. I hope you will allow me to pay tribute to the wisdom with which those areas have been selected and to the energy and care which have been expended in developing them. *In dealing with the affairs of the Fund I have always been struck by one article in particular of its Constitution. I refer to that Article which prohibits the sale of property once it has been acquired by the Fund. That provision has appealed to me in two senses. Firstly it reproduces a very fine sentiment in the ideal of keeping for the Jewish people those estates which the Fund is from time to time able to acquire. And secondly, it ensures that the land will be kept free from the grasp of the greedy speculator.* It is no part of my function to condemn the work of those who make a living out of land speculation, but I cannot avoid the conclusion that Jewish land speculation is a waste of Jewish energy and a waste of Jewish money. And that it adds very much to the difficulties of that Fund whose activities we are celebrating to-night. It only remains, Mr. Chairman, for me to give expression to the hope that success may crown the efforts of your Fund and to express the hope that world Jewry will recognise its obligation to attain that success."

Address at the 25th Anniversary celebration
of the Jewish National Fund, Jerusalem,
November, 1927.

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD:

"They believe that the land should be held in public trust (but there is much Leviticus as Karl Marx in that).

. . . Whoever studies the conditions under which Palestine has to be reclaimed must see how only by enlisting the hearts of men can the miracle be performed, and that the communist (not Bolshevist) Nuris does that far better than the wage-paying, individualistic colonies."

"Zionism and Palestine," in the
London Contemporary Review, 1921.

"Such is the Jew who is going to Palestine. He is an idealist and a worker. His conception of his work is definite, his methods are practical. He is creating experimental nurseries

for trees; he is gathering together stores of such machinery as will be useful in Palestinian conditions; he is studying the art of terracing. At one of the newest of these settlements, that of Nuris, at the foot of Mount Gilboa, consisting of 150 people, I found them engaged in breaking up waste land and planting the hillsides. They were to put in 14,000 eucalyptus trees, 4,000 pines, 500 cypresses, 10,000 olives together with apples, oranges, and almonds.

"Of the genuineness of the Jewish settlement there can be no doubt. Ten years of the work which I saw will increase the wealth of Palestine a hundredfold."

"Zionism and Palestine", in the
Contemporary Review, London, 1921.

"I was on my way to see the new thought nestling amidst the old tradition. In a little town of tents at the foot of Gilboa, by the spring where Gideon is said to have tested the endurance of his army, faithful men and women have come together to rebuild Palestine and fence it against Capitalism.

"They came to a place all but waste, to swampy ground and a barren hillside. They will fail, the man of practical intelligence will say. I hope he is wrong, but if they do and are scattered, they will have clothed the northern sides of Mount Gilboa, made rich the waste lands at its foot, and cheered and refreshed everyone who will come in contact with their work. They are believers."

"From Jerusalem to Nazareth"
in the *Glasgow Forward*, 1921.

COLONEL S.P. JAMES:

Expert of the Anti-Malaria Commission of the League of Nations.

"The country dwellers are scattered in about 100 Jewish agricultural villages, the principal groups being on fertile and well-watered areas in the Maritime Plain and in the Valley of Esdraelon. By an expenditure of £900,000 about 51 square miles of the Esdraelon Valley were purchased by the Jewish National Fund and other organisations and laid out in 20 villages with a population numbering at present 2,600. About

700 acres were afforested and all the swamps and marshes within the colonised area were drained.

"All the members of the Commission were much impressed by the excellence of the sub-soil drainage work which they inspected in several Jewish Colonies, and they are very glad to have this opportunity of putting on record their appreciation of the striking anti-malarial results attained."

Report on the Tour of Investigation in Palestine, 1925.

COL. JOSIAH C. WEDGWOOD, M.P., D.S.O.:

"They (the Jewish workmen in Palestine) are working for a home for themselves, and to create a refuge for brothers and sisters still in exile. Such a refuge it may be, for the foundations are well laid. The land is for ever the property of the People."

Address at Cooper Union
before the Jewish Trade Unions,
New York, January 14, 1926.

The despised Jewish colonist has made good; and this has changed British opinion not only about the *Haluzim*, but almost, one would say, about Jews generally. My most sceptical friends come back from a tour in Palestine bubbling praise. It is the strip between Haifa and the Sea of Galilee which excites enthusiasm. This belt has been bought by the Jewish National Fund with good American dollars, turned from bad land into good, drained, watered, till now the Vale of Jezreel lies there—a strip of California sandwiched in between blocks of the old Land of Canaan as it was known to Abraham. No fear here of driving out the Arab population; they are at least enabling them to live like twentieth century human beings.

"... Ours may be an example of more than agricultural development, *for the land bought is the inalienable property of the Jewish people. A new version this of the ancient Year of Jubilee, and as satisfactory in its promise for the economic future of Palestine.*"

Address before the Bnai Brith,
Detroit, Mich., January 18, 1926.

"Every Zionist knows that the success of this Judeo-British venture depends upon the Jews getting land to use in Palestine. If they cannot use the land, Jews cannot stop in Palestine.

". . . That the J.N.F. should own the land of Palestine and lease the land on hereditary lease in family-holding areas, at revisable rents based on land value alone is our common ground."

In Foreword to "Land Problems in Palestine,"
by A. Granovsky,
(George Routledge & Son, London, 1926).

"The land question is at the root of all our difficulties. We must have land. Without land men can find no work and settlers cannot come in to Palestine. Those who own the land command all the products of the soil, and the land bought by the Keren Kayemeth remains for ever the property of the people."

In a letter to the Jewish National
Fund, May 14, 1929.

HARRY GOSLING, M.P.:
Mayor of Stepney.

"I want to impress upon you the importance of having National Fund Boxes in your homes and of putting a penny a day into each Box. *There is no nobler cause or grander ideal than the redemption of the land for the people, to whom it rightly belongs.*"

At the East London J.N.F. Bazaar,
January 30, 1926.

BRIG.-GEN. SIR WYNDHAM DEEDES, C. M. G., D. S. O.:

"I can pay high tribute to the work being done by the Jewish National Fund in Palestine. Through it, Zionism is transforming the land of Palestine into the eternal possession of entire Jewry."

At a luncheon in his honour,
April 29, 1927.

RIGHT HON. L. M. S. AMERY:

Secretary of State for the Dominions.

"I visited Palestine two years ago, and I must confess that my visit made a very profound impression upon me. I motored across that great plain of Esdraelon, which only a few years ago was one great fever-stricken swamp. And here from end to end was one field of pale green wheat and barley, a beautiful sight between the hills surrounding it. I stopped at a little settlement—I think it was Nahalal—and I talked to the settlers there. They had only been established three years on the ground. In the first year I think between 60 and 70 per cent. of the pioneers who worked at draining the ground were stricken down with malaria; in the second year, when the ground was drained, the proportion was down to something like 3 per cent. and in the third year it was down to under half per cent."

Address delivered in Johannesburg, September 9, 1927.

RT. HON. THE EARL OF BALFOUR, K. G., O. M., F. R. S.:

"Need I say that I feel very greatly honoured by the announcement that it is proposed to call the newly planted forest after my name. I earnestly hope that it will mark another step in the economic advance of Palestine under the inspiration and guidance of the movement in which your Society is taking so active a part."

In a letter to Mr. Leopold Schen, President,
Jewish National Fund for Gt. Britain
and Ireland, November 8, 1927.

"It is unnecessary for me to express my very high sense of the honour conferred upon me, but my feeling of personal gratification, strong as it is, is trifling compared with the satisfaction with which I view this important step in the economic development of Palestine. Afforestation naturally is a slow business, but is nevertheless important. Though I cannot live to see its results, I am confident that the project will be of immense benefit to the future of the country."

Message to the inaugural ceremony
of the Balfour Forest, February, 1928.

SIR JOHN RUSSELL, F.R.S.:

Director of the Rothamsted Experimental Station.

"Every settlement of a new country is bound to be costly, especially when, as in Palestine, there had previously been much mismanagement and misgovernment. In older settlements the first colonists, especially the women and children, have often suffered greatly; while a stirring record of human achievement, the story of these colonies is often a pathetic tale of human suffering. In Palestine the price of colonisation has been paid in large part in money: the Palestine Zionist Executive and the other agencies that have provided the funds have the satisfaction of knowing that the human suffering has been minimised. I have rarely seen healthier looking children than in the Jewish colonies."

"Agriculture in Palestine", Leaflet published
by the Zionist Organisation, London,
June, 1927.

"The favourable impression I formed last year was confirmed during my present visit

"Swamps are drained, not because money will be increased, but because malaria will be diminished. In other countries these operations ultimately pay because the land initially cost nothing and finally assumes great value. In Palestine, however, the land was never free for the colonists; it had to be purchased at considerable cost, and a long while must elapse before increments in value can be expected to repay the initial outlay. A good feature in the situation is that the increments when they come will be secured to the National Fund, as a result of whose efforts the land has been reclaimed and improved."

Report on Visit to Palestine, April, 1928.

"Further east are a group of communist Colonies, among them Daganian. But the communism is not political or revolutionary; it is "idealistic" and expresses the unwillingness of its members either to exploit the labour of others or to have their own labour exploited."

"Palestinian Agriculture and Its Possibilities,"
in *The Pioneer*, London, May, 1930.

A. D. UNWIN :

Principal Forest Officer of Cyprus.

"The very good planting (of the Jewish National Fund) with its very few failures, and plantations in which the blanks are very few, will always remain a wonderful memory to me, as a forester does not expect perfection. Nevertheless these plantations come as near that as any practical man could wish, and most foresters would be glad if they reached the same standard under similar climatic conditions.

"Nevertheless I consider that these new plantations are a wonderful sign of the awakening and virile movement amongst the Jews, and will be a lasting monument to their genius and work in Palestine.

"I cannot pay too high a tribute to the very painstaking, careful and systematic work put into them."

Report on the Forest Reserves, Forest Department's and Jewish Settlement Plantations of Palestine. June 30, 1928.

REV. W.M. CHRISTIE, D.D. :

"In no case has the Jew received a yard of land except by purchase, And when he has got the land he has shown what can be made of it. I knew the Plain of Esdraelon and of Gennessaret when they were covered perennially with thorns and thistles, with very small portions besides the villages scraped with primitive instruments, but now these are the green spots of Palestine and Gennessaret is again "the ambition of nature."

In the *British Review*, London, September, 1929.

DANIEL HOPKIN, M.P. :

"The colonists have shown by their magnificent courage and fine idealism what the possibilities are of increasing the productivity of the soil of Palestine. It is through such work as one sees in the Emek that, I believe, this peaceful penetration of sound works and higher ideals will help to solve the Palestinian question."

In Interview, *Jewish Chronicle*, London, November 1, 1929.

HARRY SNELL, M.P.:

"I can say definitely that no suspicion can attach to the business arrangements made by the Jews in their purchases of land from the Arabs. I personally know something of agriculture. Arab cultivation of the land is primitive to a degree. On the other hand, the Jews apply the latest methods of science and progress, and the very improved use they make of the land is a source of anger to the Effendi class who had left the land derelict for centuries."

Address before the
Hampstead Ethical Society.
May, 1930.

PROF. PATRICK ABERCROMBIE:

"It is very fortunate that this area (Haifa Bay lands) is owned by public bodies (Jewish National Fund and Palestine Economic Corporation) which lay out in advance the whole plan and so achieve the maximum benefit of its features and avoid the mistakes due to lack of such control."

Report on Haifa Bay Development Plan,
April, 1930.