

THE ROAD TO NATIONHOOD

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PALESTINE and the Jewish community have amazing powers of adjustability. The Jewish National Home has come through many storms and crises with a resilience which has always brought it new strength. Political and economic problems have created obstacles to normal growth and development. But they have also served to toughen the fibre of the Jewish settlers and forge the spiritual armor to resist and fight off the illusions of ease and comfort.

Because Palestine has such a high degree of flexibility, too many of us have failed to recognize fully the scope of the events of the past four years of war and the far-reaching changes and adjustments which had to be made in industry and agriculture to enable Palestine to serve as a supply and operational base of first importance in the Middle Eastern theatre. The transition from a peacetime to a wartime economy involved problems of major proportions. In the realm of agriculture the primary need was to expand the production of food products to feed the ever-increasing armies and the civilian population.

Today the Mediterranean has been completely freed from the menace of Nazi submarines and Fascist attack. But up to only a very short time ago Allied shipping was not very safe in that sea and long and roundabout routes had to be used to move supplies to the Middle East. It was this problem of the danger to shipping and the scarcity of bottoms in which to carry anything but the most vital war material, which made the conversion of Palestine's industry to war production a step of the greatest military value and necessity.

The challenge of achieving a total war footing, with manpower and woman power fully mobilized, with new factories established and old factories converted, with farms expanded and new land placed under cultivation, was successfully met through a program put into operation by the Jewish Agency for Palestine with the funds made














available by the Keren Hayesod (Palestine Foundation Fund). In the endless variety of activities supported by the Keren Hayesod is mirrored the flowering of the homeland as well as its trials and problems. It is the Jewish Agency which has guided the progress of the homeland and helped it steer a true and safe course through the most perilous storms.

If American Jewry, which has contributed the sum of \$35,220,000 to the upbuilding of Palestine through the Keren Hayesod since its establishment, is to have a comprehensive understanding of the program and significance of this people's fund, which in effect has all of the attributes of a national treasury, it might be well to look back to its origin and to the principles and aims of its founders.

(Continued on page 92)

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The Road To Nationhood

(Continued from page 38)

IN July, 1920, an historic Zionist Conference held in London discussed the complex questions of the upbuilding of Palestine in their full portent and resolved to establish a unique institution of its kind, possessing public character. As a result of that decision the Palestine Foundation Fund or Keren Hayesod came into being as the financial instrument of the Zionist Movement and Jewish Agency. Two decades before that historic conference, Herzl had dwelt upon the necessity of raising £10,000,000 to finance the settlement scheme of the Jewish Association after the hoped-for Charter was obtained. Herzl at first tried to procure this amount from wealthy Jews and large philanthropic societies. When he failed to convince them of the soundness of his ideal, he decided to appeal to the broad masses of the people. But the people, too, were insufficiently equipped to respond to his appeal. The proceeds of the campaigns for the Jewish Colonial Trust and the Jewish National Fund, and to the special drives held by the Zionist Movement (including the Odessa Committee) had raised about

£1,000,000 by the end of the last war. Imposing in itself, this total was of course collected in dribbles over a long period, and sufficed only to lay the foundations of the Zionist colonization effort then in its genesis.

Before the London Conference twenty-three years ago, a time of great rejoicing following the political victory of the Zionist Organization, the principal questions for consideration and decision were of immigration and settlement. According to the plans drafted by experts, it was resolved, with the establishment of the Keren Hayesod, to mobilize £25,000,000 within five years for the construction of the country. The traditional Tithe was set as the standard contribution, and given the form of a compulsory annual tax levied upon every Jew, irrespective of political complexion, by the Keren Hayesod.

The goal set by the Conference, however, was not achieved, and the plan for large-scale building within five years was not fulfilled. Keren Hayesod had therefore to adjust its activities to the financial means placed at its disposal. Dur-

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ing the period when Keren Hayesod was legally incorporated, in April, 1921, until the present a net sum of £10,000,000 has reached the Head Office in Jerusalem. In this period the income of the Jewish Agency and Keren Hayesod from other sources—such as various grants, payments on account of loans, and services—has aggregated £2,700,000, so that the entire amount accruing to the Jewish Agency and Keren Hayesod over these twenty-two years has been £12,700,000.

PALESTINE SHARE GROWS

THE net amount of £10,000,000 was achieved through receipts of £7,355,000 or 73.5% from April 1921 to September 1939 and £2,645,000 or 26.5% during the 45 months of this war, namely, from October 1939 to June 1943. It should be emphasized that during the present war, the percentage of income from the United States of America rose to 60% of the total (compared with 46.6% before the war) and from South Africa to 13.9%. On the other hand, the income from European countries (excluding the United Kingdom), following the destruction of the great Jewish communities, dropped to 5% in comparison with 25.8% from the continent of Europe previously. Palestine is substantially increasing its share in the Keren Hayesod campaigns, and during the war period its contributions rose to over 5% of the total. In May of this year, the peak record was attained in Keren Hayesod history with total income from contributions of £114,000. In the first nine months of the fiscal year—October 1942 to June 1943—the net income of the Keren Hayesod was £674,000, of which £383,000 came from the United States of America and £62,000 from Palestine.

The figures on the categories of use of Keren Hayesod funds through the various departments of the Jewish Agency during the period of April 1921 to June 1943 show that £7,488,000 or 61.3% was invested in "Immigration and Settlement" and £4,720,000 or 38.7% in "Public Services, National Organization and Security." Another £756,000 was spent by the Head Office since its establishment directly on organization, publicity, and delegates. First place among the items included in the first category was given to agricultural settlement, which took £3,797,000 or 31.1%. Immigra-

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tion and Training received £1,360,000 or 11.1%. Among the principal types of disbursement in the second category were £1,914,000 or 15.7% on educational and cultural activity and £1,647,000 or 13.5% of all expenditure and investment on National Organization and Security.

From its inception, the Palestine Foundation Fund has borne the practical responsibility for meeting the budgets adopted by the Zionist Congresses and General Council sessions for the various upbuilding purposes, and it has earned the oft-given appellation of the "Jewish State Treasury." These Keren Hayesod investments in town and countryside areas have created concrete property values, making it possible to raise a large loan of moderate terms from one of the largest banks in London in 1934. Since then, the standing and scope of action of the Jewish Agency and Keren Hayesod in the sphere of Jewish economy in Eretz Israel have steadily expanded.

SETTLEMENT PARAMOUNT

THE crown of Keren Hayesod efforts has been agricultural colonization on Jewish National Fund land—the foundation stone of the Zionist undertaking both economic and political. As in other avenues of effort, the Keren Hayesod has acted in the domain of agricultural settlement not only directly but also through various subsidiary corporations. There is, for example, the Palestine Agricultural Settlement Association, (PASA), the share capital of which was fully subscribed by the Palestine Foundation Fund. The Fund has also taken part in establishing water companies, the Rural and Suburban Settlement Company (RASSCO), which serves the needs of middle-class settlement, and other concerns. Agricultural advancement is being furthered by pioneering national capital coupled with the pioneering spirit and self-sacrifice of the Jewish settlers in reviving the successful ancient husbandry of the land.

The Jewish Agency continued during the war period, with its attendant difficulties, to promote fresh agricultural enterprise. Enormous sums compared with the rate of pre-war investment are now required to consolidate and expand national agriculture. There are now 276 Jewish villages in Palestine, and of these 147 were



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founded with Keren Hayesod funds and another 37 assisted by it. Twenty-eight new villages were established during the war. The agricultural community has been able to adjust its production to the special needs of these times and to the war effort as a result of the creative force of the mixed farming system initiated by the Keren Hayesod.

Urban trade and industry, the natural sector of private initiative, have also been materially and considerably aided by the Keren Hayesod, either through straight grants or guarantees, by investments in key industries or in undertakings of national Jewish importance. Urban settlement was given powerful impetus by the General Mortgage Bank of Palestine founded with Keren Hayesod funds. The investments by the Keren Hayesod in urban settlement by the end of June, 1943, aggregated £1,000,000 or 8.2% of its outlay since 1921.

KEREN HAYESOD has also borne the burden of maintaining the public services of Palestine Jewry, such as education and health, during the initial period of the Fund's existence; and to the extent that the Jewish population is expanding, the responsibility for the upkeep of these services is being increasingly assumed by the local organized Jewish institutions. Palestine Jewry and its economic system have grown, progressed, been strengthened in spite of the many obstacles they have had to overcome. The Jewish population showed its strength by contributing out of its own resources substantial amounts for defense, war needs, and other present-day purposes. A striking demonstration of the Yishuv's powers and potential at this time may be gathered by contrasting its sound position today with the calamitous economic conditions of the last war in Palestine.

Two fundamental objectives were set when the Keren Hayesod was established 23 years ago: the centralization of national capital and the levying of a voluntary tax on the Jewish people for the construction of Eretz Israel. If anything has been definitely established without a scintilla of doubt during that epoch—marked by innumerable fluctuations and setbacks, yet inspired by the force of a dynamic idealism—it is that the advancement of the settlement

effort at the tempo required by the circumstances would not have been possible without the aid of a co-ordinated national capital.

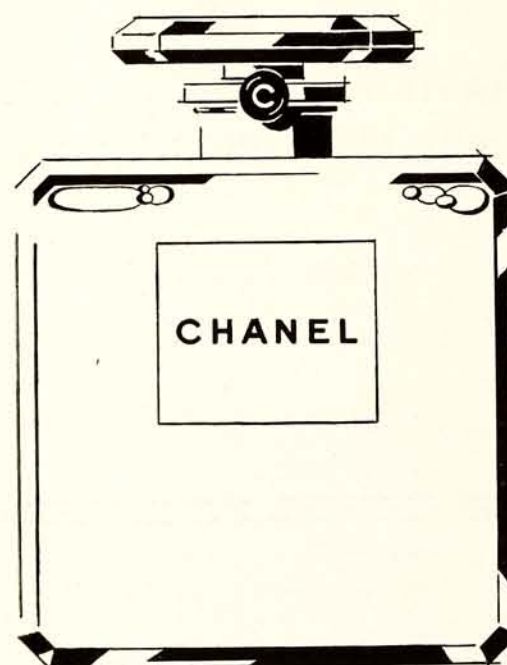
Many tasks confront the Keren Hayesod. We cannot escape the thought today, facing the awful tragedy of Israel, of how much more confidently we might have turned our eyes to the future had the Keren Hayesod come closer to the goal which it originally set itself. It is sufficient to pose this premise to recognize the compulsion lying upon us. Nothing can bar the road to our future if every one of us, and every one among the Jewish people, discharges his and her obligation in the fullest recognition of the tremendous and ineluctable responsibility which is our duty to Israel.

Historic Opportunity

(Continued from page 36)

It is one of the principal objectives of the United Nations to erase from the memory of civilization the horrors which culminated in the present global war. It must be self-evident to the statesmen who are grappling with this task that if the Jewish problem is left unsolved, if tens and hundreds of thousands of men, women and children are permitted to live a twilight existence in the back alleys and ditches of the European continent, their plight will once again become the fertile ground for renewed attacks and disturbances.

AN HISTORIC opportunity lies before the United Nations not only to place millions of Jews on the road to salvation, but to employ their skill and their energy in the development of the Middle East. Instead of White Papers shutting the gates of Palestine to the homeless pleading for admission, the government of Great Britain should issue new pledges and new declarations of wider development for the Jewish homeland. That would indeed be in consonance with the spirit of the new world of freedom and equal opportunity. By their remarkable contributions to the war, the Jews of Palestine have eloquently demonstrated their capacity for the tasks of peace, for the job of reconstruction and economic, social and cultural development. The great and enduring structure of the Jewish National Home is a firm foundation for the greater and more resplendent structure of a Jewish Commonwealth. That Commonwealth can and will reflect the highest qualities of nationhood in the noblest traditions of Israel.



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