

comparatively uninviting." The executive of the Association of German Rabbis, representing the Jewish communities of Berlin, Frankfurt, Breslau, Halberstadt and Munich, denounced the "efforts of the so-called Zionists to create a Jewish National State in Palestine" as contrary to the "prophetic message of Judaism and the duty of every Jew to belong without reservation to the fatherland in which he lives . . ."

Adolf Jellinek, who became known as the greatest Jewish preacher of his age and a standard bearer of Jewish liberalism from his position as rabbi at the Leopoldstadt Temple in Vienna, deplored the creation of what he called a "small state like Serbia or Romania outside Europe, which would most likely become the plaything of one Great Power against another, and whose future would be very uncertain." This, however, was not the real basis for his opposition. He argued that it threatened the position of Jews in Western countries and that "almost all Jews in Europe" would vote against the scheme if they were given the opportunity. He stated: "We are at home in Europe and feel ourselves to be children of the lands in which we were born, raised, and educated, whose languages we speak and whose cultures constitute our intellectual substance. We are Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Hungarians, Italians, etc. with every fibre of our being. We long ago ceased to be genuine full-blooded Semites in the sense of a Hebrew nationality that has long since been lost."

For Reform Jews, the idea of Zionism contradicted almost completely their belief in a universal Judaism. The first Reform prayerbook eliminated references to Jews being in exile and to a Messiah who would miraculously restore Jews throughout the world to the historic land of Israel and who would rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem. The prayerbook eliminated all prayers for a return to Zion.

In November 1885, nineteen Reform rabbis met in Pittsburgh and wrote an eight-point platform that one participant called "the most succinct expression of the theology of the Reform movement that had ever been published in the world." The platform emphasized that Reform Judaism denied Jewish peoplehood and nationalism of any variety. It stated: "We recognize in the era

of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state."

Zionism Was Anathema

For Isaac Mayer Wise, the leader of American Reform Judaism in the 19th century, Zionism was an anathema. He rejected both the premise and conclusion of Zionism that anti-Semitism was an absolute condition in all nation-state's where Jews were a minority and that a separate nation-state for Jews was thus a necessity. Writing in *The American Israelite*, Wise declared that, ". . . The Herzl-Nordau scheme appears to be about as important to Judaism as was Pleasanton's blue grass theory to science or as is 'Christian Science' to medicine. Pleasanton's empiricism was at least harmless, but Herzl-Nordau's is so fraught with the possibility of mischief . . . it becomes the duty of every true Jew to take an active part in efforts to destroy it."

The overwhelming majority of faculty and students at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati believed that Zionism was antithetical to the beliefs of Reform Judaism. Professor Louis Grossman in 1899 expressed the dominant sentiment when he said that, ". . . A sober student of Jewish history and a genuine lover of his co-religionists sees that the Zionist agitation contradicts everything that is typical of Jews and Judaism." In Hebrew Union College's opening exercises on October 14, 1916, President Kaufmann Kohler stated that "ignorance and irreligion are at the bottom of the whole movement of political Zionism."

In 1897, the Central Conference of American Rabbis adopted a resolution disapproving of any attempt to establish a Jewish state. The resolution stated: "Zion was a precious possession of the past . . . as such it is a holy memory, but it is not our hope of the future. America is our Zion." In 1904, *The American Israelite* noted, "There is not one solitary prominent native Jewish-American who is an advocate of Zionism."

In 1912, when Zionists pressed for the promulgation of the Balfour Declaration, it was a Jewish opponent who spoke out against the concept of an exclusively Jewish state within the British Cabinet. Edwin S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India in Lloyd George's World War I cabinet, said he would accept the declaration calling for a Jewish national home in Palestine only conditionally as "a military expedient" (the Allied Powers were not doing well in World War I against the Central Powers at the time), and only after the wording of the policy statement had been rephrased. Montagu informed the chief that he had "striven all his life to escape the ghetto," to which he now faced possible relegation as a result of the proposed policy paper.

Hard-Won Status

Montagu, not wishing to endanger the hard-won status of Jews as an integrated religious community enjoying equal rights and obligations in the countries in which they lived, resented the Zionist effort to convince Jews that they were an "ethnic-racial" group. He believed, as well, that there was an injustice involved in turning over control of a land to those who then constituted only 7 percent of the population.

Montagu went so far as to accuse those in the British Government who sought to create a Jewish state in Palestine of anti-Semitism. In a document entitled "The Anti-Semitism of the Present Government" dated August 23, 1917, marked "Secret" and made public by the British Government only in 1970, he writes: "I have chosen the above title for this memorandum, not in any hostile sense, not by any means of quarreling with anti-Semitic views, which may be held by my colleagues, not with a desire to deny that anti-Semitism can be held by rational men, but I wish to place on record my view that the policy of His Majesty's Government is anti-Semitic in result and will prove a rallying ground for anti-Semites in every country of the world."

"The war has indeed justified patriotism as the prime motive of political thought. It is in this atmosphere that the Government proposes to endorse the formation of a new nation with a new home in Palestine. This nation will presumably be formed of Jewish Russians, Jewish

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