

“The Other Side of the Coin”

An Anonymous Group of Polish Anarchists

November 8th, 1929

We read your article, “A Disgraceful Blot on Humanity.” As it turns out, you have granted a reactionary ideology citizenship in your minds. Such ideology spares you difficult and straining thought. And whaddya know—you just happen to publish an opinion that every other national chauvinist Zionist would endorse wholeheartedly!

We can understand that the rivers of spilled Jewish blood have deeply upset your spirits. Our spirits are also upset by the destruction that has affected so many Jews. This is, however, no justification whatsoever to lose yourself. You write: “Now is not the time for speculations and nit-picking. That won’t stop this calamity in this moment.” On the contrary, the greater and stronger the violence grows, the greater our responsibility and duty grows to find the correct cause and determine our diagnosis.

We understand very well that English imperialism is the modern Rome, and we know how vulgar and dirty its nails are. It’s clear to us that England would have it that both the Jews and the [Arab] workers receive nothing, shut up, and be content with allowing England to practice its colonial murder and politics of theft. But our sinful world possesses no such contented people. Both sides come with their demands and complaints, and England makes use of the old Roman method: divide and conquer. Make a fire between the peoples and then whip them for their dishonesty.

We know this all too well. We also know, however, that this would not be possible if there was not already the necessary kindling for the fire. It is for this reason that we cannot summarily dismiss the recent events with the meager pretext of English interests. We are also just as far away from laying the entire blame on our detested capitalism and declaring this as an attempt “from the effendis and the local government to turn the anger of their people away from the truly guilty and towards the helpless Jews, who are always the scapegoat.” Precisely now, the “helpless Jews” are not helpless, nor are they a scapegoat.

The Zionist devil, with its criminal, irresponsible demagogic agitation, has convinced the “helpless” Jews, the naïve masses, that it will return them to their national home under the protection of the expansive, powerful wings of that great biblical people, the English. The gullible, naïve masses took this at face value and set upon the conquest of Palestine’s land with cries of “Hurrah!” under the British flag and assisted by English battalions. This pitiful people, agitated by Zionist demagoguery, was not content with just conquering the land, with just becoming the owners of the land, but they also joyfully began a new campaign: the conquest of labor[5] with

the slogan “Swój do swego,” under which they themselves suffered in their land of Poland and condemned as an injustice.

It was not enough simply to steal the Arab’s land; we needed to then drive him from his land! Jews wanted to consolidate all rights for themselves. When it looked like a certain right would fall into the hands of the Arabs and do them good, the Zionists began an outcry: “The Philistines are upon you, Israel!” The goal is to turn the Arab into a disenfranchised, degraded creature which should never stop shaking in fear at the thought of the Jewish landowner.

We had the chance to speak with many ordinary Jews in Palestine who gleefully bragged that the Arabs shake in fear for the Jew; “We hold them in fear!”; “Should an Arab make a peep, he gets a strike in the teeth and learns not to do it again.”

This criminal Zionist agitation has brought so much foolish chutzpah against the Arabs into the psychology of the Jewish public, that they regard the Arabs worse than the Black Hundreds[7] in the Czarist period regarded the Jews! Is it such a wonder, then, that the Arab spirit has gathered so much hate of an uncontrollable nature that it was bound to break out sooner or later? The kindling was certainly taken advantage of by both the English imperialists, the Communist schemers, as well as the effendis who all sped up the whole process. But even without them, it was bound to be released.

If only the Jews had merely come with their “piece of historic pretension”! As you have written, they have instead come to “drain [Palestine’s] swamps, construct cities and villages, increasing the quality of life of its backwards, half-savage inhabitants.” Without this, there would have been no confrontation! One piece of evidence is the history of the Old Yishuv, as well as the long and quiet Hibbat Zion[8] movement which the Arabs regarded with calm and largely left alone. This was not enough for political Zionism, however, which wanted to exploit its “historic pretensions” to become the sole owners of the land. It is for this reason that the Jewish “historic pretension” was destined to clash with the concrete claim of the Arabs, the actual owners of the land. The Arabs answered the Zionists with an old Jewish saying: *Loy meuktsekho veloy miduvshekho*, “We don’t want your honey and we don’t want your sting!”

We must also not forget that the construction of cities and villages was done over the poor bodies of the fellahin, who were pushed off their land by the effendis. Land which they and their ancestors worked for generations. Of course, the effendis did not do this for a love of Zionism, but for the love of Jewish coin.

It must also not be lost to our attention the vulgar, shameful role which the Zionists have played as a first line of protection and means of fortification for the thieving English occupation. Which of us is not familiar with the holy and historic mission which the Zionists have taken upon themselves—to defend the interests of the English occupation and serve as a bulwark for the West against the savage East?

This is only confirmation that as long as the Jewish Yishuv was without pretensions for exclusive power, they were left alone! When the Yishuv began to write on their flags “A State for Jews,” only then was it confronted with the marginalized right of the Arabs, who regard the land as their Arab country, *not* with the power of “prior privileges,” but with the current, factual, and concrete privilege of a people that is settled in its own land!

We believe however that there is a third way out of these agitating, useless chauvinist slogans like “Jewish State” and “National Home.” Stop acting as a bulwark between the English occupation and the Arabs. Make the effort to come to an understanding with the Arabs—not with the effendis, but with the fellahin, the peasants—if it’s not already too late for such work.

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The Yiddish anarchist newspaper *Di fraye arbeter shtime* held an anti-Zionist position *until* the 1929 Hebron massacre. This article was a response to their Zionist turn.

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