

THE JEWS AND THE PASSION FOR PALESTINE IN THE LIGHT OF PROPHECY

by

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MIRAGE OF BIRO-BIDJAN

IF THE Zionist movement is indeed the beginning of the fulfillment of a prophetic plan, we might well expect to witness the forces of Satan vigorously at work to defeat the plan and to set before the Jews some counterfeit scheme to cool their passion for Palestine.

This is exactly what has taken place, and since the scheme has been advanced by an atheistic government, Russia, it is doubly significant.

There have been those who have insisted that *The Protocols* were the minutes of the first Zionist Congress and that the Zionist movement is but an expression of Communism, but it is impossible to square such theories with the well-known fact that in Communist Russia Zionism has been absolutely forbidden. Pierre Van Passen truthfully says:

“One thing the Jew cannot be in the Soviet Union, he cannot be a Zionist, not even a Socialist-Zionist. He may not engage in making propaganda for the Jewish National Home in Palestine. He may not cultivate the Hebrew language. Galuth-nationalism is forbidden ground. The state does not tolerate any activity in that direction. And since the State operates through and by a dictatorship, nothing, not even an underground nucleus of Zionist activity remains in the length and breadth of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.”

Equally ridiculous is the contention that Zionist activities in Palestine closely resemble the Russian Communist order of things. In a personal letter, our friend, Dr. Cohn of New York, reported to us after an investigation of this matter in Palestine:

“I saw no such evidences when I was in Palestine. The Jewish life in Palestine is what we might call Communal, which is quite different from Communistic, and only one who is ignorant of the difference between these two terms could make the mistake of confusing one with the other. Communism is fully exemplified in what is going on in Russia; that sort of life I saw nowhere in Palestine.

“I did see Communal life, and by that I mean that the Jewish Colonization Society actually owns the acreage, having received money by way of donations from Jews all over the world; this Society then has drained the land, rebuilt its soil, laid it out for farming purposes, and then arranged for Jewish families to colonize on the basis which is not exactly an outright purchase, but corresponds somewhat to the detail laid out in Leviticus 25.

“Thus, a Jewish family is apportioned a certain number of acres, the number depending upon the size of the family, and the acreage calculated on a scientific basis to produce sufficient to support a given number of people. Thus, there is accomplished a continuity of ownership for one purpose only, the developing of the land and the taking care of the population under a plan that provides a reasonable approximation to equality of earning opportunities.

“Beyond this program of Community title holdings, there is nothing that smacks in the faintest way of Communism. There is a family unity recognized and indeed made an essential requisite, and there is also every effort made to build up the spiritual life of the Colony, although the younger people, I suppose much like the young people in America, do not seem to be greatly exercised over their spiritual conditions.”

THIS IS NO GARDEN OF EDEN

Strange to say, the Soviet officials, after having banned Zionism, as well as Judaism and Christianity in Russia, offered a colony in the far corner of the land, known as Biro-Bidjan, as a mirage to lure the wealth of Jewry away from Palestine and within its own borders. Great sums of money have been spent in attractive advertising in all parts of the world, conjuring up this spot as a veritable garden of Eden for the weary wanderer. The Communist press has faithfully pictured the Utopia provided not only for the Gentile but Jew in Russia, making the most elaborate claims as the unique opportunity offered the Jews of the world to reconstruct their life on sound foundations at Biro-Bidjan.

But it turns out that these rosy pictures are no nearer the truth than those of the Paradise Russia offers those of other races. But the great mistake of the Soviet leaders in their scheme to attract Jews to Biro-Bidjan, was their failure to realize that the Jews are essentially a religious people, especially the oppressed classes, and religion is no more tolerated in Biro-Bidjan than in other parts of Russia, although the recent new Constitution appears to allow of more liberty.

The colonization scheme was devised when the Jews of Moscow and other cities, who were the principal commercial class of Russia, were liquidated, thousands of them being left without means of support. They were told that all they had to do was to hike to the far corner of Siberia to Biro-Bidjan. Many of them reached there to find a soil on which they could raise little. While government investments have improved conditions there greatly, but a few thousand Jews have been lured to the colony, and the exodus practically keeps up with the influx.

A. Patkin, formerly Barrister of the High Court of Moscow, in an article in *The Melbourne Argus* (Australia) said:

“The Jewish people all over the world, including Russia, consider Biro-Bidjan as a historical tragedy. The main object of Biro-Bidjan was to create in the Far East, which is facing Japanese invasion, a Jewish-Cossack corps to defend the frontiers of Russia, Biro-Bidjan, which is a tremendous area on the Amur River, is absolutely unfit for any colonization on a large scale. All attempts of various Russian pre-war governments to colonize this country with Russian needy peasants were of no avail. An area consisting of more than three million five hundred thousand acres has a peasant population of twenty-seven thousand souls.

“This Biro-Bidjan affair has another politico-psychological background. It serves as a propaganda trick to fight Zionism and the British policy of the Palestinian mandate. The success of the Jewish national home in Palestine, and the attachment of world Jewry to its old country, have always been a thorn in the side of the Communists in Russia, and the proletarian Biro-Bidjan Jewish republic has been partly invented to combat the ‘British imperialistic national home’.”

SOVIET TACTICS OF POLITICAL BRIBE

All the Soviet schemes of settling the pauperized Russian Jews on the land for years past have been exploited as a medium of gaining the support of rich Jews of America for the Soviet financial schemes. Biro-Bidjan is without doubt only another step in the Soviet tactics of political bribe.

As for the leaders of world Jewry, they have not taken kindly to the Russian Paradise scheme. A Jewish newspaper says:

“Philanthropic leaders who in years gone by have posed as non-Zionists, are in league with the Communists in their endeavor to raise the Biro-Bidjan swindle to the dignity of a feasible and promising Jewish colonization project. They fail to consider that Communism is the sworn foe of everything that is Hebraic and Jewish; that Hebrew is forbidden in Soviet Russia; that Zionism is contraband and a counter-revolutionary force; that thousands of Russian Zionists are still rotting away in Soviet jails and that every Jew who settles in Biro-Bidjan is subject to overwhelming forces of de-Judaization and Communization. Nor do they come to consider that in the course of the last twelve years almost one hundred thousand Jews have gone to Biro-Bidjan and that the vast majority of them have deserted the proposed Red Jewish Eden because of the economic, political, social, and spiritual difficulties.”

Says *New Palestine*:

“The Jew cannot flourish in Biro-Bidjan economically and survive as a Jew. While Palestine saves every Jewish individual for Judaism, Biro-Bidjan must destroy every Jewish individual for Judaism. But the fact is that even as an economic proposition, Biro-Bidjan is worthless. After so many efforts, and so many financial sacrifices on the part of the Soviet Government, Biro-Bidjan, instead of having the Jewish population of a quarter of a million or of three hundred thousand, has only a handful of Jewish settlers” (Fifteen thousand).

Says S. M. Melamed, a Jewish writer: "Biro-Bidjan is a fraud perpetrated upon the Jewish people by the foes of Zionism. We understand the Communist point of view. They are pledged to a program of the destruction of Judaism and Zionism, and are just going ahead with their program."

Says *New Palestine*:

"The Biro-Bidjan project has lately been taken out of mothballs and brought to public notice by means of a ballyhoo centering about Soviet officialdom in the United States. The project is now dressed in a different garb. It has been removed from the proletarian Union Square to the more gilded surroundings of Broadway and Times Square. In place of a Communist blouse, it has put on a dinner-jacket. It has acquired a bourgeois 'front' in the facade erected for it by the American Committee for the Settlement of Jews in Biro-Bidjan, composed of eminent and well-meaning, albeit somewhat naive gentlemen."

Writing in *The Day*, B. Z. Goldberg waxes positively lyrical over the transformation. He rejoices that Biro-Bidjan has been taken up by the 'bourgeois' elements. He feels that the project has 'arrived'. In his boundless enthusiasm, he sees in the frozen steppes of Siberia the makings of 'a national home,' which may be acquired at bargain rates, due to the generosity of the Soviet Government. The use of the phrases, 'A National Home' and 'A Jewish Homeland' in relation to Biro-Bidjan is obviously calculated to confuse and mislead the public mind and to divert attention, if even for a moment, from the main issue of building the Jewish National home in Palestine. He goes on:

"We have no quarrel with the attempt to settle a few thousand Jews in Biro-Bidjan or elsewhere. If there are those who possess the desire and the hardihood to endure life in the frozen paradise of the Far East, let them by all means be encouraged to settle there. But to parade this project as 'a national home,' as a 'sanctuary,' offering freedom for the 'full development of the Jewish nationality and Jewish culture' is nothing short of exploitation of Jewish misery."

The Soviet Government has systematically destroyed every vestige of Jewish communal life in Russia. It has ruthlessly suppressed every form of what Jews have always considered to be Jewish culture. The teaching of Hebrew is a criminal offense. Zionism is outlawed. And while these repressive measures are still in force, the Soviet Government offers a "territory" and a "refuge" for Jewish exiles.

"YOU SEEK OUR END IN VAIN"

Remember that the territory given them is a journey of five thousand miles from Moscow. It is the region granted to Russia by China after the conclusion of the peace pact of 1855, which remained without any cultivation for the long years, except for a few thousand scattered Cossacks and Koreans under exile. The Soviet government wanted to bring this section under cultivation as quickly as possible. It was thought that the Jews would flock there at once, due to their desire for a homeland.

This very failure of the Jews to respond in the face of unprecedented oppression in many parts of the world, seems but another evidence that the Jew of today is on the prophetic path, borne along by the divinely implanted passion for Palestine.

Jewish sentiment the world over would doubtless give overwhelming approval to the recent statement of Lord Melchett of England, militant foe of all Jews who seek to sidetrack the Palestine issue. Says Melchett:

“Palestine is not a sentimental luxury nor a wild ideal. Palestine is the only reasonable and practical solution of the problem of the Jews. As a result of the Balfour Declaration we have a country in which our rights have been defined and accepted by all the nations of the world. That is our own. Surely our effort, our whole work, should lie and must lie in the direction of making a success of this.”

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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