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In the light of these letters of Father Ludovico Mansoni it is imperative for us to reconsider our judgment on James Blake. We must beware of being unduly impressed by the evidence of the Carew Papers, on which the theory that he poisoned O'Donnell has so far relied. The reports brought back from Spain to men like Mountjoy, Carew and Fenton were notoriously unreliable; the very ship which conveyed the news that O'Donnell had died of poison reported that Father Archer was dead, despite the fact that the famous Jesuit was in excellent health and was to figure largely in Irish affairs for nearly twenty years to come.¹ Indeed, a closer and more critical examination of the evidence of the Carew Papers shows merely that rumours to the effect that O'Donnell had died of poisoning were then circulating in Spain. There was no report, however, that *Blake* had perpetrated the crime. It was Carew who first ventured to mention him as the possible assassin. But even Carew put this suggestion forward tentatively and nowhere in his correspondence do we find that he later had any confirmation whatsoever of his surmise.²

Having considered the evidence of Father Mansoni, Papal Nuncio to Ireland, we can safely state in conclusion that it has not so far been convincingly demonstrated that Red Hugh O'Donnell met his death at the hands of Blake. That indeed, may yet prove to have been the case, but until further research has discovered the result of the investigation ordered by Philip III or even the report of it in the correspondence of Mansoni, impartial history must withhold a final judgment on the alleged treachery of James Blake of Galway.

FREDERICK M. JONES.

¹ A barque which arrived on the 24th from Bilbo [Bilbao] confirms the news of O'Donnell's death and brings news that he died of poison: also that the Jesuit Archer is dead.' *Cal. S. P. Ireland, 1601-1603*, p. 530. Sir Geoffrey Fenton to Cecil, 28th November, 1602. As regards the date of Father Archer's death sometime between 1617-26 cf. Edmund Hogan, S.J., *Distinguished Irishmen of the 16th Century*. London, 1894.

² Cf. *Cal. Carew MSS.*, iv, pp. 350-51. Carew to Mountjoy, 9th October, 1602, 'I do think it will fall out that he (O'Donnell) is poisoned by James Blake . . . It will not be many days before the truth will appear.' On 25th October, Carew, in a further letter to Mountjoy on the same subject, makes no mention of Blake. Clearly he had received no further confirmation.

THE ORIGINS OF ISRAEL: TWO VIEWS

BY REV. J. J. W. MURPHY, C.S.S.R.

P*PROMISE AND FULFILMENT* by Arthur Koestler and *Trial and Error* by Dr. Chaim Weizmann are, I think, the first two books about Palestine published since the British Mandate ended there at midnight of 14th May, 1948. It is safe to predict that, before long, there will be many others; that they will express many different opinions; and that most of them will be written by Zionists. That is according to the established pattern. It indicates a difficulty that faces anybody who is genuinely impartial about Palestine and who wants to preserve impartiality in writing about it. The Zionist side of the case has all the resources of modern propaganda at its disposal and uses them skilfully. The Arab side is weak in such resources and lacks skill in using what it has. So, in order to redress the balance, it is often necessary for an impartial writer to present the Arab case himself and to point out much that is misleading in the voluminous Zionist presentation. This gives the impression that the writer is pro-Arab and anti-Zionist.¹

I trust, therefore, that it may not be out of place for me to declare my personal attitude towards the Palestine question before offering my comments on these two books. I have seen it on the spot in terms of flesh and blood—

¹ The Arab of Palestine therefore feels himself under an overwhelming inferiority in the presentation of his case to the conscience of the world. . . . Against the scientifically controlled publicity of the two major continents he has about as much chance as had the Dervishes before Kitchener's machine guns at Omdurman.' *Orientalism*, p. 421-2, by Sir Ronald Storrs, who was the first Governor of Jerusalem under British rule. Mr. Koestler calls him 'one of the most subtle and determined opponents of the Zionist enterprise' (p. 11). Dr. Weizmann says 'He was everyone's friend' (p. 276), but that he failed to win the confidence of the Jews. Sir Ronald himself tells how Lloyd George told him that his impartiality would be judged by the fact that both sides kept on complaining that he favoured the other side, and threatened him with dismissal if complaints came from one side only.

especially of blood—from November, 1946, to July, 1948. I saw in it then, and I still see, all the classical elements of true tragedy: a conflict, not of good with evil, but of partial good with partial good, resulting in great human suffering, against a background of historic doom and of theological mystery before which the appetite for ready comment and confident judgment is quickly lost.

Promise and Fulfilment is not an impartial book, but it is in the main an honest book in that it does not hide its Zionist bias. It is also very frank about certain unpleasant aspects of Zionism—almost defiantly frank, one feels at times. Zionists have made much of the material benefits brought by their enterprise to the Palestinian Arabs. Mr. Koestler points out that

these benefits were not intentional . . . No effort on the part of the Jews could have induced the Arabs voluntarily to acquiesce in their fate. But the point is that the Jews hardly made any effort in that direction at all. . . . They meant no harm to the Arabs; all they expected of them was to sit still and watch them taking the country over and running it in their own efficient way to everybody's benefit. . . . Theoretically, the extreme Zionist preached a united front of the Arab and Jewish proletariat to liberate the fellahen from their feudal exploiters. In fact, however, each Jew, Marxist or not, regarded himself as a member of the chosen race and the Arab as his inferior. . . . Their Marxist phrases and their talk of mutual understanding were bound to remain lip-service; for, had they conceded the subjective justice of the Arab case, they would have had to renounce their aim.¹

The effect of such frank admissions must be an impression on the reader that truth at all costs is the motto of this book. It may be Mr. Koestler's motto, but the book certainly does not live up to it. According to a Jewish writer, Dr. Robert Weltsch, 'Mr. Koestler's book is a curious assortment of half-truths, which he uses for his argument according to his own needs. This applies primarily to his historical narrative where an arbitrary selection or omission of facts may inadvertently modify the whole picture. . . . Mr. Koestler was obviously in a hurry, and he even did not take the trouble to straighten out certain contradictions.'²

¹ *Promise and Fulfilment*, pp. 32-5.

² *The Jewish Monthly*, November, 1949, pp. 492-3.

That Mr. Koestler was in a hurry to write his book and did not take time to verify his facts would seem to be the best explanation of his many mis-statements. He was not in Palestine when most of the events happened about which he writes. He tells us in his preface that he lived there from the age of twenty to twenty-three and has, since then, revisited it 'at fairly regular intervals' of five or ten years from 1926 to 1948—his last visit being in the first week of June, 1948, while British forces were still in Haifa. During that time he visited Ein Hashofet, the collective settlement near Haifa which had served as a model for his Zionist propaganda-novel *Thieves in the Night*. He tells us that he got 'an icy reception; in the communal Dining Hall all the familiar characters avoided our table. I had thought that in the novel they were rather idealized; now I began to feel like the murderer revisiting the scene of his crime.'¹ Most people in Palestine could have told him that his visit to Ein Hashofet would not be a success. The 'familiar characters,' whom he thought he had idealized in his novel, thought that they had been deliberately misrepresented in it for the benefit of Mr. Koestler's political friends, and as far as I knew the great majority of Palestine Jews agreed with them.

This incident—about which, as always, Mr. Koestler is commendably frank—is worth noting as an indication of his reliability to write history according to the method which he has adopted. He calls it in his preface a 'psycho-somatic' method which, while underlining the psychological factor, does not deny or minimize the importance of politico-economic forces. This sounds like a welcome change from historical materialism. Before reading very far it becomes evident that Mr. Koestler is not going to trouble us much with politico-economic forces. Psychology is his line of country. In Haifa he notes that a British sentry has his boots well polished. This is the 'somatic' part and it is correct. But Mr. Koestler sees into the man's mind and tells us that this soldier in shining boots 'knows he is the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

rearguard of an empire in retreat.' Perhaps he was; perhaps he knew that he was; but I doubt that part of it, and I had very much better opportunities of knowing him and hundreds like him than had Mr. Koestler. Mr. Koestler, on the other hand, had much better opportunities than I had of knowing the Ein Hashofet Jews; but they do not seem to have thought that he knew them very well.

In his second chapter Mr. Koestler examines the psychological reasons why most British officials of the Palestine Government were opposed to Zionism, as he assumes they always were. It is very cleverly and very amusingly done. It was, by itself, enough to ensure that the book would be a popular success. When the average reader sees the Report of the Royal Commission on Palestine, 1937—usually called the *Peel Report*—quoted in apparent support of Mr. Koestler's views on this point, he is sure to be impressed. He is unlikely to read the extract from the Report in its context; but if he does, he will find that it has nothing to do with what Mr. Koestler is describing and that the 'gentle irony' attributed to its words is part of Mr. Koestler's psychological findings and has no existence outside of them. Mr. Koestler may have had more opportunity of studying psychology at first-hand in the case of British officials in Palestine than in the case of the Haifa sentry, but he certainly had much less opportunity for it than he had in the case of Ein Hashofet.¹

Mr. Koestler pays a fine tribute to the *Peel Report*, as it deserves. He says it 'is probably the only historical classic in English letters published by H.M. Stationery Office.' But he has misused it in the case I have just given, and in two other cases. On page 19 and again on pages 47-8 he quotes part of paragraph 41 of chapter iv of the Report as if it were a finding of the Royal Commission blaming the Palestine Government for Arab disturbances. This paragraph, as its context in the Report shows and as the Commission's subsequent comment on it makes quite clear, is part of the Zionist case presented by Jewish witnesses to

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12. See *Peel Report*, ch. vi, par. 25-7.

the Commission, for which the Commission takes no responsibility; rather does its comment suggest that this part of the Zionist case was exaggerated.¹

Another serious misrepresentation of official records is on page 25. Mr. Koestler is trying to show that the landless Arab, dispossessed by Jewish land policy, 'was more a political slogan than a reality.' The Palestine Government thought it was a reality. After the report of the Shaw Commission and that of Sir John Hope-Simpson on the land problem, in 1930, the Government invited Arabs who had lost their land to apply for allotments of State land. Mr. Koestler says that up to 1936 only 664 landless Arabs submitted valid claims for new land; in 1936 only 9; in 1937 only 6; and after that there were none. These figures indicate that the problem was never serious, and was quickly settled. He omits to inform his readers that over 3,000 dispossessed Arabs applied, and that their applications were turned down, with the few exceptions he mentions, not because they were all bogus, but because the Government had excluded from its scheme six categories of Arabs who had either sold their land to Jews or had it sold over their heads. The Peel Commission considered some of the grounds of exclusion 'unduly restrictive.' Some restriction was necessary, because many Arabs would have sold their new allotments back to the Jews at the first opportunity. Like greedy children they had to be protected against themselves, and this was unfortunately true of some Arabs who were well-educated and well-to-do, as well as true of those whose poverty and ignorance made the temptation of Jewish ready money almost irresistible.² But to say that the problem of the landless Arab 'was more a political slogan than a reality' is incompatible with any complete presentation of the facts. Mr. Koestler presents only the facts compatible with the Zionist party-line.

Chapter vi of *Promise and Fulfilment* is devoted to the task, unwelcome to most people, of making political

¹ *Report*, ch. iv, par. 45.

² See *Peel Report*, ch. ix, pars. 24-30.

propaganda out of human suffering. Its heading is 'The Little Death Ships.' Its theme is the efforts of the Zionists to save Jews from the Nazi persecution in Europe by bringing them to Palestine, being thwarted by the callous policy of the 'White Paper,' issued by the British Government in 1939 in order to placate the Arabs by drastic restriction of Jewish immigration. The climax of the heart-rending story, as told by Mr. Koestler, was the mass-suicide of the Jews in the British ship *Patria*, who blew up themselves and their ship in Haifa harbour on 25th November, 1940, when refused entry to Palestine and faced with deportation to the island of Mauritius for the duration of the war. To the outsider this prospect may seem not quite an adequate reason for mass-suicide, but Mr. Koestler tells the story so well that few people will stop to think of that. The proper comment on it all is due from a Jew rather than from a Gentile. Dr. Robert Weltsch, whom I have already quoted, writes in the *Jewish Monthly*: 'Mr. Koestler says that the *Patria* was blown up by its own passengers. Everyone in Palestine knows that this was not so, and in this case humanitarian motives were evidently subordinated to political.'¹

For one distinguished Jew to say that another has repeated a story of such grave import, which everyone in Palestine knows to be untrue, is such a serious matter that one would prefer to leave it between them. The full truth about the *Patria* has never been published, but enough is known to make it reasonably certain that the ship was blown up, not by its British crew, nor by its Jewish passengers, nor by accident, but by Zionist fanatics operating from Palestine, and that their motive was political propaganda. This is what lies behind Dr. Weltsch's pregnant words, 'in this case humanitarian motives were evidently subordinated to political.'

Those words might also be a summary of the best defence of much British policy, attacked throughout *Promise and Fulfilment* with great wit and vehemence and wild inaccuracy. The most serious indictment of the whole Zionist approach

¹ *The Jewish Monthly*, November, 1940.

to the Jewish problem is that it subordinates humanitarian issues to political advantage while it continues to appeal to the conscience of the world on purely humanitarian grounds. To quote Dr. Weltsch again: ' . . . disagreement with Mr. Koestler should not be mistaken for vindication of British policy.'¹ I certainly should not like the task of vindicating British policy in Palestine, either in principle or in detail, but its faults, which were many, did not appear to me as they are described by Mr. Koestler. His chapter-heading, 'John Bull's Other Ireland' will attract Irish readers, and they will enjoy reading it, but it is important for them, if they want the truth about Palestine, to remember that Mr. Koestler was not in Palestine when any of the events, there described by him, took place.

A story told by him on page 264 may be worth quoting here. After he had arrived in Palestine a young Jew 'told us several stories about British intrigues which sounded somewhat unconvincing. But then if you know that X. is the devil, the harder you try to prove it the more unconvincing it will sound; in the end, to prove the truth you will resort to the lie.' I do not think that Mr. Koestler ever deliberately resorted to the lie in order to prove his case against those whom he considers opposed to Zionism. But I do think that his passionate belief in the truth of his case has made him very much less careful than he ought to have been in checking his sources and verifying his references. It is a grievous loss that so much of his book should be unreliable, for he has a most interesting style and could have done a great service to the Holy Land by making its recent history popular as few others could have done.

As my time in Palestine came to an end about three weeks after Mr. Koestler's arrival in the first week of June, 1948, and as there are some large gaps in my information about what went on there during the subsequent twelve months, I read 'Book Two' of *Promise and Fulfilment* with eagerness. For that is the account of what the author saw and heard for himself in Palestine from June to October.

¹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 493.

A lot of it, of course, is hearsay and pointing of the moral, but it contained the first account that I saw in print of what happened in Palestine during those historic weeks that decided the fate of the State of Israel, as related by some of the Jews who planned and fought for it. Naturally the account is one-sided, but as much of it as is first-hand seems reliable, at least as far as I have been able to check it. Certainly it is on the whole more reliable than 'Book One,' which was written as I have already described; but that is not claiming much for it.

The chapter in 'Book Three,' entitled 'The Political Structure of Israel,' will not, I fear, be studied by the majority of Mr. Koestler's readers. The political structure of Israel is a complicated building. There were a dozen political parties when I was in Palestine, ranging from Extreme Right to Extreme Left with Religious somewhere between. Two have been added since then, when the Irgun *Zwei Leumi* and the Stern Gang came up from 'underground' to seek votes. The 'I.Z.L.' did not do too badly with fourteen seats out of a total of 120; Stern got one only. Mr. Koestler has a list of 'the more important parties' on page 293. There are nine! I do not see the 'Ichud'—Dr. Magnes' Union Party, which stood for a sort of 'Vatican State' Zionism and for friendship with the Arabs on that basis—I fear it has disappeared. It never had much political influence, but I think that the moral standing of its leader was deservedly greater than that of any other Jew in Palestine. He lived long enough to see the State of Israel established at the cost of homelessness and hunger for some hundreds of thousands of Arabs driven from Palestine by terror or by force. If any Jew is free of responsibility for that, it is Magnes; but if he were alive to-day he would be the first to urge, and to make, reparation for it. There is no word about reparation, and hardly a word of pity, for it in *Promise and Fulfilment*.

Mr. Koestler does not mention Magnes: his ideal politician is a very different man, Jabotinsky. This is revealing. Jabotinsky, an impatient Zionist, was the spiritual parent of the Jewish underground movement in Palestine and might

have been an active member of it, had he lived, but he died in 1940 organizing a Jewish international force to fight against the Nazis. More than once in Palestine I thought I could see a strong family resemblance between Jabotinsky's spiritual heirs and the Nazis. Others, both Jews and British, said they saw it too. Mr. Koestler claims that 'almost every point of Jabotinsky's programme has either been implemented by official Zionism or vindicated by the trend of events' (p. 301). Both these statements would be challenged by the great majority in Israel to-day, if the election results, above quoted, are any indication. It is thus clear that Mr. Koestler thinks politically with a minority. His thinking may be better than that of others; the exaggerated nationalism and race-worship characteristic of the Nazis may be the logical conclusion and nemesis of political Zionism. He asked a Jewish wounded soldier in Haifa, 'Do you really believe the Irgun are fascists?' 'Of course they are. . . . You have only to look at them. They are the type' (p. 196). Of course Mr. Koestler did not agree, but if he is right about Jabotinsky, and if the majority of Israelis are also right about Jabotinsky's heirs, the Irgun *Zwei Leumi* (now the 'Freedom Party'), the future of Israel will not be what its present Labour-Party rulers hope.

Mr. Koestler is almost certainly right about the political influence of religion in Israel. 'The "Religious Bloc" is a force composed of not less than five different religious Parties, including the *Partyless Orthodox Women's Party*'—a new thing in Israel, surely! It has only sixteen seats in Parliament, but this small number is important when the fantastic multiplication of parties makes a coalition the only possible form of government. He says that the influence of the rabbis, whom he calls 'somewhat machiavellian' is considerable and that, by political bargaining, they have managed to get many things done which are highly unpopular with the vast unorthodox majority, such as the enforcement of Sabbath observance and of kosher food. Their influence in education is also strong, but he does not think it can last more than five or ten years, and then 'a vociferous

but bloodless secular revolution' will make a clean sweep of political relations between the State and the Synagogue. Having lived for seven months in friendly contact with a large and fervently religious Jewish community in Tripolitania, I think I know the difference between religious Jews and those who are not, and I agree with Mr. Koestler in putting the great majority of Israelis in the latter class. There is a small body of Jews in Palestine who live only for their religion, but most of the rabbis seem to put their trust in politics rather than in prayer, since the rebuilding of Zion began to look likely to come by human means.

One of the collection of essays, which forms 'Book Three,' is on the rebirth of the Hebrew language. Irish readers will be disappointed that Mr. Koestler has little to say about it. What he says is not sympathetic. The only point of practical interest which he makes, is that the alphabet should be latinized. Still, what he says is worth reading, if only for its brief history of the movement to make Hebrew, after being a dead language for over two thousand years, the living language of a thoroughly modern mechanized state. It was, of course, a sheer necessity to have a common language for all the tribes, tongues, and nations of Jews who came pouring into Palestine since 1918, each with the tongue in which he was born, as they are described in the Acts of the Apostles. But the decision that the common language should be Hebrew can only be compared to deciding that all Americans should speak Church Latin. Yet it succeeded, but Mr. Koestler thinks that the price was higher than it need have been.

In his epilogue Mr. Koestler raises a question that only a Jew can fully understand: can a Jew *now* remain a Jew outside of Israel? Most Gentiles would answer: 'Why not?' Mr. Koestler answers: 'No.' It is not so simple to a Jew. To discuss either the question or the answer properly, would take me far beyond the limits of my space and of my knowledge. All that I shall say is that here again Mr. Koestler thinks with the minority of Jews, though perhaps with the majority of Israelis. It is well that Christians

should be reminded, by being faced with dark questions like these, that the Jewish problem is no mere matter of this world only. In the course of 1950, Mr. Koestler formally accepted the consequence of his opinion and announced that he no longer considered himself a Jew.

Promise and Fulfilment will be read with interest and with profit by all who know the main facts of Palestine's recent history, and who are therefore in a position to know when Mr. Koestler departs from these facts. It will be read with interest by many others.

J. J. W. MURPHY.

[To be concluded.]