

ZIONISTS' OPERATIVE METHODS *

by

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This paper attempts to show and analyse the means and methods used by Zionist leaders to achieve their political aim of establishing a Jewish State in Palestine during the period 1897 - 1917, i.e. from the year in which the first international Zionist Congress was convened in Basle (Switzerland) to the year in which Balfour issued his famous declaration in November 1917. The period after 1917 is dealt with in another article which is forthcoming.

Zionism mentioned in this paper means political Zionism as defined by Theodore Herzl and developed by the Basle Congress and other subsequent Zionist Congresses. The sole aim of that Zionism was to create by various specific means a Jewish State in Palestine. It was shown that the Zionists were logical in their methods, persistent in their efforts and determined to achieve their goal regardless of all human considerations. Moreover, there is a remarkable continuity in Zionist methods during that period, and a marked similarity between those methods and methods used to-day by the present leaders of Israel. Decisions reached at the Congress of Basle in 1897 remained throughout this period and the following period aims of the Zionist movement, and some of them are indeed in the process of being carried out now in the State of Israel.

The first part of this paper analyses the historical development of Zionism during the 19th. century, and argues that Zionism is a recent phenomenon which emerged as a by product of the age of Nationalism. It was not as some Zionist thinkers would

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like us to believe an old movements which had its roots and origin in the Old Testament. On the contrary, Zionism is a secular movement aiming at secular objective by profane means.

In its second part the paper attempts an analysis of the ideas of Theodore Herzl whose name is often associated with the emergence of the genuine political Zionism. The efforts and activity of Herzl were closely examined, and so was the programme of the Basle Congress. It was shown that under the leadership of Herzl the Zionst Movement tried to realise its political objective by the following three means :

1. Organisational activity.
2. Colonisation.
3. Diplomacy.

Each one of these methods was discussed in the paper, e.g. The Zionst Organisation ; The Jewish Colonial Trust ; The Anglo-Palestine Company and last but not least Herzl's feverish diplomatic efforts to secure the movement's political objective by contacts with the German Emperor, with Sultan Abdul Hamid II and with the British Government. Herzl's main concern was to get a piece of land where he could establish a Jewish States secured by public law. Herzl was not insistent on Palestine as the place for the Jewish State, but was ready to consider other alternatives such as Uganda and parts of the Sinai Peninsula etc. Such willingness was significant because it revealed the secular aspect of the Zionist movement and an interest on the part of the British Government in that movement. The successors of Herzl were to exploit this interest to the utmost, and their efforts were to result later on in the Balfour Declaration.

With the death of Herzl in 1904, the leadership of the Zionst movement passed to a group of Zionists known as the practicals. With them a major change in the tactics of the movement took place. Diplomacy, though not completely ruled out, was no longer one of the major methods of the Zionsts. More emphasis was laid upon the practical methods, e.g. efficient and thorough colonisation of Palestine. While this method was being applied, the First World War broke out, and it offered the Zionsts an indispensable

chance of fulfilling their political objective by tying their movement to the imperial strategy of Britain. It was in this context that the paper follows closely and examines the efforts of Zionist leaders such as Haim Weizmann in England, the attitudes of the British Government and the whole atmosphere which led to the Balfour Declaration. The declaration itself was analysed, and finally some general conclusions were put forward.



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