

The Forum

What Readers Say

Jewish Aspirations

To the Editor of the Forum.

A large number of prominent Jews in America and elsewhere cannot see eye to eye with national Jewish aspirations, as expressed by the leaders of the Zionist organization. "We are Americans," they maintain, "we have no other national interests than American—Jews we are only by religion." And I dare say there are a good many non-Jewish citizens who sympathize with their viewpoint.

Can these people be asked then to have any practical interest in the present endeavor to rebuilt Palestine as a Jewish homeland?

I say, yes.

Throughout the ages Palestine has occupied a large place in the mentality of the Jew, as a purely religious proposition. And it does so in the minds of millions of Jews even today. It is the Holy Land, where religion "happens." So it was in the past and it is likely to be so in the future. If the Jew takes root again in the land he will create an atmosphere favorable, to say the least, to a religious revival.

The secular aspect of Jewish nationalism is of quite recent date, and even within the Zionist organization there is a strong party, the Mizrachi, which aims at giving back to modern Zionism its age-long religious basis.

With the Jew, moreover, religion is the mother of his rich and great culture. A vast and magnificent literature, a beautiful language, the Hebrew, are the tangible values of his religious heritage. Neither of them have ceased to develop during these two thousand years since the destruction of Palestine by the Romans. Their existence, however, was a hot bed product, tended by the deep-rooted religious instinct of the Jew, and all too often watered by the blood of its followers.

This religio-cultural revival has a unique chance now in Palestine; and even those who are only religiously Jews, and remain citizens and nationals of their respective countries, will ultimately reap the spiritual benefits.

Palestine then, as a religious cultural center for the Jew, with ample opportunities for learning and intellectual development, deserves the sympathy of all people and particularly of all the Jews, whatever political views they may hold. The upbuilding of the ancient land is in the first instance an educational problem.

There is being formed an educational trust for Palestine, free from all political influence, to provide the financial needs for the endowment of the basic elements of Jewish education. The trust hopes to get the support of all those people who have not lost their faith yet, in spiritual values, and who believe that the world is still in need of some light to come out of Zion. A READER.

Duluth.