

**ON THE EVE OF  
REDEMPTION,  
PP. 2-150**

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On *the* Eve  
of Redemption

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The following pages comprise a number of editorial leaders discussing questions and problems pertaining to Jewish nationalism and Zionism which were published in the *American Jewish Chronicle* in the years 1916-17-18.

tion today to help rebuild it. Our ancestors, who were the tragic witnesses of the cruel destruction of Judea, would surely not think of the possibility that after a lapse of nearly two thousand years, an army should leave Rome for Palestine with the object of helping to reinstate the Jewish people in the land of its forefathers; nor could anyone have foreseen that the Rome of old, that aimed at the subjugation of small nationalities, would be succeeded by a new Rome that pronounces its stand for the rights and political re-establishment of small and oppressed nationalities.

Of course, people will say that modern Rome can in no way be compared to ancient Rome and that the two have nothing in common. However, those who have read Montesquieu and Hegel on the deeds of ancient Rome and those who have followed the development of modern Rome, will recognize the close similarity between the two. As far as power and political and strategic genius go, modern Rome, it is true, cannot be compared to its predecessor of two thousand years ago; but if traditions, surroundings and other sociological factors that give a people shape and form count for anything, the Roman of today is



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bound to have a good deal in common with the Roman of two thousand years ago, even if the one is not racially the offspring of the other.

Present-day Rome has much in common with ancient Rome. The main difference between them is, of course, this: While ancient Rome, dominating the entire world then known to humanity, and forming the centre of the Mediterranean civilization, was the world power of the time, modern Rome holds neither the political position of ancient Rome nor is it the representative and bearer of the Mediterranean civilization. The predominance of Mediterranean civilization has gone with the last great Doges of Venice, and modern Rome is no longer the centre of gravitation of civilized humanity that ancient Rome was two thousand years ago. In the course of the last millenium, the centre of civilization has shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. It is the Atlantic civilization that is supreme today. The whole terrible fight that is going on today in all parts of the world is not a fight about the Mediterranean and its supremacy, but it is a struggle for the Atlantic and its predominance—and, in this struggle, Rome is no longer playing a leading part.

In the course of the fight about the Mediterranean, Judea was destroyed and the whole Semitic race nearly annihilated. The wars of Rome against Carthage, the people of which spoke Hebrew and formed a branch of the Aramaic family of nations, were fought with the only object of preserving Roman supremacy in the Mediterranean. The fight for the Atlantic, however, has already resulted in the re-establishment of one Semitic nation—the Arab—and will probably also result in the re-establishment of old Judea. That is where the difference between the fight for the Mediterranean, fought by ancient Rome, and the fight for the Atlantic, in which modern Rome participates, comes in.

The ancient Mediterranean Rome was not only imperialistic to the core, but universalistic as well. The chief aim and plan of ancient Rome was to subjugate the whole world, then known to humanity, with a view to dominating it. The idea of a universal monarchy at the expense of the independence and freedom of other nations first originated in ancient Rome. Rome of today, which takes part in the fight for the Atlantic, is imperialistic, although no longer striving for political uni-

versalism and world domination; it announces that it stands today for the preservation of the individuality of the small nations.

The prospective re-establishment of Judea, as one of the consequences of the present war, cannot be a blind chance of fate. There is historical logic in this development. Palestine, as a Mediterranean country could not maintain its independence in the face of a rising Mediterranean world power that strove to master not only the Mediterranean but all the other parts of the globe then known to mankind. Our sages of old found a thousand and one moral and political reasons for the downfall of ancient Judea and for its destruction by Rome. They ascribed the downfall of ancient Judea not only to political, but even to moral causes and to the growth of individual hatred and dissensions among the Jews themselves. The internal political and moral reasons advanced by our sages for the downfall of Judea may have contributed to the destruction, but the main reason was the determination of Rome to master all the shores of the Mediterranean and to dominate the entire ancient world. In the face of this fact, even an internally solid and strong Judea would have finally succumbed as