
INAUGURAL DR. FRITZ BAMBERGER

MEMORIAL LECTURE

Excerpts of the lecture presented on
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DR. ARTHUR HERTZBERG

What is our claim to the Holy Land based on? Let me give you the Talmudic version. The first hallowing of the land was not permanent; it was the second hallowing of the land that made it a permanent possession of the people. The first Temple was not a permanent possession, and I suspect that the rabbis of the Talmud were able to say that because they accepted the legitimacy of the rule of the Persians who then permitted them to return to rebuild the Temple.

Then the rabbis of the Talmud arrived and said that the second Temple belongs to us permanently. We never recognized the transfer of sovereignty through conquest by the Romans in the year 70, and then again most of a century later when they quelled the Bar Kokhba Rebellion in the 130s. Therefore, we maintain that Jews never surrendered their sovereignty in the land of Israel. To this day, this is taken to be a legal precedent.

For certain legal purposes, like the transfer of moveable property, each one of us who is Jewish owns four ells of the land of Israel. Each Jew has an inalienable entitlement to the land of Israel; and so we do not recognize international law with regard to the right of conquest. This is ours by self-declaration, because we believe it to be a given.

But guess who else believes it is a given? The Muslims, who believe that any piece of land to which Islam was ever extended remains inalienably Muslim. Therefore, serious Muslims believe that their claim to the possession of Palestine – to which Islam was extended in the 7th century – cannot be compromised. And so you have a war of religion...

What compromises can you make between religious absolutes? Or religious absolutism? Religious absolutes lead to eternal war. Religious absolutes cannot be waived, not when they meet cross-table or in combat. And therefore, let us face the fact that whenever we have had peace in the Holy Land, we have had it when the religious absolutes were checked at the door and pragmatic people made a deal...

If we move away from a war of religion, there is some hope; we can then move the question to a solution not by messianic dreamers or enthusiasts, but by pragmatic people. Because the truth of the matter is that the fanatics on both sides, on our side and on their side, don't want peace!

The game is about suicide bombings by the Palestinians, because they want to make the Holy Land too hot for Jews to live in and they want to chase us out. And our game is

to make the West Bank unlivable so that the Palestinians start marching out. And the truth is that neither policy will work.

Imagine that we *actually* succeed and the West Bank is all ours. At that point, three options are present for Israel and the Jewish world. One option is one-man-one-vote bi-nationalization, which has now become the favorite idea of the left, or the post-Zionist left, which would like to do away with the State of Israel.

Remember: the Arab birth rate is larger than the Jewish birth rate with the exception of B'nai Brak and Mea Sha'arim. With the one-man-one-vote state, Zionism can expect to hear its death knell.

Cantons are the other option that the Israeli right uses. They mean that the Arab population in the West Bank can run their own domestic affairs, but only after about half their land and water supply are appropriated.

Do you think that Israel can survive in Jewish opinion and in the world's respect if it is disenfranchising the majority of its people in the undivided land of Israel?

Finally, there is the third solution – and that is transfer. Do you know what transfer means? Do you know who last used it? The minutes of the Wannsee Conference of January 1942 never said expulsion, nor did they say murder; they arranged to transfer the Jews of Europe to the east.

Transfer is nothing more than a sanitized word for uprooting civilian populations, which, although it does not mean the worst things that happened to Jews, still besmirches the record of compassion that the Jewish people carries with it from the days of Sinai.

The undivided land of Israel means the destruction of the Zionist adventure, and therefore, the battle for the salvation of Israel is the battle that I have joined in my book, *The Fate of Zionism*.



Dr. Arthur Hertzberg and his portrait by Jan Aronson, recently exhibited at the HUC-JIR Museum in New York in "Jan Aronson: A Reverence for Nature"

The notion that the Israelis and the Palestinians are going to make peace across a table has always been a favorite formula of many Israelis who do not want peace. They know that it is not going to happen through dialogue.

In 1940 and 1950 the armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab states were imposed on both parties by Ralph Bunche on behalf of the U.N. with the Americans standing right behind him. In 1973 who made peace between Israel and the Palestinians? Did they make it cross-table or did the Americans broker it and pay for it?

The point of the matter is that a serious analysis of the history of the Palestinian-Israel conflict will show us that without strong third-party intervention there can be no peace. If Israel is to remain a Zionist state, if the Palestinians are to be saved from their warlike and murderous propensities, peace is going to have to be imposed by the Americans.

Therefore, I set no store whatsoever in the notion that the Israelis and Palestinians are going to settle this between them. If they could, they would have done so a long time ago.

I think an awareness is beginning to filter around that will force the Israelis and the Palestinians to do what is good for them: the Palestinians to give up murder; the Israelis to give up what they cannot digest. And once that happens, I think the atmosphere will change.

I think that each side is stalling because each hopes that the other side will blink first. And I think the only way out of this impasse is to create a situation in which they are both moved to peace by the opinion of the moral and political leader of this day: the United States of America. ■

To obtain a copy of Dr. Hertzberg's lecture, please contact the National Office of Public Affairs, 212-824-2205.

Dr. Fritz Bamberger (1902-1984)

The Dr. Fritz Bamberger Memorial Lecture honors the memory of the noted German-Jewish scholar and specialist in Jewish intellectual history, who served HUC-JIR as a member of the Board of Governors and, from 1962 on, as Assistant to the President and Professor of Intellectual History at HUC-JIR in New York.

Established in loving memory by Fritz Bamberger's children, Phyllis and Michael Bamberger, a former Vice Chair of the New York Board of Overseers, and Gabrielle Bamberger, the Inaugural Bamberger Memorial Lecture was presented by Dr. Arthur Hertzberg, Bronfman Visiting Professor of Humanities at New York University. To mark the occasion, Hebrew Union College Press published Dr. Bamberger's *Spinoza and Anti-Spinoza Literature, the Printed Literature of Spinozism 1665-1832*, and reprinted his *Books are the Best Things, An Anthology from Old Hebrew Writings*.

Born in 1902 in Frankfurt-am-Main, Dr. Fritz Bamberger received his doctorate from the University of Berlin. From 1926 to 1933 he was a member of the Forschungsinstitut of the Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin, working on books about Maimonides and Gabirol and serving as one of the editors of the "Akademie edition" of *Moses Mendelssohn's Collected Works*. From 1933 to 1934 he taught philosophy at the Hochschule die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin, of which he was a graduate.

After Hitler's rise in Germany, Dr. Bamberger organized at great personal risk a system of schools from kindergarten to college for Jewish students expelled by the Nazis from public schools. In 1934 he was appointed Director of the Bureau of Education for Jews in Berlin and President of the Jewish Teachers College, which was established to train general teachers for the new Jewish schools. In these capacities, he was responsible for the establishment of new types of Jewish schools and for many educational innovations designed to meet the needs of young Jews during the Nazi years.

In January 1939 he came to the United States where, until 1942, he taught at the College of Jewish Studies and the University of Chicago. In 1942 Dr. Bamberger joined Esquire, Inc., the American publishing house, where he served as Executive Director of *Esquire* and *Coronet* magazines. After twenty years in the publishing field, he resigned in 1962 to become Assistant to the President and Professor of Intellectual History at HUC-JIR in New York.

A contributor to scholarly journals and general periodicals, his publications included *The Origin of the Problem of Values in the Philosophy of the 19th Century* (1924), *Moses Mendelssohn* (1929), *The System of Maimonides* (1935), *The Ninth School Year* (1937), *Zunz's Conception of History* (1941), *Leo Baeck - The Man and the Idea* (1958), *Julius Guttmann - Philosopher of Judaism* (1961). He was the editor of *The Teachings of Judaism* (3 volumes; 1928-30), *Moses Mendelssohn's Collected Writings* (7 volumes, 1929-32; new edition 1970-74), *Mendelssohn Autographs* (1929), *The Book Zunz* (1932), *Herder's Jewish Fables* (1936), and *Books are the Best Things* (1962).

HUC-JIR awarded Dr. Bamberger the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters in 1982 for his courage, moral integrity, and scholarly attainments. Dr. Bamberger's encyclopedic collection of works by and about Spinoza are a treasured resource of the Abramov Library at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem.

