

Keren Hayesod Manifesto -1920

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THE KEREN HAYESOD FOR THE JEWISH SETTLEMENT IN PALESTINE: AN APPEAL TO ALL JEWRY

The following appeal has been issued by the Head Office of the Keren Hayesod, 75 Great Russell Street. W.C. TO THE JEWS OF THE WORLD The Mandate for Palestine, which is at once a pledge and a challenge to the Jewish people, is about to become a part of the Law of Nations.

The moment has arrived for the concentration of Jewish effort on the upbuilding of the Jewish National Home. The lofty enterprise to which Jewry stands committed in the sight of the world, demands the active co-operation of Jews of all classes and opinions, whose common obligation it has now become. If the reconstruction of Palestine is to be effectively undertaken, financial resources and funds on the amplest scale will be required.

For the purpose of providing these resources, the Keren Hayesod (Foundation Fund) has now been formally constituted. A Board of Directors has been formed with the duty of framing, in consultation with experts, a considered programme of constructive work, and of ensuring its orderly execution.

Side by side with the Board of Directors there has been constituted an Economic Council composed of men of affairs of high standing in the financial and commercial worlds. The Economic Council has assumed the task of examining those projected undertakings which can be regarded as, in the stricter sense, reproductive, of executing such of them as are approved, and further, of assisting the Board of Directors with expert advice in the general administration of the Fund.

Keren Hayesod begins its work at a great and tragic hour. The historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine, which will later become the State of Israel, has been recognised by the World's Great Powers. The Mandate has been accepted by Great Britain. The Government of Palestine has been entrusted to a Statesman whose presence at the head of the Administration is sure pledge of British goodwill. Far different is the situation in Eastern Europe. Two-thirds of the Jewish race are at this moment living under conditions of unendurable anguish. Harried, pillaged, uprooted from their homes, butchered without mercy, exposed to such an outburst of unrestrained savagery as Europe has not witnessed for four hundred years, entire communities are being relentlessly exterminated.

On the eve of its renaissance, in the presence of the lofty tasks that are summoning it to action, Jewry stands wounded and mutilated. It has but one hand free of constructive labour: with the other it is desperately struggling to ward off the implacable onslaught that threatens it with annihilation.

A supreme effort is called for. To the message of confidence and goodwill which comes from San Remo, to the storm of hatred unchained in Eastern Europe, let Jews of all countries and of all classes unite to give the same reply: BUILD THE JEWISH COMMONWEALTH.

The purpose of Keren Hayesod is to bring about the settlement of Palestine by Jews on an orderly plan and in steadily increasing numbers, to enable immigration to begin without delay, and to provide for the economic development of the country to the advantage of its Jewish and its non-Jewish inhabitants alike.

That purpose is attainable. Room can be found in Palestine for a vastly increased population. Thousands are already waiting on the threshold. Let but productive employment be provided for them and they can enter.

There is land to be bought and prepared, there are roads and railways, harbours and bridges to be built, there are hills to be forested, there are marshes to be drained, there is fertile soil to be irrigated, there is latent waterpower to be utilized, there are towns to be laid out, there are crafts and industries to be developed. Side by side with these undertakings, adequate provision for the social welfare of the population, for public health, and above all, for education.

All these activities are comprised in the programme of Keren Hayesod. Its organization is flexible, and can be readily adapted to every variety of undertaking. It will at once encourage private initiative – subject always to the test of social justice and public utility – and foster co-operative effort in all its many-sided applications.

This is no common moment. For twenty centuries it has been patiently awaited: it will not recur in our life-time nor in that of our children's children. Nor is this such an appeal as is daily made to Jewish philanthropy. It marks the beginning of a concerted effort designed to elicit from the entire Jewish people such a response as will vindicate the honour of the Jewish name.

No casual charity will suffice. The exceptional effort which is called for today must take the form of self-taxation, steady, persistent, systematic, inspired by the noble Jewish tradition of the Tithe. A heavy load of taxation is today being imposed on all the peoples of the world in the name of national reconstruction. There is no Jewish State; the appeal that is about to be made is the Jewish conscience and is fortified by no power of compulsion; but no Jew worthy of the name will, at this solemn moment, take the responsibility of sheltering himself behind the powerlessness of his people.

The gates of Palestine are no longer barred from within. The key is in the hands of the Jewish people. It is for Jewry to decide whether they are, to its lasting dishonour, unopened, or whether they are to welcome in the multitudes that are expectantly awaiting the hour of redemption.

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