

STAR OF THE WEST

"We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; that all nations shall become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men shall be strengthened, that diversity of religion shall cease and differences of race be annulled. So it shall be; these fruitless strifes; these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come."—BAHA'O'LLAH.

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Declares Zionists Must Work with Other Races

Leader of Bahaim believes Neutral Government Like British Is Best for Palestine at Present—Says His Father Advocated League Half Century Ago.

BY MARION WEINSTEIN.

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WHILE the league of nations is hailed or attacked here as a Wilsonian project, out in Palestine is a religious leader who claims it first saw the light in the writings of his father, fifty years ago. He is Abdul-Baha, the son and successor of BAHA'O'LLAH, founder of the modern cult, Bahaim.*

Abdul-Baha, or Abbas Effendi, as he is widely known in the Near East, counts hundreds of followers in America. He made a tour here in 1912, preaching his doctrine of universal love in churches and halls from coast to coast. Born in Persia in 1844, he went to Acca as a young man. He was imprisoned by the Turks for his teachings, but was released in 1908, the year of the new Ottoman constitution.

Interested in World League.

I met Abdul-Baha lately in his home in Haifa. He has many friends among the British, including General Ronald Storrs, military governor of Jerusalem, and it was a British officer who took me to him. His influence is considerable in

the Holy Land, but it is almost impossible to reduce it to actual numbers. I went to him curious as to his views of the future of Palestine, but he seemed more eager to talk of a matter of world importance—the league of nations.

He spoke in Persian, a well trained secretary interpreting his low, soft words in good English. Through the open windows of the large sunny salon of his modern house came the trill of songbirds in the Effendi's lovely garden. In white galabieh and turban, he fitted into the summery scene, his voice falling on the silence like a woodland echo. An ancient, venerable patriarch he seemed, with his snowy beard, a kindly patriarch, but with little of the Biblical fire.

Tells of Father's Plan.

"Fifty years ago," he began, "BAHA'O'LLAH wrote that there must be a league of nations to establish universal peace. He worked his idea out on practical lines, too. He said every nation must choose representatives, approved by the senate, the cabinet and the ruler of the country. They were to meet to found a universal peace congress to be forever a world court of arbitration.

"BAHA'O'LLAH saw even then, half a

* Bahais understand the Word of God again was "made flesh and dwelt among us" in the appearance of BAHA'O'LLAH. Miss Weinstein, not being acquainted with this fact, looks upon the Bahai Movement as a cult or "ism."—*The Editors.*

century ago, that unless universal peace is established, the world of humanity will continue in a state of barbarism. For it is a world of struggle for existence, of sensualism, a world of nature. Only when universal peace comes to stay will it become a world of spirit.

"I went to America myself on a mission of universal peace. I proclaimed seven years ago that Europe was an arsenal that needed but a spark to turn it into a volcano. The world leaders, I urged, must prevent this catastrophe. But they did not heed me. Now that they themselves are working for universal peace and we are soon to have a league of nations, there is no need for me to go to America again.

Message to His Followers.

"Tell my followers," Abdul-Baha continued, "that I am always asking heavenly help for them, and that my deepest desire is that they shall be the source of the enlightenment of humanity and the unity of all the races of mankind. The point of distinction among men, let them remember, is their deeds, not their beliefs or words. I charge my disciples, too, at this time to show love even toward their 'enemies.' They have no 'enemies.' The enemy of man is himself."

His religion, this leader explained, includes the highest principles of its forerunners, with this addition—it fuses them all in the pursuit of one goal, the unity of mankind in universal love. Unlike its Mohammedan neighbor, it teaches the equality of man and woman. "The world of humanity has two wings," is Abdul-Baha's view, "man and woman. If one wing is weak then the bird cannot fly."

He looks to the rebirth of religion as a result of the war. The Bolshevist movement, he believes, will prove an admonition to the religious world and send mankind back to the fold, convinced that

religion is the sole source of order and peace. Bolshevism was inevitable, because religion was on the daily decline in Europe, particularly in Russia.

Has Hope for Palestine.

For Palestine Abdul-Baha has the brightest hopes. "It will develop day by day now," he declared, "in industry, in commerce, in agriculture, under an enlightened government. Up to the present the people of this country were like lost sheep. Now they have found their shepherd.

"If the Zionists will mingle with the other races and live in unity with them, they will succeed. If not, they will meet certain resistance. For the present I think a neutral government like the British administration would be best. A Jewish government might come later.

"There is too much talk today of what the Zionists are going to do here. There is no need of it. Let them come and do more and say less.

"The Zionists should make it clear that their principle is to elevate all the people here and to develop the country for all its inhabitants. This land must be developed, according to the promises of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Zachariah. If they come in such a spirit they will not fail.

Must Be Open to All.

"They must not work to separate the Jews from the other Palestinians. Schools should be open to all nationalities here, business companies, etc. The Turks went down because they attempted to rule over foreign races. The British are always in power because they keep fair and promote harmony.

"This is the path to universal peace here as elsewhere—unity. We must prevent strife by all means. For 6,000 years man has been at war. It is time to try peace a little while. If it fails, we can always go back to war."