

AMERICA: *What happens when an intellectual demands justice for the Palestinians*

AUTHOR I.F. 'Izzy' Stone faces a problem common to a number of Jewish intellectuals in America — being shunned for voicing his views on Israel.

Stone's personal background as the first reporter to travel with illegal Jewish immigrants running the British blockade to get to Palestine should, one would have thought, established his Jewish credentials fairly firmly.

So too should his first book *Underground to Palestine*, which is dedicated to those immigrants and castigated the British who, he said, tried to "sacrifice" the Jewish immigrants in order to build an alliance with the Muslim upper classes against Russia, France and the United States and keep the Mid-east under their control.

He quit journalism so that he could take a wholly partisan role advocating for the immigrants.

Cause

Yet Stone's personal identification with Jewish suffering, and the fact that his book was a substantial influence in promoting their use, hardly sufficed in American Jewish circles. Within a few years, even since Izzy Stone has been nothing of a pariah.

Now the book has been republished with a new second part to it: *Reflections and Meditations Thirty Years After* which is, in a sense,

Mark Bruzonsky reporting from Washington

Izzy's self-defence as well as his counter-attack.

Stone committed two basic sins as far as American Jewry is concerned. First, he refused to buckle under to a newly-imposed party-like "discipline" that organised American Jewry instituted as a reaction to its impotence during the 30s.

And second, he always maintained that whatever the pluses and minuses of Zionism, the interests of the Arab population of Palestine was also an important Jewish concern.

Part two of the new edition to *Underground To Palestine* consists of two short essays. In the first — *Confessions of a Jewish Dissi-*

dent — Stone lambasts the American Jewish establishment for his (and so many others) rejection.

"Despite all these credentials," he notes after listing his Jewish ties, "I find myself — like many fellow American intellectuals, Jewish and non-Jewish — ostracised whenever I try to speak up on the Mid-east."

Dissent

Stone's original sin came in a single rather obscure sentence in his book. After suggesting that "In a sane and orderly world, the U.S.A., USSR, France and Britain would join in an international development scheme for the Mid-east and in a context of rising living standards provide ample room for the Jews in Palestine," he then went on to mildly suggest, "I myself would like to see a binational Arab-Jewish state made of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, the whole to be part of a Mid-eastern Semitic Federation."

Though later the name I.F. Stone became specifically associated with the Palestinian cause and later still with the notion of a Palestinian as well as a Jewish state in historic Palestine, in 1946 he made no further comment on these issues.

When the book was published and friends from the Zionist movement approached Izzy about an advertising campaign he put his foot down to their polite insistence that the offending sentence disappear.

Recalling the experience half a life-time later Stone notes in this first essay, "That ended the luncheon, and in a way, the book. It was in effect boycotted."

Since then the name I.F. Stone has been progressively harshly treated in American Jewish circles. Izzy has been unjustly vilified as a "self-hating Jew" and an anti-Zionist, neither of which his friends have ever known him to be.

The second of Stone's 'Thirty Years Later' essay is titled *The Other Zionism*, and recalls the various figures and groups within the Zionist movement who were never antagonist or condescending toward the Arabs, who always realised that Zionism's fulfilment lies in eventual acceptance by the Palestinian Arabs.

In assaulting Begin's "rigid, monolithic policy totally unsuited to the great opportunities opened up by Sadat's courageous initiative," Stone recalls the schism in Zionism represented by Jabotinsky's Herut movement versus the various Zionist groups who always have accepted the legitimacy of Palestinian nationalism.

In reviewing the ups and downs of this other Zionism, Stone rightly prophesies that "To impose the kind of self-rule Begin envisages on the Palestinians is to put Israel into an endless sea of trouble." But "all else becomes

negotiable," he adds, "if the principle of self-determination is recognised."

"The main current of Zionism," Stone begins his second concluding essay, "has always nourished itself on the illusion that the Jews were 'a people without a land' returning to 'a land without a people.'"

But there was from the beginning of the movement another Zionism, now almost forgotten, except by scholars," he continues, "which was prepared, from the deepest ethical motives, to face up to the reality that Palestine was not an empty land but contained another and kindred people."

"They were a lonely handful then, and a lonelier one now," Stone adds, "when the pendulum of power has swung to the far right, to the ultra-nationalists, with their old leader, Menachem Begin, in office."

Despite being disliked Stone refuses to stop telling the "truth as he sees it. He ends his book by saying:-

"No matter which the choice, the two people must live together, either in the same Palestinian state or side by side in two Palestinian states.

But either solution requires a revival of the other Zionism, a recognition that two peoples — not one — occupy the same land and have the same rights.

This is the path to reconciliation and reconciliation alone can guarantee Israel's survival. Israel can exhaust itself in new wars. It can commit suicide. It can pull down the pillars on itself and its neighbours.

But it can live only by reviving that spirit of fraternity and justice and conciliation that its prophets preached and the other Zionism sought to apply."

The isolation of Izzy, the Jew who dares to be different