

HAZLETON COLLEGIAN  
Weekly Newsletter Edition

The Pennsylvania State University Center  
Highacres, Hazleton, Pennsylvania

---Vol. XVI. No. 26

April 30, 1954

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DR. MARIO ROSSI VISITS THE CENTER

On Wednesday afternoon, April 26, interested students and members of the faculty filled South-Hall (101) to hear Dr. Mario Rossi, distinguished journalist and authority on Near-Eastern affairs, deliver a short lecture on "The Palestine Problem". At the present time, Dr. Rossi is correspondent for "The Christian Science Monitor" assigned to cover the United Nations Headquarters in New York City for that publication. Previous to this position with the "Christian Science Monitor", Dr. Rossi served on the staff of the Office of War Information in New York. He was also attached to the overseas staff of "Nation" magazine as its foreign correspondent in the Near East; and, for a time, he employed his acute and analytical understanding of Near Eastern problems as a radio news commentator.

Dr. Rossi began his lecture by attaching the term "superficial" to the concept of the Arab-Israeli dispute that most of us gain through our newspapers. Actually the true nature of this problem is deeper and far greater in significance than a series of border incidents during a non-workable truce. Dr. Rossi pointed to the centuries of domination through conquest and colonization suffered by these Arab nations as the main contributing factor to the lack of a national identity essential among the masses of any nation desiring economic improvement through a healthy nationalism. As undisputed proof of this frustrating lack of national identity, Dr. Rossi revealed that not one of these young nations can boast a culture of its own. True, he continued, there is an "Arab" culture but there is not, for example, a Syrian culture or a Trans-Jordanian culture. And it is the rise of this nationalistic culture within a nation which acts as the catalyst in achieving any degree of the economic and administrative self-sufficiency associated with progress. True, cultures do not rise overnight. They are the product of the energy and imagination of countless individuals covering many generations and many occupations. The Arab nations are not ignorant of this fact; nor are they ignorant of their need for economic and educational aid from outside. Where shall they find such cooperation? The obvious answer is among the highly developed nations of the West. However this "obvious" answer is also an obvious blister. For it is from these same highly developed nations that they so recently shed their ancient shackles of colonialism. One can sympathize with their fear of any re-establishment of foreign administration under another disguise. And as if this problem was not enough, right in the midst of this troubled scene, the peacemakers of World War Two carved the nation of Israel.

Into the middle of the Arab world comes the state of Israel-The promised land of Judaism -The seat of Zionism- and Zionism itself but the living essence of nationalism. Is it any wonder that the presence of strong alien nationalism amid the frustrated Arab states led to conflict? With Dr. Rossi's explanation, the violent headlines reporting the uneasy truce in the Holy Land takes on life, and shape and dimension.

Dr. Rossi expressed hope in the U. N. as the lone agency capable of providing not only the needs of the Arab nations, without the "strings" the Arabs fear in accepting aid from the West, but, also, capable of successfully mediating between these two conflicting factions in the Near East. It is common knowledge that failure of the UN to cope satisfactorily with the situation to date has been the success of the Russian plan to embarrass the West in one of its most important spheres of influence by her obstructionist tactics in the Security Council. Even in the face of this staggering obstacle, Dr. Rossi believes the Palestine problem not only can be solved by the U. N., but, most important, it can be solved peacefully.