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Series I: General Correspondence, 1914-1969, undated.

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Reel
39

Box
14

Folder
951

Jewish Agency, National Council of Freedom movement, 1948
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STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL
WITH REFERENCE TO THE BERNADOTTE PLAN,
ISSUED IN PARIS SEPTEMBER 22, 1948

The Israeli government is giving the most serious study to Count Bernadotte's important report to the General Assembly. The people of Israel are eager for peace with their Arab neighbors, and they will earnestly explore all proposals which are put forward as a basis for a final and lasting peace.

While it is welcome that the report expresses the central fact of Israel's independence and vitality as a state, it would nevertheless be premature at this stage to accept its conclusions in their entirety. Careful study and discussion are obviously essential.

Thus, one of the conclusions which calls for the most critical scrutiny is the suggestion that the Negeb be excised from the state of Israel. The United Nations special committee on Palestine, after an exhaustive study of the Palestine problem, recommended that the territory of the Negeb be included in the Jewish state. This recommendation was accepted by the General Assembly. To exclude the Negeb from the state of Israel would be to take away two-thirds of its area, to reduce it to a miniature state, to constrict its growth and to deny to the Jewish people the only available land reserve which offers the prospects of large-scale development.

In any discussion of the report, the future of Jerusalem will be the subject of special interest. Besieged by foreign Arab armies, the people of Jerusalem were cut off from food and water, suffering many casualties, and were finally rescued from starvation and death only because the State of Israel established a land bridge from the coast. Under the circumstances, the people of Israel and especially of Jerusalem will not look with equanimity on any plan which would jeopardize the fate of the 90,000 Jewish inhabitants of that city by cutting them off from direct contact with Israel.

The government of Israel will presumably have an opportunity of making its official comment on these and other important features of the report before the appropriate organs of the General Assembly.

THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN ISRAEL

First Meeting of National Council

POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS

The first meeting of the National Council of the Freedom Movement (Tenuat HaHerut) in Israel was held in Tel-Aviv in October. The following political resolutions were adopted:

INTEGRITY OF OUR HOMELAND:

1. This first meeting of the National Council of the Freedom Movement (Tenuat HaHerut) proclaims the fundamental principle of the Movement to be the integrity of the Jewish homeland in its historic boundaries.
2. The National Council of the Freedom Movement calls upon the Provisional Government of Israel to revoke and annul all and every consent given to the partition of the Land of Israel which partition has by the process of events now lost even the formal grounds on which it was based.
3. Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the Land of Israel. The Freedom Movement solemnly warns against any attempt to bargain away our holiest city or any part thereof. Jerusalem is not susceptible of any form of partition, nor will the Jewish people ever accept the surrender of any part whatsoever of the City of David.
4. The Provisional Government of Israel is not an elected government. It has, therefore, neither the right nor the authority to agree to any diminution of the area or of the sovereignty of the Jewish State, whatever may be the factors which may seek by threats or coercion to diminish that area or sovereignty. The Freedom Movement declares to all governments, organisations or interests which may contemplate persuading or coercing the Provisional Government of Israel to agree to any such diminution, that such agreement will not be held as binding upon any elected government which may succeed the present Provisional non-elected Government of Israel.

RELATIONS WITH ARAB STATES:

5. The National Council draws attention to the fact that in spite of the invasion of the Land of Israel by the Arab States, in spite of their attacks upon our people and our country, the Provisional Government of Israel has failed to proclaim a state of war to exist between Israel and these States. It is of vital political importance, and it is also required by international law, that such a state of war be proclaimed immediately. In that proclamation the Arab States must be unequivocally defined as satellites of Great Britain and as aggressors, and the State of Israel as the victim of aggression and thereby compelled to conduct a legal and just war in self-defence.

6. The Freedom Movement solemnly warns the People of Israel against the policy of their Provisional Government which is seeking to conclude an agreement with the dependent government of the puppet monarch Abdullah, the hireling of British policy and the man who has wantonly destroyed our sacred city of Jerusalem. Any agreement to surrender to this Abdullah -- whom the British imposed as ruler over the Eastern area of the Land of Israel -- any part whatsoever of Western Israel will amount to a surrender of additional portions of our homeland to the British enemy and to the placing of the whole of the State of Israel at the mercy of the British who were only driven out of our homeland as a result of the heroic struggle of the Jewish Resistance Fighters.

7. The Freedom Movement declares that there is no justification for any agreement whatsoever with the government of Abdullah whose territory is nothing but a usurped portion of the historic heritage of the Jewish People.

8. The Freedom Movement calls upon the Provisional Government of Israel to declare that no negotiations whatsoever can be conducted with the governments of those other Arab States whose armies are attacking Israel until their armed forces withdraw within their own borders. Until such time the full force of Jewish arms will be directed against the invading Arab armies.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

9. The Freedom Movement calls upon the Provisional Government of Israel to abandon its dangerous and harmful policy which it has described as "orientation on UNO" and which in reality is nothing but a policy of slavish willingness to accept the dictates of Bevin and his collaborators in the American State Department.

The only international orientation for Israel must be based on the liberation of the whole of our homeland, and this means that the only sound foundation for Israel's international relations must be "reciprocity". This policy will ensure for us allies whose interests coincide with our national aims. This policy far from being in any way prejudicial to the interests of world peace, is in fact the only possible guarantee of lasting peace in the Middle East.

PLIGHT OF JEWS IN ARAB LANDS:

10. In view of the threatened destruction of the Jewish communities in the Arab countries, the Council of the Freedom Movement calls upon the Provisional Government of Israel to take immediate steps to secure the evacuation of our brethren in those countries and their transfer to our homeland.

The Provisional Government of Israel must warn the Arab governments of the full responsibility -- including their liability to be adjudged war criminals -- which they will bear for the destructions of the lives and property of Jews subject to their rule.

11. The Council calls upon the Provisional Government of Israel to confer immediately Israeli citizenship upon any Jew anywhere in the world who wishes to adopt it and is ready to surrender his present citizenship if any. This should be done without delay for our brethren in the Cyprus Concentration Camps who have been forcibly exiled from the Jewish homeland, and for our brethren in the camps of Europe who have been prevented from entering their Jewish homeland.

FREEDOM OF THE CITIZEN:

12. The National Council deplores the fact that despite the solemn declaration of the Provisional Government that it would repeal and annul the British Emergency Regulations at the earliest possible moment, it has not only continued to impose these regulations upon the citizens but has even added to them arbitrary regulations of its own in complete contradiction of the political, moral and legal rights of the citizen.

The concentration in the hands of a single individual of legislative, judicial and executive powers, which the Provisional Government has effected, plainly indicates the totalitarian tendency of the regime and the grave dangers of this to the future liberties of our State.

The Council calls upon all freedom-loving citizens in all walks of life to protest in the clearest possible manner against this attempt to introduce these poisonous fascist practices into our State, and to demand the immediate abrogation of all the British Emergency Regulations as well as of those additional Emergency Regulations which have been introduced by the Provisional Government and which abolish fundamental citizen rights.

DEMANDS OF A FREE DEMOCRATIC NATION:

13. The National Council demands that the Provisional Government release immediately all political detainees, many of whom fought bravely in the war of liberation from British rule. Those amongst the detainees against whom charges have been made should be brought with the utmost expedition before a civil court of justice which can judge them in accordance with the law and its conscience.

The Council denounces with abhorrence and disgust the turning of the Acre gaol -- that building which has become the symbol of the Mandatory regime of hanging and oppression, and which was stormed by our fighters -- into a place of imprisonment for citizens of the Jewish State. The national honour of Israel, the glorious record of our struggle for freedom, and the sacred memory of those who went to the gallows for their country's liberation, all these demand that this Bastille shall not be used as a prison for the citizens of a free and self-respecting State of Israel.

14. In view of these tyrannical tendencies in the regime of the Provisional Government; in face of the grave political dangers confronting our nation; and in the light of the urgent need to see that Israel shall develop into a sovereign democratic State, the Freedom Movement demands that a free and scrupulously conducted general election of a Constituent Assembly be held without any further delay.

SALUTE OUR INCOMPARABLE ARMY!

15. The National Council of the Freedom Movement greets the initiative shown by the Provisional Government and its decision to repulse the attacks of the invading Egyptian army in the Negev and in the hills of Judea. We turn our eyes with pride and hope towards the Israeli Army which courageously meets the attacks of the merciless invaders and is liberating the homeland by the shedding of its blood. The Council sends greetings and its pledge of whole-hearted support to our brethren fighting at the front.