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Sabath, Congressman A. J., 1944.

April 28, 1944

The Honorable Adolph J. Sabath
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

My dear Congressman Sabath:

I was very happy to have had the talk with you Tuesday. I know of your unfailing interest in our cause, and of your readiness at all times to be of help. I value greatly your counsel and guidance.

What has transpired in recent weeks in connection with the Palestine Resolution introduced in Congress and the President's statement made through Dr. Wise and me on March 9th has caused great confusion in our ranks and has given our people a sense of frustration and defeat. Here are the facts.

(1) After receiving the "green light" from everybody in the Administration and in Congress whom we consulted, we introduced the Palestine Resolution. Cordell Hull saw the Resolution before it was introduced and raised no objections to it. The majority and minority leaders of both branches of Congress not only approved of the Resolution, but spoke in favor of it on the floor of the House and the Senate when it was introduced. We were led to believe that the passage of the Resolution would be quick and sure.

(2) Hardly had the Resolution been introduced when the War Department was brought into the picture, presumably by the State Department, to warn against the passage of the Resolution as dangerous from a military point of view. Why a presumably friendly State Department could not have apprised us beforehand, so that we could have delayed introducing the Resolution, and thus obviating all that happened subsequently, remains a distressing mystery.

(3) The entire country had been aroused by the introduction of the Resolution. Tens of thousands of communications poured into Washington endorsing it. The press of the country published hundreds of editorials favoring it. Numerous Christian organizations, churches, labor groups, service groups, etc. were moved to send friendly messages. The sudden intervention of the military came as a distinct shock to all of them and left them bewildered -- and certainly not convinced that the intervention of the military was either warranted or spontaneous.

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(4) In that state of bewilderment we turned to the President of the United States. Since the American people had been inhibited from expressing through their chosen representatives in Congress their true sentiments on the subject, we felt justified in turning to the Chief Executive to learn from him what the true policy of our government was with reference to Palestine. We asked for clarification and for reassurance.

(5) On March 9th, Dr. Wise and I met with the President. As a result of a very pleasant and full conference, we were authorized to issue a statement in which it was stated that "the American Government had never given its approval to the White Paper of 1939...and that when future decisions are reached full justice will be done to those who seek a Jewish National Home for which our Government and the American people have always had the deepest sympathy, etc." We were pleased with this statement although it did not go as far as we had hoped. Our people received the statement with great satisfaction. Coming as it did, after the intervention of the military and after the Arab protests had been received, it had real significance. We were prepared to make use of it both here and abroad.

(6) But as if deliberately intended to nullify the whole value of the President's statement, and hot upon its heels, came the announcement of the House Foreign Affairs Committee that it had deferred action on the Resolution because of military considerations. The Jewish public and the Jewish press were stunned. What prompted Mr. Bloom, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee to rush through formal action on the Resolution, after it had been agreed that the Resolution should remain pending until the proper time arrived for its passage, remains another of those distressing mysteries. Mr. Bloom has never paid us the courtesy of telling us why the precipitated action was taken. As a result there has been bitter and mounting resentment.

(7) Not long thereafter, the President himself, at a press conference, in reply to a question of how he reconciled the statement issued by us in his name with the attitude of the military authorities gave a reply which still further befogged the situation and greatly weakened the effectiveness of his March 9th statement. The result of all this has been a growing conviction on the part of many that the Zionists have been given the "run around" by the Administration in Washington. You have undoubtedly seen articles in the public press -- and even in the press which is friendly to the Administration.

(8) The article of Dres/Pearson which appeared last Monday has not improved matters any. We had been led to expect another statement from the President, this time in his own name, one which he would issue after consultation with Churchill. It

had been intimated to us that we would be given the courtesy of seeing the statement before it was issued. It is six weeks now since the subject of this second statement was discussed with the President. We have not heard a word from the White House, but through Drew Pearson's column we learn that the conversation with Churchill had been held, and that both the President and Churchill are opposed to the Jewish Commonwealth! If true, this is alarming news. It puts the President in direct and open opposition to the Zionist Movement. I cannot believe it. Please remember that the Jewish Commonwealth is not something new, something introduced for the first time in connection with the Palestine Resolution. It is what Wilson, Balfour, Lloyd George and Churchill had in mind when they talked about the Jewish National Home in Palestine. A Jewish Commonwealth is old-fashioned, orthodox Zionism. It is only the propaganda of British agents in the last few years since the introduction of the White Paper, which has spread the idea that Zionists who demand the faithful fulfillment of the letter and spirit of the Palestine Mandate and the Balfour Declaration are extremists.

This, then, is the situation today, my dear Congressman Sabath. Our Palestine Resolution has been stymied by a friendly Administration. The President's own position has been obscured by things said by him and by others. The enemies of our cause have rejoiced over the turn of events in Washington. Our political position in London and Jerusalem has deteriorated as a result of it, and in a most critical time. Our people have received a severe and unmerited blow.

What is to be done? Clearly there are two things which should be done and quickly done to repair the damage.

(1) The President should issue a clear-cut statement which will allay all doubts as to his own position on the subject of the Jewish National Home. It should be more definitive than his statement issued on March 9th -- one which will be in line with the traditional American policy toward Palestine inaugurated by President Wilson. The American people as a whole will hail such a declaration. No adverse political capital will be made of it for there is no political division on the subject. Both political parties, through their authorized leaders, are on record as heartily endorsing the Jewish Commonwealth.

(2) After the President's statement will have been issued, the "green light" should be given for bringing out the Resolution from committee. The Administration should call off the "hounds of war". After all, the Resolution does not contemplate the enactment of any law. It is merely the expression of sympathy and good will. It asks that the United States shall

Congressman Sabath

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use its good offices. Everybody has agreed that once this Resolution comes on the floor of the House and the Senate, it will be approved overwhelmingly.

Prolonged delay will serve only to entangle and embitter an already unhappy situation. Capital will be made of it within the next few months to the disadvantage of everyone concerned. I know your statesmanship and your political sagacity. I know that your judgment is valued. You can render a historic service to a great cause in a decisive hour.

I shall be very happy to hear from you. With all good wishes, I remain

Most cordially yours,

AHS:BK



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House of Representatives U. S.

Committee on Rules

Washington, D. C.

May 2, 1944.

Mr. Abba H. Silver,
American Zionist Emergency Council,
The Temple, East 105th Street at Ansel Road,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Mr. Silver:

I have your letter of April 28 and have read every word of it.
As I told you personally, I am willing to do anything I can to help in
this important matter; and I wish you thorough success in your efforts.

Sincerely yours,

WRHS
J. SABATH



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