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American Zionist Policy Committee, statement of aims and
principles, 1945.

STATEMENT OF AIMS OF THE AMERICAN ZIONIST POLICY COMMITTEE

Approved Unanimously at a Meeting Held at the
Commodore Hotel in New York City on March 20,
1945.

The American Zionist Policy Committee will carry on a program of education among American Zionists to achieve the following objectives:

1. To deepen Zionist thought and the understanding of Zionist problems on the part of lay leaders and the Zionist rank and file.
2. To advocate and press for a militant and dynamic Zionist policy such as has been exemplified by the successful leadership of Dr. Abba Hillel Silver.
3. To strengthen American Zionism from within by developing a vigorous and informed public opinion among the rank and file, and an intelligent interest in national affairs.
4. To insure that the composition and policies of the American Zionist leadership shall reflect the will and temper of the great body of American Zionists.

AMERICAN ZIONIST POLICY COMMITTEE

Statement of Aims and Principles

It is of the utmost importance that all those who are affiliated with the American Zionist Policy Committee as well as the Zionist public generally should have a clear conception of our aims and purposes. Unless these are sharply defined and clearly stated, misconceptions may arise detrimental to our work and to the cause. We therefore offer the following statement and a guide for our friends and supporters.

1) The history of Zionism and of the Jewish National Home during the inter-war period has been one of continuous recession on the part of the mandatory from the letter and spirit of the Balfour Declaration and of the mandate. This recession began almost immediately after the conclusion of World War I. Already in 1921 Palestine was partitioned by the decision to set up a separate regime for Transjordan. The year 1922 witnessed the publication of a White Paper reinterpreting the Balfour Declaration - the first of a series of such documents, culminating in the disastrous White Paper of 1939 which is still in force. During that period the Zionist movement and its leaders struggled, though for the most part unsuccessfully, to maintain the legal position and the rights which had been conferred upon the Jewish people. Frequently the leadership was severely blamed for what was described as its weakness in dealing with the mandatory power. In our opinion, the defeats we suffered were due largely to the fact that neither the Zionist leaders nor the pro-Zionist statesmen in England and America were sustained by a sufficiently large, sufficiently informed and sufficiently articulate body of public opinion. In the final analysis, the fate of the Jewish National Home was determined by the acts of Colonial administrators and Cabinet officers without

regard to the views and wishes of a broad public that was largely disinterested and inarticulate.

2) The habit of looking to a few powerful individuals has become ingrained in the Zionist movement to a dangerous degree. There was an occasion not so long ago when the most important "political action" indicated seemed to be the offering of prayers for the recovery from illness of a friendly British statesman upon whom all Zionist hopes centered. There was a similar tendency in this country to build our hopes for the just solution of the Palestine problem on the sympathy and goodwill of one man, the late President Roosevelt, who so tragically passed away in the midst of his labors for world reconstruction. No one knows what will happen on the other side of the Atlantic if Mr. Churchill is replaced as Prime Minister by one less friendly disposed to the Zionist cause.

3) To pursue this course is to risk not only further defeats but ultimate catastrophe. The future of the Jewish National Home will not be secure unless it is built upon a broad and sure foundation of public opinion and popular support throughout the democratic world, and particularly in the United States and the British Commonwealth of Nations. In view of Arab intransigence and Arab pressure, it is not to be expected that responsible statesmen will press for a Zionist solution of the Palestine question unless they are sustained in their purposes and carried along by a powerful current of popular will. They will not move forward unless they have a clear mandate to do so and that mandate is expressed in unequivocal terms.

4) We do not decry or disparage diplomacy and diplomatic effort but we believe that at this critical time the movement must devote its major attention and major effort chiefly to securing an adequate expression of the popular will and to channelize it effectively so that it will exercise at least a strong moral influence upon the plans and

policies of democratic statesmen. This was the meaning and purpose of the Palestine resolutions adopted by many State Legislatures and of the resolutions which were introduced more than a year ago in both houses of Congress and endorsed by the representatives of both major parties. The doubts which were entertained by some Zionists regarding the value of these resolutions, even if adopted by Congress, and the readiness on the part of some leaders to abandon them when opposition developed show how seriously the whole situation was misjudged and how easily the movement tended to fall back upon "personal diplomacy" despite the tragic experience of a quarter of a century.

5) Such questions which go to the very root of things are not sufficiently understood by the rank and file of Zionists throughout the country. This is especially true since the membership has so greatly expanded and now consists for the most part of new converts whose heart is in the right place but who lack Zionist background and education and are largely ignorant of Zionist history and the lessons which it teaches. There is therefore no more immediate and urgent task than that of conducting a proper campaign of education among our fellow Zionists, of stimulating serious discussion of the problems which confront the movement, of a clarification of Zionist thought.

This is the first and most important task of the American Zionist Policy Committee and its adherents. It is to this end that our activities must be directed by means of lectures and discussions, the dissemination of appropriate leaflets and pamphlets, the preparation and use of informative and cogent memoranda. Ours must be a "grass roots" effort - the reeducation and consequent reorientation of the Zionist movement from the bottom up.

6) It is hardly necessary to add that as loyal and disciplined Zionists we must not and will not undertake any political action on our own. That remains the prerogative of the duly constituted organs

of the Zionist movement which are authorized to carry on political effort: the Jewish Agency for Palestine on the one hand, and the American Zionist Emergency Council, representing all American Zionist organizations, on the other. Individually and as a group we must not and will not interfere with those efforts. As individual Zionists, as members of our respective Zionist district organizations, we will continue to cooperate loyally and carry out any assignment to the best of our ability. But as a special group, as the Policy Committee, it will be our function to study Zionist problems, to examine critically Zionist policies, to educate our fellow Zionists to an appreciation of our point of view, which we believe to be the correct one.

7) There is a further task which should not be neglected. It is not enough to win over our fellow Zionists through our educational efforts. We must also see to it that the views and wishes of the rank and file are adequately reflected in the central direction of the Zionist Organization of America. The truly democratic character of our movement is its source of greatest strength and must be zealously guarded. We must see to it that the composition of the National Administration of the ZOA and its policies shall conform to the sentiments of its constituents. Without elaborating on this point, we stress it as being of vital importance.

8) Through our work we shall be generating currents of thought which will strengthen and revitalize the movement. We shall foster an informed and intelligent public opinion among the Zionist membership. We will thereby preserve it from becoming a large and inert mass, but build it up into an effective instrument in the service of our cause. One Zionist who is intelligent, informed and alert - one Zionist who thinks, is worth a score who don't. We may well take that as our motto.