



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.

Series II: Harold P. Manson File (Zionism Files), 1940-1949, undated.

Sub-series A: Main Manson File, 1940-1949.

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Dewey, Thomas E., 1946.

DEWEY VIEWS ON OPENING PALESTINE

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Following is the part of Governor Dewey's speech last night at the Hotel Commodore, before a dinner of the United Palestine Appeal, in which he discussed the question of immigration into Palestine.

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The promise of admission of a hundred thousand Jewish people to Palestine should have been fulfilled long ago. That is a joint obligation of our Government and the British Government under their long-standing commitments. The test of friendship is the ability to speak frankly to our friends without danger of offense -- and I should like to speak frankly to our British friends. It is no service to our own cause or to the cause of friendship to muffle the truth or to make widely and strategically spaced declarations, which are not followed up by able, competent or productive action.

The simple truth is that both governments through their own appointed Joint Commission of Inquiry have agreed that 100,000 Jews should have been admitted to Palestine long ago. The need is more urgent today than ever before.

If the sincerity and diplomacy together with the great prestige of our government cannot achieve this objective, there is something lacking either in the diplomacy or the sincerity.

In this connection, I want to make it crystal clear to our British friends that demands for immediate immigration into Palestine far transcend partisan politics. Actually, they have the whole-hearted support not only of the leadership of both political parties, but also of the vast majority of the American people.

Furthermore, I am convinced that whenever external policies of great importance are thrust into political campaigns, such injections always weaken and seriously impair the carrying out of a united national policy.

Calls It Issue of Human Rights

In my considered judgment, it is vital that it be understood everywhere that the question of Palestine is not a political issue between Americans. It is a fundamental issue of human rights, of human freedom.

In 1944 the Republican Party, at my suggestion, entered into a bi-partisan agreement concerning the international organization for world peace. Mr. John Foster Dulles acted as my representative in a series of conferences with Cordell Hull, then Secretary of State, which resulted in the complete elimination of the question of the world peace organization from the Presidential campaign. That action resulted in the first bi-partisan foreign policy in peacetime in our history and even recent political efforts at the highest levels in our country failed to destroy it. America and the world have a better hope of peace as a result.

In the same way, it is my firm belief that the entire approach to the Palestine question must be made bi-partisan and has no place in political campaigns.

It must be clearly demonstrated to the world that the United States reaffirms its policy that the pledges to the Jewish people must be fulfilled.

No one can say that a final solution in Palestine is easy. But the right of large and immediate Jewish immigration is fundamental to that solution and it must be an immigration of not 100,000 but of several hundreds of thousands.

In 1944 the Republican National platform called for the opening of Palestine to the unrestricted immigration and land ownership of Jews so that Palestine may become "a free and democratic" commonwealth. I supported that position then. I support that position now.

Sees Challenge to Sincerity

The displaced persons of Europe are a challenge to the sincerity of our leadership. For a year and a half this problem has been crying out for action, not talk. It is the problem of not one religion or of one group; it is a problem of humanity itself. If this is the way the brave new world will solve its international problems, we have made a bad start indeed. It has long since been a time for action, decisive, firm and courageous action.

The estimates vary, but of the displaced persons who want and really need desperately a new home there are between 800,000 and a million. These victims of Hitler by their very status offer evidence of their love of freedom, of liberty and free government. They should be welcome additions to all the great nations of the world.

These people are the natural successors of the great waves of the persecuted who in the past contributed so richly to the greatness of the United States and other new nations of the world. It should not be difficult with the support and good-will of both parties in this country for an active effort on the part of our Government to procure admission both to Palestine and to the other great nations of the world for all those who are so desperately in need of peace and of an opportunity to rebuild their shattered lives. We should adjust our own immigration laws to permit the admission of our share of displaced persons, both Christians and Jews.

There can be no doubt of the wholehearted welcome which all the peoples of good-will would give to this pitifully small band of victims of war and persecution. It is not a problem of race or religion. It is a moral problem.

Asks That U. S. Take Lead

The displaced peoples, Jews and Christians alike, are a test of the good faith of the peace-loving nations of the world, of our aspirations for liberty and justice. They are a charge upon the conscience of mankind. The problem is beset with some petty, some major difficulties. The stakes are too great for vacillation or incompetence.

Of course, it would be comfortable to lay the problem aside and close our eyes. But the peace of the world must be founded upon conviction and firm action in accordance with the high principles upon which our nation was founded.

Let our Government take the lead, backed, as it will be, if it will only act, by the historic faith of the American people and find refuge now for these few hundreds of thousands whose helpless plight points an accusing finger at the good faith of the great nations of the world.

All our efforts, all our thoughts are to build for the peace of the world. But we cannot build peace with homeless victims of the last war on our conscience. Human liberty is the goal to which we aspire not only for ourselves but for all men. It is of the very essence of our freedom that we treasure it so much, we want to share it. To that end let our actions speak before all mankind so that liberty and justice shall again become the common aspiration of all the world.

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November 6, 1946

The Honorable Thomas E. Dewey
State Capitol
Albany, N.Y.

My dear Governor Dewey:

May I join your host of friends in congratulating you upon your splendid victory. The overwhelming vote by which you were re-elected is a magnificent tribute to you. I listened to you last evening when you spoke after your election was assured, and I was profoundly moved and heartened.

May God grant you His providential guidance in the great days which lie ahead of you.

Most cordially yours,

AMS:BK





STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY

THOMAS E. DEWEY
GOVERNOR

November 9, 1946

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver,
Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Dr. Silver:

Many thanks for your letter of
November 6th on the result of the election
and for the good things you say. I appreciate
them ever so much and hope to see you
soon.

I shall look forward to seeing you
at sometime you are in New York.

With warm personal regards and all
best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Thomas E. Dewey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

TED:MM