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The Jewish State comes into being, 1947.

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THE JEWISH STATE COMES INTO BEING  
Victory at the United Nations



By  
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

At  
The Temple

on  
Sunday morning, December 7, 1947

My dear Friends: We are as yet too close to the historic event that took place a week ago yesterday properly to appraise it. And the full story of what did take place, what led up to it is too long and too involved to be recounted here. I can share with you this morning only a few reactions, and I can comment only disjointedly, I am afraid, upon a few facts connected with this decision. Time alone, will give us the proper perspective and will properly evaluate the event.

I should like to say a word at the outset on the vote, itself. The report of the UNSCOP Commission which recommended partition of Palestine was approved by a vote of 33-13 with ten states abstaining, and one absent. This figure itself is very impressive. Not alone was there a 2/3 vote in favor, but six more than was required for a 2/3 vote. But the figure, itself, does not tell the whole story. The vote was far more impressive even than these figures indicated, for of the 13 states who voted negative, 10 were Moslem or Arab countries. And one, India, a country close enough to Pakistan, the largest Moslem country in the world to have been influenced by this proximity. Actually, there were only two Christian countries who voted against the proposals, two little countries. One was Cuba, and the other was Greece. In other words, the votes of the countries not directly involved in this issue was overwhelmingly for it.

There was considerable heart-searching among the 57 delegates which make up the UN Assembly and considerable of difference of opinion within each delegation, and great pressure from many directions was brought to play on all the delegations. The Arab states, the Moslem states which constitute a substantial bloc of 11 delegates, and therefore represented considerable diplomatic influence in the United Nations and were capable of considerable economic and political maneuverability, exploited all the available pressures which they possessed in Flushing Meadow, among the embassies in Washington and in the capitals all over the world.

Thus, for example, China, one of the five big powers -- China was very friendly and a week before the final vote was taken, the Chief of Chinese

the chief of the Chinese delegation, Wellington Koo, spoke at the United Nations in favor of partition. And then the pressures were brought to bear and from Nanking came word that the Chinese delegation must not vote for partition. China has a population of some 40 millions of Moslems and so China, on the final vote, abstained from voting.

Other countries wavered for one reason or another. Take France. France has deep sympathy for our cause. She always has had. And some months ago, it demonstrated in magnificent manner its great tribute. You read the story of the Exodus 1947. But France also has a very large Arab Empire in North Africa and the foreign office did not want to antagonize the Arabs in that French Empire. And so twice, the French delegation proposed postponement in the Ad Hoc Palestine Committee, the committee specially appointed by the Assembly of the United Nations to study the report of the UNSCOP Committee and bring in recommendations to the Assembly. The Ad Hoc Committee deliberations were at an end and a vote was to be taken. The French spokesman made a motion that the the whole motion be referred to the de Hague Court for adjudication which would have meant of course a long postponement of the whole subject, and unpredictable consequences. Only by the narrowest vote 21-20 was that motion defeated at the Ad Hoc Committee. Similarly when the debate was over in the Assembly and the vote was about to be taken, on Friday afternoon, the same head of the French dælegation proposed postponement for 24 hours in order to enable both sides to get together. But be it said to the eternal credit of the French that when the vinal vote was taken on Saturday, France voted "oui" on partition.

Take the little country Haiti. It first indicated that it would vote against partition. Then on the final vote, it voted for it.

Similarly was the case with the Philippines. Romulo, the head of the delegation made a ~~speech~~ speech against partition. But word from Manila came that the Philippine delegation was to vote for partition, and it did.

Very few states easily made up their minds. Some, like New Zealand, for example, were all for partition. But they were nevertheless not convinced that proper provision had been made in this set up for security, for the establishment of an international force during the period of transition between the time of the retirement from Palestine and the time when the new states were set up. They were unwilling to vote for the plan until they were re-assured of adequate security in that country.

Other countries had legal qualms. Would the Assembly of the United Nations actually have the authority to decree a solution for Palestine and to set up new governments in that country? Did the United Nations have other powers other than the recommendation of this legal question -- which of course has serious implications for the future actions of the United Nations on other issues.

Therefore it was quite remarkable that on the final vote such an impressive affirmative vote was recorded.

Another very interesting feature of the vote was that while the United Kingdom, Great Britain, itself, abstained from voting, all the four members of the British Commonwealth voted affirmatively for the report -- Australia, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand. That was most gratifying considering the seemingly hostile and intransigent position taken by the mother country. All four dominions are of course loyal subjects.

We felt, therefore, that the whole Anglo-Saxon world was with us, even though Great Britain itself was blinded by the obdurate, vindictive policy of Bevin. In fact, Canada was amazingly cooperative and helpful. Mr. Evatt, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee piloted it to a successful conclusion. We are very hopeful that when the heat and controversy abate that the Jewish people not alone of Palestine but the Jews of the world and the English people .....will both forget the unpleasantness of the last few years and will ~~be~~ work in the future in the same spirit of good will and mutual understanding and helpfulness as they have for many generations up to the last sad years.

It should also be borne in mind that this favorable action in the United Nations would have been impossible without the support of the Soviet Union and quite impossible without the support of the United States of America. The Soviet Union and the entire Slavic bloc with the possible exception of Yugoslavia, which alone of the whole Slavic bloc abstained from voting because of the large Moslem population in Yugoslavia, consistently were helpful and cooperative. The Soviet Union you will recall, revealed her favorable attitude at the Special Assembly last Spring. Gromyko said his country would prefer if possible, a bi-national state, but if ~~if~~ the situation politically deteriorated, it would favor the setting up of two individual states, a Jewish and Arab state. That, you will recall, fell as a bombshell in the United Nations because everybody had been led to believe by anti-Zionist propaganda that the Soviet Union was waiting to see the United States and Great Britain get entangled over the Arab situation and get the Arabs sore and then the Soviet Union would see to it that Arabs would come into the sphere of the Soviet Union....Washington was full of this kind of propaganda. And so when Gromyko rose and without preparation announced that the Soviet Union favored the setting up of a bi-national state or if not possible it would favor the setting up of two individual states -- it not only shocked the Arabs to their depths, but undermined this skillfully contracted piece of anti-Zionist propaganda which we faced wherever we moved.

When the UNSCOP Report was finally presented to the Assembly this September, the Soviet Union spoke up in favor of two states. A Soviet representative participated on the Special Committee appointed by the Ad Hoc Committee and worked most helpfully with it and allowed no obstacle to delay action. And on the day of the final vote, Again Gromyko speaking for the Soviet Union brushed aside all the last minute Arab maneuvers for delay and called for the taking of a vote. This was the one and only instance this year in the Assembly when the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. worked together harmoniously on any one issue in spite of theseemingly conflicting issues in that part of the world and in spite other issues in the United States this

year. On this one issue the United States and the Soviet Union found themselves working most harmoniously and collaborated in a spirit of good will. And this in my judgment may be a happy augury for cooperation on other great issues which will confront the United Nations.

I repeat now what I have tried to say in the last few months that it is a tragic mistake to popularize the the belief among our people here and throughout the worlds that there is something fatally irreconcilable between the Soviet Union and the United States of America and that the world must forever be divided in two or that war, or a cold war is inevitable between these two great countries. I believe that is a tragic mistake from which I hope the statesmen of the world will soon free themselves.

I take some personal pride and satisfaction of this action of the Soviet Union. Many of my colleagues had written off the Soviet as possible help to us. They figured that Soviet Union on the basis of ideology could never side with us. after the appointment of the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry Three years ago at the Zionist Convention in Atlantic City/ I said: "I do not know why the Soviet Union was not invited on the Commission of Inquiry. Surely the Soviet Union is interested in the problem of the displaced Jews of Europe, and surely the problems of the Middle East cannot find their complete solution without the good will and helpful cooperation of the closest and most powerful neighbor. Our propaganda must now take on a global character."

In February 1946 at the meeting of the American Jewish Conference which was held in our own city of Cleveland I again called the attention to the role which the Soviet Union might play in helping the Jewish people solve its great problem. And I said:

"There are those who resent every approach made to win over the sympathy of the Soviet Government to our cause. They call it 'flirting,' and point the finger of derision at Zionists whenever some anti-Zionist statement or act emanates from Soviet or pro-Soviet sources. This is an amazing phenomenon in Jewish life which can only be attributed to a blind and bitter partisanship which carries over from

an area which is not related to Jewish life to a specifically Jewish issue of gravest moment."

"At the moment, the attitude of the Soviet Government -- insofar as the sparse evidence can indicate an attitude -- does not seem to be favorable to us. But there is nothing final about it. Some of us recall that up to a few months ago, even more definite evidences seemed to point to a favorable and friendly attitude. The present attitude may or may not change again in the future. We may not succeed. But we certainly owe it to ourselves to do everything in our power to see that that attitude does change, and in our favor!"

As far as our own country is concerned, it came through magnificently at the end. There was considerable hesitancy and uncertainty right to the last few days at the United Nations just as there had been with reference to our government in the last eight years. The uncertainty did not concern the position of the United States government itself ~~how~~ as to how it would vote re the UNSCOP Report. It had declared that it would vote for it. The question was how far would our government go in leadership to make sure that the report is adopted, to use diplomatic persuasion on other countries to vote affirmatively. Without this diplomatic persuasion this report could not have been accepted. It wasn't the vote of the United States that was in doubt, but those which one might loosely call votes within the American sphere of government -- mostly Central and South America, the Latin countries.

There were powerful forces at work in our State Department to keep the United States from keeping this role of leadership. Their slogan was: This is a battle for the United Nations, not for the United States. We will vote affirmatively and give our reasons. Naturally we are not going to do what sometimes we do to bring diplomatic persuasion as in the case of the Balkan Committee...No issue we are not going on this/~~matter~~ to use the same tactics. They knew that the vote would be fairly close -- that it might lose over night or might win. That didn't bother them. If they lost, it is lost -- that is all.

These same unfriendly forces were at work to revise the UNSCOP Report especially the boundaries to our disadvantage. There were moments when the American delegation under direction from this authority was demanding the surrender of the whole Negev to the Arab state -- the Negev which was included by UNSCOP in the Jewish State as Jewish territory.

Naturally under pressure of those forces we did have to yield some two hundred million dunam to the Arab state. It was therefore necessary up to the very end almost to alert our friends, our friends in the Administration as to the danger in the situation.

By Wednesday, a week ago Wednesday -- three days before the final vote -- we did not have the vote necessary to carry the Report. Too many states were still in doubt. Too many states indicated their intention to abstain and largely because the position of the United States delegation was not crystal clear. They did not know how deeply in earnest they were about this matter.

Fortunately Thanksgiving intervened. There were no sessions on Thursday. We had some 36 hours to work and believe me, we worked. Many people helped. The President of the United States intervened in the situation. By Friday afternoon the situation had cleared up and we were confident that we could claim the required number of votes. And the delay of 24 hours actually helped us because we were able to muster more votes. By Saturday afternoon Mr. Herschel Johnson spoke up emphatically, convincingly just before the vote and moved for an immediate vote for partition. And the vote was taken.

I felt right along through these recent years that our final battle would be in the United States and that America's voice would be decisive. That is why I urged my friends to concentrate their efforts here on this scene and in Washington. I felt that the attitude of the United States toward Palestine over a period of years were not defined...For years we were getting what might be called bluntly the "friendly brush off. All through the years 1939-44 the American Government did not make a single formal protest against the White Paper (people could not escape from Germany)....When our government, Under President Truman did take<sup>a</sup> final step

namely that President Truman recommended that 100,000 Jewish refugees should be permitted to go to Palestine -- even that act was not backed up by that persistence to bring about positive results. It was therefore necessary to mobilize American public opinion and through this public opinion to stir up the Administration to action. That is why we worked hard to get both political parties to include party planks on Palestine in their platforms. That is why we worked so hard to get the Congress of the United States to pass a Palestine Resolution in order to put on record the real sentiment of the American people on Palestine.

This program was deprecated by some as being too militant and that it would embarrass some with the Administration. It simply had to be done. No other way was possible. It was the democratic way. And fortunately, it proved to be the correct way.

Our government was always guided by strong public opinion, <sup>and</sup> ~~was~~ helped by Jews and non-Jews to take finally this positive position which will heap the UN to settle problems of mankind.

Now, of course, this decision to partition Palestine is not the best kind of a decision. This is a second partition for Palestine. The old Palestine included Trans-Jordan, but in 1922 Trans-Jordan was cut off. Now it is proposed to partition again the country -- all that was left of it. We felt that a great demand to sacrifice was again being made of the Jewish people. Nevertheless we realized that this was all that we could get from this commission. There was no higher authority to appeal to. Reluctantly we accepted.

This decision of the United Nations gives us a country which is small, to be sure, but not so small that it cannot become the home of millions of our people. It will be a country which can develop industrially and agriculturally. What this decision is - is state-hood. We are restored to the position of a nation among the nations of the earth and after nearly 1900 years we cease to be a homeless people, a homeless wandering people. We have our national center again, where our

people will be free to live its own life, to develop its own civilization, use its own language, a place, if necessary, of refuge for all those who will need it. It gives to the people of Palestine a seat in the United Nations. It is the answer to the prayer of the ages. It is the end of the Galut of our people. It is the fulfillment of our Messianic hopes.

I should like to say one word about the security in Palestine because your newspapers are full of reports of rioting and disturbances. There were not any international forces provided by the UN. The UN Commission of five ~~is~~ are to go to Palestine within the very near future and are authorized to establish military force out of the local populations to maintain law and order. As far as Palestine is concerned Haganah now recognized...Should local military set-up not be adequate this will be brought to the attention of the Security Council and the Security Council will take appropriate measures.

These riots and disturbances must have been and should have been anticipated. They have been fomented by agitators, at the UN by Arabs....Nevertheless I am inclined to believe that much of the fury of these riots exist only in the newspaper headlines. I am not denying that they exist. I am afraid, however, that they are over-played.

You will recall that four or five weeks ago there appeared the news that seven Arab states were mobilizing their armies on the borders of Palestine. This state sent 30 thousand, that state sent 20,000 Arabs. An enterprising newspaper man took a plane and flew over the border and found three soldiers. Since that time their mobilized armies have vanished into thin air. Please discount much of the Arabian night stories that will appear in your newspapers from now on. They are being deliberately put there by interested parties to create the impression that this decision of the United Nations can never be enforced.

Of two things I am certain, that the Arab states will not dare to deny the authority of the United Nations. They belong to the United Nations and are pledged to abide by the principles of the United Nations.

And as far as the Arabs in Palestine are concerned, I am inclined to believe that they will soon realize that it is not advisable to carry on riots, that the Jews in Palestine are very well able to take care of themselves.

One word in conclusion. This decision will make possible the transferring of these tens of thousands of unfortunate Jewish refugees languishing in detention camps of Cypress so long. The greatest joy was evoked in the hearts of these refugees. We are hoping to bring them into Palestine very quickly. We hope perhaps within hopes at the year that 100,000 at least will be able to find their/last realized.

There will be a great call friends upon increased generosity of the Jews of America to make this choice and to help lay the foundation, the secure foundation of the Jewish state. I am sure that the Jews of America who have on all occasions given evidence of their deep generosity will most abundantly and with increased measure pour out their substance to help the Jewish people to build nobly its third Commonwealth in Eretz Yisrael. Personally I should like to say one word.

I thank God that I was privileged to have a hand along with many many others in this great work and I am grateful to the God of Israel for this glorious consummation. I should like to thank the Temple, the Congregation Tifereth Israel for having made it possible for me during these recent years to give so much time which should have gone to the work of The Temple, the congregation to this cause. Without this whole-hearted backing of the officers and members of our congregation I could not have done the little that I was privileged to do. This event will be recalled in Jewish history as one of the two or three greatest events in our long history. Tifereth Israel will I believe be remembered with gratitude by our people.

1) Too close - appraisal - Full story is too long, involved to be recounted here. I can share with you only a few reactions - and comment disappointingly only upon a few facts connected with U.N. decision of a week ago Saturday. Time alone will give us proper perspective - & will properly evaluate event.

2) A word abt. the vote itself. Report appeared 33-13; 10 abstentions - one absent. I'm impressed <sup>6 yes > 2/3</sup> but what story - 9/13 - ten were Moslem countries - (India) - Only 2 Christian countries voted against - Vote of countries which were not directly involved - overwhelmingly for.

③ There was much heart-searching among 57 delegates - considerable division of opinion - & pressure from many directions on all delegates.

Arab States which constituted a substantial bloc of 11 delegates - & represented considerable diplomatic influence, & econ. maneuverability. <sup>exploited their</sup> ~~used~~ their available pressures - in Flourish Meadows - among the embassies in Wash - and in the capitals / the world.

Thus for example China - one of the big 7/13 - friendly - Wellington Koo - spoke for - Nankai - Moslem Pop. of 40 m. - (also favored)

Other states were for no reason or another - (2)

- France - deep sympathy - "Exodus" - Arab Empire  
Twice Fr. delegate <sup>Perrin</sup> proposed a postponement - ad hoc  
But on final vote - OUI!

- Haiti - at first indicated that it would vote NO! -

- Philippines <sup>a million more</sup> Korunob - Roxas -

- Very few states easily made up their minds - Some,  
like New Zealand, all for Partition, not convinced -  
Security - Inter. Force.

- Others had legal qualms - Did the Assembly  
have the authority - to decree - to assume respon. -  
(beyond right to recommend)

- It was remarkable - that on final vote such  
an impressive opposition vote was recorded

3) While United Kingdom abstained - all 4 members

of the Commonwealth -

We felt that Anglo Saxon world was all with us -

Canada - Australia - Eva H. - English, too -

but for their blind, obstinate, Victorian policy;

Berlin

4) Favourable action improbable without support of Soviet, and impossible without support of America. (3)

The Soviet Union - & entire Slavic bloc consistently helpful and cooperative. Jugoslavia alone - obstructed - USSR

Soviet Union revealed her favourable attitude - lost at Special Assembly - Georgytsis - (Brest-Litovsk)

Lead to believe by anti-Zion. propaganda in London, had - send Arab states into Soviet camp -

- in 7 powerful arms in Zion. / Arab prop.

- When the USSR report was presented to Assembly in Sept - Ruman spokesman - announced -

- A Soviet rep. was on special com. on working com appointed to check on <sup>the</sup> report in detail - cooperated most helpfully - allowed us

obstacles to endanger action - (lost minutes Sunday)

And on day of final vote - pushed aside Arab delaying tactics and called for a just vote.

This was an and only instance at this Assembly

- USA & Soviet worked together harmoniously

- In spite of conflicting interests in Middle East -

could cooperate in settling this part with just - May it be a happy augury for future collaboration

the world with knowledge and understanding, so that our case will be properly understood and our cause adequately supported. There is much work to be done in Washington and in London and also in other capitals of the world. I do not know why the Soviet Union was not invited on the Commission of Inquiry. Surely the Soviet Union is interested in the problem of the displaced Jews of Europe, and surely the problems of the Middle East cannot find their complete solution without the good will and helpful cooperation of the closest and most powerful neighbor. Our propaganda must now take on a global character."

At the convention of the American Jewish Conference held on February 18, 1946, I stated: "In this connection I should like to suggest that we should be on guard against those who would like to tie the Zionist

movement to one or another of present-day rival ideologic groups, Soviet Socialism vs. Social Democracy. There are those who resent every approach made to win over the sympathy of the Soviet Government to our cause.

They call it 'flirting,' and point the finger of derision at Zionists whenever some anti-Zionist statement or act emanates from Soviet or pro-Soviet sources. This is an amazing phenomenon in Jewish life which can only be attributed to a blind and bitter partisanship which carries over



1946

*Bayan*

#

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from an area which is not related to Jewish life to a specifically Jewish issue of gravest moment. *// ~~to~~ Bo Han*

"We were not and are not discouraged in our efforts to win over Great Britain even though we have been grievously disappointed time and again, and the latest developments are the most disappointing of all. We were not and are not discouraged in our efforts to win over the President of the United States and our State Department even though heretofore we have encountered considerable misunderstanding and resistance there.

No one has criticized or derided us for carrying on intensive work with these governments, *no one has criticized or derided us for trying to establish contacts with* other governments in Europe, South and Central America and other parts of the world. Why, then should the Zionist movement regard itself as in any way inhibited from trying to win understanding and friendship for our movement from one of the greatest powers on earth?

"The Arabs are certainly not averse to carrying on their propaganda both in the direction of Great Britain and of the Soviet Union. My regret is not that we have tried, but that we have not tried hard enough, or soon enough. *#* At the moment, the attitude of the Soviet Government -- insofar as the sparse evidence can indicate an attitude -- does not seem

to be favorable to us. But there is nothing final about it. Some of us recall

that up to a few months ago, even more definite evidences seemed to point to a

favorable and friendly attitude. The present attitude may or may not change again

in the future. We may not succeed. But we *certainly* owe it to ourselves

to do everything in our power to see that that attitude does change, and in our favor!



57. I talk some personal satisfaction in the ~~pastor~~ action (4)  
of Soviet -

Zionist leaders had written off the Soviet Union -

3 yrs. ago - at 21A Convention - (Jews)

In Feb. 46 - Amer. J. Cong. - Cleveland (Jews)

6) As far as our own part is concerned - it came then  
magically at the end -

There was considerable hesitation and uncertainty - right  
to the last few days - and for the last 5 yrs.

As to the position, the U.S. on the issue - for it -

But how far it would go to in backing - to  
use diplomatic persuasion - without which

It was not American our vote which was in  
doubt - votes of - loosely called - Amer. bloc -

There were powerful press - State Dept <sup>always</sup>

"This is a matter for U.N. - not specifically

for U.S." - We must bring no pressure -

- Balkan Com - Little Assembly - Veto

These same press - were working to revert the  
boundaries to our disadvantage - 220 -  
- pressure did cost us part / 220 -

Exam. Overin.

There was real danger - that such a diplomatic dis-  
interestedness - would lose us many states who

did not wish to involve us - would obtain  
- U.S. Delegation confused - (Herb Fried)

7/ It was necessary to alert our friends in the  
Administration as to the danger - By Wed. we  
were short of  
several hundred  
votes

Many people helped - Pres. intervened

~~but~~ By Friday afternoon - we felt secure

the position of Am. delegation had been clear & firm -

Herschel Johnson - spoke emphatically, & convinced

just prior to the vote - and moved for an  
immediate vote on partition -

- 8/ I have felt right along in recent years -
- Am. final battle held - Am. voice decisive
- I also felt that Am. position was far from defeated
- For years we were getting a friendly "brush off"
- White Paper 1939-44 - Am. made no protest
- And when it acted - 100,000 - without previous  
accepting the Br. line.
- It was necessary to mobilize - stand up Am

Planks - Cyprus - Partition -

- Many Joint bodies - "interim team" - Embassy  
Admin - ~~the~~ Embassies cos well admin

- But it had to be done - There was no other way -

- It is the democratic way -

- And it proved the correct way - Our fault -

was helped and guided by <sup>steps</sup> public pressure  
to prompt & helpful action -

Secretariat  
appears  
to UK

- A credit to America - a service to UK

a contribution to settlement

9.) By action of UK - Pol. will be partitioned - + an End of Jew  
states will be set up by Oct. 1 - 1948 -  
Plan Councils - April - ~~March~~ <sup>at least</sup> Aug. 1 -

+ Jerusalem area  
separate govt unit  
under UN.

(a) Not an ideal solution - Partition should not have been  
imposed - but not contemplated either by B. Jee. & Mandate  
which, Pol. including Transj - are partition already

5500 sq. miles -

(b) But it became clear from friendly visit of Agranat  
that this is maximum we could expect from  
UK - & certainly there was no other authority to appeal to

(c) Blatantly we accepted.

(d) Small - large Communist - with paper Development

(e) Gives us Stalghood - a nation among nations - <sup>1900</sup>  
~~summary to people of ages (class)~~  
- No larger a Nat. Wishes people a hardy people

- Free to live its own life - develop its own culture -

- Language - Flag - Seat at UN - creation  
forums

- a Place of Refuge - 611.

10) Communist Union - will contribute to stability with its  
may reverse Near about

11) Security - no Inter. force has been provided. The

N. Commission (S-Bolton, Gachs, Denmark, Panama (Thelmer))  
appointed to take over transfer - will whizz

local militia -

In case cannot control - call on Security Council

(a) Riots - fomented - speeches at UN - Masses of Arabs who  
concerned 1,200,000 ago  
inevitable - overplayed - a few weeks ago

(b) Defy UN. check to talk can, Es.

12) Persons will mark possible trafficking of Refugees  
- an end to their tragic odyssey

13) American Jewish Aid -

14) a glorious new chapter - 3rd Commonwealth

15/ I have been privileged to have a hand - plowed 18  
casamata -  
Thank the Temple.

