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Extraordinary Zionist Conference, 1920.

RABBI SILVER'S SPEECH

20A 1920
May
Extraordinary
Convention
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I really feel as though it were somewhat presumptuous on my part -- a young man in the service of the Cause -- to speak at this convention. I should rather like to hear those men who have grown old in this holy service. I feel that theirs is this festive occasion, and that they are entitled to all the honor ~~and all the glory and all the credit~~ that the grateful house of Israel is anxious and eager to bestow upon them. If I say anything at all now, it is to express the feeling of the younger men who are in the ranks of the ~~Zionist~~ Movement, ^{It is} ~~just a statement~~ to make you feel -- you, the men who have worked and toiled loyally and faithfully for more than one decade -- that we, the younger men, are in this cause to stay, to labor, to give of our devotion and our consecration unto the last moment ^{of ultimate triumph} (Applause)

We shall take over some of the burdens which you have carried so willingly, and we shall carry on from strength to strength.

When I first heard the glad tidings that were cabled from across the sea, I felt in a mood somewhat akin to the mood that I was in ⁱⁿ November, 1918, when the Armistice was signed. ~~Only~~ much more so! For the War, tremendous, momentous as it was, was swift. It began in my lifetime, and ended in my lifetime. I was privileged to see the beginning and the consummation of it. But this Armistice marks the end of a War in which Israel ~~ostentatiously~~ ^{ostensibly} lost every battle, but in reality won the last and the greatest of the battles -- this war began, oh, so long ago -- the day when the ~~first priest sat~~ ^{Shechina} began to ~~so~~ among the ruins of the destroyed Sanctuary, and for twenty centuries the tragedy passed from the drab to the dark, and from the dark to the Stygian gloom; heart-breaking, soul-trying, ~~nerve-racking~~ ^{crushing}; and then, suddenly, suddenly, the glad tidings, the glorious tidings! ~~... why, it came like a flash from Heaven. Wonderful, wonderful thing!~~

I felt in the mood of holiness. I experienced a sensation such as I

had ~~have~~ never ~~yet~~ experienced, *before* and I ~~have since thought~~ and thanked God that it ~~has~~ *was* ~~was~~ my privilege to be one of those who could say "~~Baruch hitah Adonai elohenu,~~ etc., etc." *"Blamed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the Universe who hast caused us to live to see this day"*

golus I felt as though I would like to toast the silent dead, the mighty heroes of my people, ~~that~~ *who had* hoped and hoped in vain, and fought without being able to see the glorious Consummation of their ~~effects~~ *struggles*, and their sacrifices, ~~on~~ *souls* the ~~heroes~~ who waited and waited through the long, ~~direful~~, dreadful night of the *from him who said "even unto that leader that new Moses, who said: "Ben Zaccai to Haleri, from Haleri to the deathless the great Herzl."*

I felt as though I would wish to summon their spirits ~~with us~~ now, so that they too might rejoice *with us* at this ~~glorious occasion~~ -- Perhaps they are rejoicing. Perhaps it is they ~~that~~ *who* look through our tear-dimmed eyes. Perhaps *it is they who speak through our trembling lips!* *For was it not their immortal spirit that prompted us and guided us and moved us along through the trying days and the wearying years.*

There is one thing that this remarkable event has confirmed within me.

I have always been a ~~confirmed~~ believer. I have always believed implicitly that we were "an eternal people." *when darkness settled over Israel* Even through the last ~~few~~ years, ~~when things were gloomy~~, and when all our hopes seemed to be crashing in wreckage; I hoped, I hoped! But at no time was my faith so justified as when this thing took place. *in faith triumphant* Then I knew that neither the hosts of Babylon and Assyria, the ~~winged~~ *furious* messengers of Memphis, ~~and~~ *grieved* the ~~grieved~~ *war* hoplites of Greece ~~and~~ the iron legions of Rome, yea, *not* even Democracy and Freedom itself, could ~~not~~ destroy us. WE ARE AN ETERNAL PEOPLE! (Great and prolonged applause, the audience rising.)

What, what can I say to you men and women who know much more about this movement than I do? Who have given much more to it of effort and labor than I have? All I can say at this moment is that we are seeing the footprints of the Messiah. We are enjoying that moment for which your forefathers and mine longed and prayed ~~for~~ for centuries. Let us not prove wanting. Let us not fail in

this critical moment. What you and I do at this moment may determine the course of Jewish history for a thousand years.

Life to-day is wonderfully plastic and yielding and susceptible to influences. Every fine soul imprint, every contribution in soul, in effort, in devotion, in consecration, will tell ultimately upon the destiny of Israel! Let us prove true and strong to the occasion. Let us stand united, everyone; those ^{had been} who ~~are~~ opposed to us and those who ^{have always been} ~~are~~ with us, the indifferent, the ^{devoted} friends, everyone!

"When God looks with favor upon the works of a man, even his enemies make friends with him." We need them all; we need unity, unity. We need an all-embracing, holy devotion to this cause. Let us stand as one and fight as one, until the dawn that is now breaking over Palestine will brighten and brighten into the full noontide of a free, prosperous, ^{blended} ~~dignified~~, ~~healthy~~ Jewish life in Palestine!
(Great applause)



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NEWS NOT PROPAGANDA
FROM
PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT
ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA
55 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

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A. H. FROMENSON
DIRECTOR

Address Delivered By Rabbi A. H. Silver of Cleveland,
at the Extraordinary Zionist Conference in New York City.

WRHS AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

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but in reality won the last and the greatest of the battles. This war began, Oh, so long ago - the day when the Shechinah began to sob among the ruins of the destroyed Sanctuary, and for twenty centuries the tragedy passed from the drab to the dark, and from the dark to the Stygian gloom; heart-breaking, soul-trying, crushing, and then, suddenly, suddenly, the glad tidings, the glorious tidings!...

I felt in the mood of holiness. I experienced a sensation such as I had never experienced before, and I thanked God that it was my privilege to be among those who could say - "Blessed art Thou Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who hast caused us to live to see this day"....

I felt as though I would like to toast the silent dead, the mighty heroes of my people, who had hoped and hoped in vain, and had fought without being able to see the glorious consummation of their struggles and their sacrifices; the souls who waited and waited through the long, dreadful night of the Golus, from Ben Zaccai to Halevi, from Halevi to the deathless Herzl:

I felt as though I would wish to summon their spirits now, so that they too might rejoice with us. Perhaps they are rejoicing. Perhaps it is they who look through our tear-dimmed eyes. Perhaps it is they who speak through our trembling lips! For was it not their indomitable spirit that prompted us and guided us and moved us through the trying days and the wearying years.

There is one thing which this remarkable event has confirmed within me. I have always been a believer! I have always believed implicitly that we were "an eternal people". Even through

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What, what can I say to you men and women who know much more about this movement than I do - who have given much more to it of effort and labor than I have? All I can say at this moment is that we are seeing the footprints of the Messiah. We are enjoying that moment for which your forefathers and mine longed and prayed for centuries. Let us not prove wanting. Let us not fail in this critical moment. What you and I do at this moment may determine the course of Jewish history for a thousand years.

Life today is wonderfully plastic and yielding and susceptible to influences. Every fine soul imprint, every contribution in soul, in effort, in devotion, in consecration, will tell ultimately upon the destiny of Israel! Let us prove true and strong to the occasion. Let us stand united, everyone; those who had been opposed to us and those who have always been with us, the indifferents, the devoted, everyone!

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Address delivered by Rabbi
Silver.

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(Great applause)

6/1/20.

