



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

Reel
172

Box
62

Folder
65

San Remo decision, 1920.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Dear friends:

We are assembled in thousands here today to celebrate the declaration of our Independence.

The Allies at San Reno have given a written mandate over the Holy Land. We are invited to take possession of Palestine the land of our Forefathers.

It seems to me that the signing of the Armistice on November 18th brought to a close a terrible war that lasted only four short years. Our war has been going on for 2000 years and victory is at last in sight. I have the honor to belong to a people who have suffered 2000 years of cruel oppression and still live; for we are an eternal people. The tyranny of the Assyrians; the Roman Mace; the Grecian fires; the Egyptian idols, the crusaders; the auto-defie of the Spanish Inquisition; the tortures of the Crescent and the Cross; from dark to drab and from Drab to black. How dismal has been our lot; the ravages of wars, the kogroms, the shame of the yellow badge and all and all--

Dr. Grossman so eloquently portrayed to you the sufferings of our people in Europe today. He spoke of the hundreds of thousands dying in the devastated regions. It is not a question of the numbers who are dying there today. For we are witnessing a tragedy of a people a whole Nation being uprooted and crushed beyond all semblance of reason recognition. Who are denied the right to live and love and the pursuit to happiness.

I am asked by my many friends what is this----Zionist Movement? Is it a new form of propoganda of the many sorts which seem to grow over night? I can not explain my Zionism and I cannot reason it out, I only know that I am a Zionist because I am a Jew.

1920-21
20-12
San Remo Decision

2

It is an inspiration and one must feel it even as an Artist is inspired by his art. It requires a background. It requires a frame of mind. It requires the sympathy and the knowledge of one's own people. Our Jewishness consists not alone of a love of Race, of Culture, of Religion of nationality, but a blending of these all in one beautiful emblem like the Rainbow. The rainbow is not simply a collection of beautiful colors but a blending of them all indistinguishable indefinable. Separate any of these and you do an injury to the Whole. There are a few small handful who fear our Movement. They say we cannot be loyal to the United States and still long for Zion. No man can be guilty of a transgression who retains a love for the traditions of his people. Their folks sentiment their sufferings, their aspirations, for do not these go to form the whoaf and web of our nation. There is a small handful of people a very few, who fear this movement who seem to believe that we are merely tolerated in this great Republic. They are nervous of their own surroundings for they are of themselves afraid. They are ignorant, they are cowards when they charge us with disloyalty.

They seem to think that we are merely allowed to remain here on sufferance that we may remain here as long as we behave ourselves, and the American people are satisfied with our conduct. But let me say that we refuse to be tolerated. We are part and parcel of this country, an inseparable part of the composite government. We have grown up with the United States and we do not have to feel we are merely tolerated.

When white man first sailed across the sea and gazed upon the horizon of a New World and when the men placed their feet upon the shores of this continent, a Jew was there. In the settlement

of the vast wildernesses, the Jew was there. When the colonies first became resentful against the tyranny of a foreign power and threw off the shackles, a Jew was there. And when this country was torn with civil strife and the nation rocked on its foundation we find that in the ranks of those who fought and died to keep this country intact, the Jews were there. And still later when this country went to war to free millions of people held in bondage across the sea, when 250,000 of our best blood gave of themselves willingly to make the great sacrifice necessary for the salvation of these peoples, we found the Jews were there.

Have you ever seen the ragged shores of Europe with its strife and its misery with its ruined homes with its crushed families grovelling in the mire of their devastated habitations.

In the streets of Warsaw were aged men whom I respect and revered with their beards plucked by the handful by the hateing Poles who look at us only with hatred, suspicious and threatening in their looks. Have you ever trodden in the holy soil of our colonies, and seen the happy faces of those living there that breathed the air of freedom-that air-that atmosphere charged with the glorious memories of our ancestors, with the golden glow of our noble sires.

I spoke to a few young colonists and asked them how they come there and they answered that they realized that life in the place of their birth grew more and more insecure and held out no hope for the future so they left their birth place and went to Warsaw, from Warsaw to Budapest, from Budapest to Vienna, from Vienna to Alexandria and to Hafia and here we are free men, here we may live and die in peace, a new day

There is dawning in the East a new day for our people. A new Palestine beacons us to greater glories and a more wonderful freedom. As I behold this portentious awakening I repeat the sacred prayer of Shecluyonn.

Palestine was not given us as a gift. We suffered for it, we worked for it, we strove for it, and now that it is here, we must give of our wealth and our strength, and our youth to build up a new Palestine.

