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United Palestine Appeal, 1938.

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

UNITED PALESTINE APPEAL

ADDRESS

OF

HON. ROBERT J. BULKLEY

OF OHIO

AT TESTIMONIAL DINNER TO DR. ABBA HILLEL
SILVER, NEW YORK CITY

May 3, 1938

(Printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of May 18, 1938)

Mr. WAGNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a very interesting address delivered by the Senator from Ohio [Mr. BULKLEY] at the dinner which was given in honor of Dr. Abba Hillel Silver at the Hotel Biltmore in New York City on May 3, 1938.

There being no objection, the address was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

One of the fundamental reasons for the survival of the Jewish people has been that in times of greatest distress and trial leaders of uncommon attributes have risen to strengthen Jewish morale and courage in the face of adversity. The man we are honoring tonight is such a leader, for he has come to the helm of the United Palestine Appeal at a moment of grave crisis for the Jews in so many lands. We in Ohio have known Dr. Silver well for many years. We have a deep affection for him as a man and we have a great admiration for him as a leader. Dr. Silver is a man of vision, energy, and direction. These three qualities have made him a dynamic force in the civic and communal life of Ohio and of the United States as a whole. If American Jews respond to the leadership of such men, they will carry out with honor and success the responsibilities and burdens which the present world situation has placed upon the Jewish community in America.

There is no other Jewish community of comparable size to share these responsibilities and burdens. All over the European Continent the whole moral and political structure has been torn from its moorings by a storm of hatred and fear. The triumph of force over justice has struck terror in the hearts of those who were only a short decade ago the champions and defenders of democracy. International agreements have been thrown to the scrap heap. Human rights have been trampled in the dust. Morality and justice have been sent into exile and human dignity has been made an outcast.

The Jews have been struck by the full impact of this torrent of totalitarianism. Their tragedy is great indeed. During the past 5 years the Jewish people have been engaged in a critical struggle for survival. It has been attacked on every front. To old religious prejudices has been added a complex of economic and political prejudices and the Jew has been identified with every class and group subject to violent criticism. The battlefield for this struggle has been central and eastern Europe, but its reverberations have been clearly heard around the world. The march of totalitarian aggression has threatened the survival of democracy everywhere. Wherever the Jew has been attacked, other minorities and liberal groups have also suffered.

The Jews are the most sensitive barometer of political and economic upheaval. For they are always the first to feel the effects of governmental change and particularly the restriction of civil and religious liberty. Democracy is an indispensable pillar of Jewish freedom and survival. But the Jews have defended and will continue to defend democracy not merely because it is essential for their protection and well-being, but because it has been a fundamental factor in their social and cultural development as a people, and a foundation stone of their structure of moral and social justice. They have learned to eschew reaction and narrow bigotry, they have learned in the hard school of experience to despise tyranny and dictatorship.

Throughout the present wave of oppression the Christian world has failed in its elementary responsibility to halt gross injustice and bitter race hatred. There can be no greater indictment of our civilization today than the fact that old men and women and children have been stripped of all their worldly goods and food and set adrift to perish of hunger and exposure. Such an incredible violation of human decency is without parallel in modern times. It implies a moral retrogression which must alarm the civilized world. Inaction and indifference to the plight of the Jewish people today will only serve to undermine our entire moral structure. Civilization and justice are not dead, and we must promptly take our stand against injustice and oppression.

Twenty years ago, at the end of the Great War, the nations of the world were faced with the problem of millions of Jews who were made homeless and destitute as a result of that conflict. The distress of the Jewish people at that time evoked such universal sympathy that the conscience of the Christian world was moved

to undertake a project that would restore Palestine as a Jewish national home and thereby open to many hundreds of thousands new opportunities for rehabilitation.

This great historic act was incorporated in the Covenant of the League of Nations and indorsed by 52 countries, including the United States. A mandate was granted to Great Britain as a sacred trust to carry out the Balfour declaration which England had published in 1917, pledging herself to promote the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

The Jewish situation today is in many respects infinitely worse than it was in 1918 because many hundreds of thousands of Jews are not merely faced with the problem of obtaining food or shelter but of surviving an environment that has been poisoned with a vicious anti-Semitism that denies the Jew even the most elementary human rights. Those who now have bread in their cupboards and a bed to sleep in may be in greater despair than those who went hungry and barefoot 20 years ago.

In view of the fact that the tragic position of the Jewish people is more critical than it was in 1918, the nations of the world must inaugurate a program of relief and redress commensurate with the urgency of the need. I believe that all of us may feel justly proud of the fact that an important step in this direction has been taken by President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull. The American Government's invitation to other nations to join in an international program of refugee emigration may be the basis of a historic action as far reaching as that of 1918 if the nations of the world unite in making possible larger immigration into Palestine and a more rapid economic development of the country.

In 1918, when the world powers decided to grant the Jews an opportunity to rebuild Palestine, that country was a desert waste. Neglected for many centuries Palestine was a barren, backward land offering meager inducements for large-scale settlement. At that time no one was very optimistic about the number of Jews that Palestine could absorb. The whole project was in the nature of an experiment and only the most ardent idealists expressed confidence in its success. But during the two decades that have intervened the Jewish people have worked a miracle of reclamation and reconstruction of unprecedented proportions. They drained the swamps. They irrigated the desert. They made fruit grow on land that had lain arid for centuries. They built cities on sand dunes. They built new industries and with the aid of scientific equipment they made the dry soil of Palestine fertile. American Jewry bore a major share of the burden of this upbuilding program through its support of the United Palestine Appeal and the Palestine Foundation Fund and the Jewish National Fund, which are combined in this drive. In the short span of 20 years the heroic pioneers and builders established a community of 430,000 and prepared the country economically and agriculturally for the absorption of many hundreds of thousands of others. Economic experts today estimate that Palestine can comfortably absorb more than 2,000,000 Jews within the next 20 years. That such a thing should be at all possible is perhaps the greatest tribute to the idealism, sacrifice, and energy of the Jews who went to Palestine to build and create a new life out of the wreckage which they salvaged from the countries of oppression.

What a rich opportunity Palestine offers to the nations of the world today for carrying out a program of mass resettlement for homeless and oppressed Jews. President Roosevelt's proposal for refugee emigration should be the springboard for renewed effort for maximum colonization and settlement in Palestine. It is, of course, a most welcome gesture of tolerance and sympathy for those countries which have accepted President Roosevelt's invitation to open their doors to as many refugees as their immigration quotas will permit. But the desperate position of many hundreds of thousands of Jews requires extraordinary measures. Homes for greater numbers than those that can be admitted by these countries must be found elsewhere. In 1918 it was said that Palestine might provide a home. In 1938 it has been said and proved that Palestine can provide a home for a larger number of Jews than can be admitted to all other countries in the world. Palestine has achieved this position during the past 5 years without any special aid or cooperation such as has been initiated by President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull. Since 1933 Palestine has absorbed more than 190,000 Jews from Germany, Austria, Poland, and Rumania, and other lands. Palestine has demonstrated beyond any doubt its capacity for mass Jewish immigration. Is there any question that Palestine could absorb far greater numbers in the future if the governments of the world would prevail upon Great Britain to open the doors of Palestine to an immigration based on the principle of economic absorptive capacity and not upon artificial restrictions? In 1917 the issuance of the Balfour declaration by Great Britain was justifiably hailed by Jews and the rest of the world as one of the outstanding acts of justice and magnanimity on the part of a great nation. Today it is within the power of Great Britain to perform another act of historic proportions and to give ringing testimony to the civilized world that the principles of humanity have not been banished from the chancelleries of our governments through permitting the homeless Jews of Austria and the homeless Jews of Poland and Germany and Rumania to go to Palestine and to rebuild their lives which have been shattered by forces that threaten the very existence of democracy and social justice.

With Courage and Faith

New U. P. A. Head Calls for Abandonment of Despair And Renewed Hope

Text of Address by DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

I should like to say at the outset that the prime reason which moved me to assume the leadership of the 1938 campaign of the U.P.A. was the thought that by so doing I might relieve Dr. Wise of some of the heavy burdens which have fallen upon his shoulders in recent years, far beyond the measure which any human being, even as gifted and energetic and resourceful and inspired as Dr. Wise is. It was my thought that, by coming to his aid in this work, some of his time and some of his energies might be released for greater concentration upon the other activities in which he is engaged on behalf of our people. He has generously offered me—his younger colleague—the fullest measure of his cooperation, and symbolized that offer by accepting the chairmanship of the executive committee of the U.P.A. We shall thus have continuously the benefit of his seasoned counsel, of his wise guidance and of his enkindling inspiration.

I do not think that this is the time to pay our fullest measure of tribute to Dr. Wise, not merely for the leadership which he gave to U.P.A. in the last two years, but for the leadership which he gave to the Jewish people in the last forty years. It was said of another great Jewish leader who also lived and labored in desperate times for his people that he was the *Ner Israel*—a Light in Israel; that he was an *Amud Barzel*—a Pillar of Strength—of iron; that he was a *Patish Hazak*—a Powerful Hammer. I know of no leader in Jewish life in our generation to whom these three attributes are more justly and accurately ascribed. In darkness, a light in Israel; in hours of doubt and uncertainty, a pillar of strength; and in the midst of battle and struggle, a hammer, a power of great and persistent energy.

My dear Dr. Wise, this is one of the rare moments in my life; it is a great honor for me to take this torch from your hands in this cause at this hour. I am keenly aware that the burden involved is even greater than the honor. I am the spiritual leader of a large congregation, which, of course, has the first claim upon my time and upon my energy. Nevertheless, when the summons came I did not feel justified in refusing or declining, but I regarded myself at this hour as a conscripted soldier. This is an hour of battle for Israel. We are fighting on all fronts. Never in our history have we had to fight on so many fronts at one and the same time. Others are called upon to make far greater sacrifices. This which was asked of me is the least. I shall give to this campaign during the coming year whatever energies I can command, whatever ability I can command, whatever time I can command. I shall try to be more than the nominal head of the campaign. I am assuming responsibility, and I assume, also, that you wish me to take on the fullest measure of such responsibility and a measure of authority.

Sees Wider Opportunities

I shall try to benefit by the accumulated experience of ours during the period of years. I shall also try to experiment, perhaps trying a few new ways. I shall make an effort, with your cooperation, during the coming year to capitalize on the widespread pro-Palestine sentiment which exists among our people everywhere. I have found that, while ideologically all of our people may not be ready to commit themselves to our Zionist program, there are really few Jews in this country who are thinking at all—and most Jews have been made to think in the last few years—who have not become Palestine-minded and Palestine-sympathetic. I shall try, as far as I can, to organize that sentiment and to capitalize upon it, perhaps to decentralize our work a bit, so as to de-

velop locally and regionally some additional lay Jewish leadership for Palestine.

I want to make just one or two requests of you, my fellow co-workers. I would like to ask you in your respective communities to clear the way for the U.P.A. I should like to ask all those who are identified with one Zionist group or another, which groups may have their own particular projects which involve financial undertakings, to give the U.P.A. in their communities the right of way. I should like to utter one word of caution to all of you: that in this work of raising money for Palestine, there is such a thing as being penny-wise and pound-foolish, that in initiating and launching numerous small projects for Palestine you do not benefit Palestine but in the long run hurt it. There is a real danger—and I have travelled this country from coast to coast visiting many communities, and I have for three years been chairman of the Jewish Welfare Fund in Cleveland—there is the real danger of souring our Jewish communities because of these numerous small petty projects for Palestine which have been launched. There is also a danger of fragmentizing our Palestine activities. The trend in our communities and the demand of our Jews is for centralization, co-ordination. They get weary quickly and resentful of being approached time and again during the year for this Palestine project and for that Palestine project. If a fund is worthy, some way ought to be found of incorporating it in the total Palestine budget. I ask for your co-operation, friends, laymen, rabbis, members of the staff and the personnel particularly, the men who are out in the field—our representatives—who are working day in and day out, and for them I solicit your utmost good will, co-operation and helpfulness.

It is to say a truism and a repeated platitude that these are times of recession for our people politically and economically. But it is in times such as these that spiritually our people progress. That is the philosophy of Jewish history and that is one of the secrets of Jewish survival. Our people is very much like one of those coil springs—the more pressure you put upon them, the greater the resistance. In the last few years we have again seen this miracle which always amazes this world, that in the times when we are being hammered upon the anvil of history, we increase spiritually, and we multiply the acts of our sacrificial loyalties.

Deprecates Defeatism

I do not approve, I deprecate the constant chastizing of our people. I deprecate the constant beating of our breasts—we have sinned, we have transgressed, we have not done enough. I think something should be said for our people, for what it did do, for the sacrifices which it has made in the last twenty years, colossal sacrifices, astounding sacrifices. Please remember that Palestine was not the only problem which claimed of us a great deal in terms of substance and time, and energy and labor and care and anxiety. In fifteen-twenty years the American Jews have had to send over \$120,000,000 to succor their people in Eastern Europe, and most of that money did not come out of the pockets of the few—the rich—but from the sweat and the labor of the masses of our people. And not only these tens of millions of dollars which were collected from campaigns, but even larger sums which were sent abroad by a child to a parent, by a brother to a sister. How our people, through no fault of their own, have had to spend this, in order to keep their people alive in foreign lands! Why do we always castigate ourselves? Is there any

people on the face of God's earth today that has shown and exhibited greater heroism under duress, a greater spirit of sacrifice, greater loyalty to its weaker and most suffering brothers, a deeper sense of solidarity than our people? Why don't we, when we assemble and when we enumerate the things which we might do and should do, or fail to do, also build up the morale of our people and inspire them in these horrible days when the whole world seems to be organized against them, and strengthen them by reminding them of what they have done and what they are doing in the world today?

When I come to a community and ask for funds for Palestine, or for Poland or for Germany, I do not go with a scorpion whip, with words of bitterness and denunciation. I go to that community with words of consolation, comfort and hope, praising them for what they have done and urging upon them that as long as that great need exists, to make even more and greater sacrifices for our cause.

I should like to see banished from our ranks in these times the mood of defeatism, the mood of despair. No people is at its best when it is frightened. You cannot appeal to the generosity of a people when you terrify them. The reaction to fright is flight and hoarding. Bring your people that sort of message which the prophets of Israel always brought to their people in the dark nights of suffering: "*Al tira, avdi Ya'akov*"—do not be afraid! Jewish life is not liquidating anywhere on the face of the earth. Bring them the message of the prophets: "Even when thou shalt pass through the deep waters, I shall be with thee and the fires which are kindled against thee will not consume thee." Bring them that message.

A Message of Hope

You have every reason to bring them that message—because it is not merely wishful thinking, which is in itself a great act of salvation in an hour of crisis, but on the basis of what we have actually done and achieved and builded in these desperate post-bellum years. We have reason to speak to our people in confidence and in hope of the future.

Following the World War, when more than half of our people were broken and shattered in Eastern Europe with their life disorganized, their economic resources at a vanishing point; following the World War, which set in motion one of the greatest migrations known in the history of our people, when so much of our energies and resources had to be devoted to the elementary work of binding wounds, of providing bread for the starving and shrouds for the dead—the Jewish people had, nevertheless, the temerity, the courage, the vision, the heroism to apply themselves to this colossal job in Palestine of rebuilding the Jewish national life. With their own hands and their own resources in this critical period and in this short space of time they took a land neglected, stripped, desolate and, in fifteen-twenty short years, populated it,

built towns and cities, and schools and hospitals and a university; and a backward, Oriental province became one of the greatest civilized, cultural centers in the Near East. Is that a record of which we need be ashamed? Why do our leaders go about intoning this elegy of doom all the time? Jewish life in Germany is doomed—Jewish life in Poland is doomed—Jewish life in Rumania is doomed! What right has any Jew to pronounce the *Kaddish* over the lives of millions of Jews in any country of the world?

Palestine will not be built up upon the doom of these Jewish communities. It is a vigorous, prosperous Jewish life in the Diaspora which will feed and strengthen and develop the Jewish Homeland in Palestine.

I appeal to you, my friends, as you go to your communities—you lay leaders, you rabbis, you members of the staff and the personnel of the U.P.A. Go forward as the spokesmen, as the emissaries of a faith, of courage, of vision, which has become undimmed in two thousand years. Do you think that this upbuilding of Palestine which our forefathers began the very day that the Temple lay in ruins, which continued to the period of the cross and the crescent, through Rome, Islam, the crusades and the Turks; do you think that that

project with which the life of our people has been intertwined now for nearly two thousand years will be abandoned now because of the political uncertainties, because of these sporadic riots which are taking place in the country? Do you think that that dream will be abandoned now, after our soil in Palestine has been incarnadined with our blood? Do you think that now, after we have vindicated anew our thrice justified claims upon Palestine by works of labor, of building, that we will abandon it today? Partition or no partition, we go on! If partition goes through, then certainly we will need ten times the funds that we raised last year. If partition does not go through, surely our work does not stop. There is the Mandate and the work of continuing to bring Jews into Palestine. Let us clear our minds of dialectics and our hearts of metaphysical ideologies. Let us clear ourselves of that morbidity of analyzing ourselves to find out why some people do not like us. Let us face the simple problem in a simple way.

Friends, there is the Jewish people, there is the Jewish nation which needs a national homeland. There is a Jewish national homeland in Palestine. Let us determine to rebuild it.