



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Forward to Feur's book, Why a Jewish State, 1942.



## FOREWORD

Here is a clear, concise and authoritative statement of classic Zionism. It is a refreshing and logical presentation of the case for a Jewish state in Palestine.

The historical background of the Zionist Movement is deftly drawn by the steady hand of a well-informed student of Jewish life. The urgency of Zionism for both Jew and non-Jew and its inevitability to any just solution of what has become the most desperate problem of the twentieth century -- the national homelessness of the Jewish people -- is here forcefully revealed by one who understands the kind of a world in which we live and who allows himself no illusions about the world which is likely to emerge from the fires of the second world war. The author writes without passion or pedantry and avoids all unavailing theoretic discussions about race, nation, nationality, culture or civilization which have been such ideologic dead-weights upon our movement ever since its inception. The volume is neither disputatious nor propagandistic and its appearance is most timely, for the fate of the movement will soon be determined. The forces are already converging for the final hour of decision.

Philanthropically-minded Jews still hope for havens of refuge in some parts of the world other than Palestine to absorb the mass migrations of European Jews which most informed people now expect to follow this war. They are incorrigible territorialists, and half a century of territorial questioning has not discouraged them. They are hoping for a new dispersion now that the European "Galut" has gone down in blood and fire -- perhaps a new diaspora in the Mohammedan lands of the Middle East which presumably would be more hospitable and more secure than that of the Christian lands of Europe -- perhaps a new ghetto in Madagascar or in the West Indies....This is the latest Ersatz for Palestine and for the idea of the rebirth of the Jewish nation in its historic land.



Jewish romantic sociologists who like to be known as great realists are again peddling their research and statistics and are again offering the palliatives of the economic reconstruction of Jewish life in Central and Eastern Europe based upon the Four Freedoms and the peace and tolerance which are sure to follow this war. They, too, have learned nothing from the last post-war period and from the economic reconstruction which was built upon faith in the Fourteen Points, Minority Rights and a League of Nations.

There will be no opportunities for mass emigrations of Jews anywhere in the world after this war. We wished it were otherwise, but wishes are not horses. Feeble trickles of immigration will be permitted in this or that country, but waves will be fiercely resisted. Vast disturbances are destined to continue long after the peace will be signed and in a politically and economically disturbed world, the Jewish people in Europe will be under severe pressure and bitter attack in spite of the political rights which will undoubtedly be restored to them.

There is but one answer. Such political conditions must be created as will permit two to three million Jews in a relatively short time to leave the crowded and economically tensioned centers of Central and Eastern Europe and to establish themselves in the Jewish Homeland in Palestine. A free and open Palestine is the indispensable condition not only for a peaceful solution of the Jewish problem in Europe but also for the pacification of Europe. Theodore Herzl understood it. "The Jewish State", he declared, "is essential to the world; it will therefore be created." Behind the idea of a Jewish State is the incontestable force of logic and necessity. Balfour understood it. The British Colonial Office has since forgotten it.

Another popular delusion is today spreading confusion in our ranks. Jews, among them some well-intentioned Reform Rabbis, and some not so well-intentioned, are loudly voicing their endorsement of the economic upbuilding of



Palestine and the settlement of Jews there (as if this were a great concession on their part, one which should be regarded as proof of their commendable tolerance and broad-mindedness), but there must be no political action! Certainly no talk of Jewish nationalism! These Jews somehow overlook the fact that there is in existence a political White Paper which practically spells the doom of post-war immigration of Jews into Palestine, which, in fact, abruptly terminates all immigration after 1944, and permanently reduces the Jewish population to a minority status equal to one-third of the Arab population. It should be clear that this White Paper can be altered only through political action of the most vigorous sort. These Jews also seem to ignore the fact that it was political action which finally culminated in the Balfour Declaration and in the Mandate and that it was these political achievements which made it possible for a half million Jews to settle in Palestine since the last war.

It should also be clear that if the national and historic claims of the Jewish people to Palestine are not valid and are no longer to be pressed, and only humanitarian considerations are to be invoked, then it may well be maintained, as Arab spokesmen and their British abettors have already maintained, that the little country of Palestine has already fully discharged its moral obligation in that it has already admitted far more Jewish refugees than any other country in the world, some of them incomparably larger than Palestine. It is only as we insist upon the national and historic rights of the Jewish people to its ancient homeland, a claim which is acknowledged in the internationally accredited Mandate which recognizes "the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine" that we can, in all justice, demand an uncurbed Jewish immigration into the land of the Jewish people after the war.

Abba Hillel Silver

September 14, 1942