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Press Conference, London, 1942.

Dr. Silver's Message to Britain

Zionist Review 3-13-42

42-25

STATEMENT AT PRESS CONFERENCE

RABBI Dr. ABBA HILLEL SILVER, Chairman of the American United Palestine Appeal, has come to England at the invitation of Dr. Weizmann to participate in the Keren Hayesod Campaign. Dr. Silver arrived on Monday evening and on Tuesday he addressed a Press Conference at 77 Great Russell Street. Mr. L. Bakstansky, who was in the chair, gave a brief account of the work and plans of the Keren Hayesod in this country. In the course of his statement Dr. Silver said:

We are now thinking over there not only of the ways of winning the war, but also of the ways of winning the peace after the war. There is much earnest thinking being devoted not only in Governmental circles but also among the laity in our country, towards the problems of the building of a just world order which will make the recurrence of periodic world wars less likely in the future. A just peace involves justice to all peoples, and especially to the weaker peoples and the smaller nationalities who, because of their weakness and because of their dependency, are most often exploited.

Tragic Problem of the Jews

Pre-eminent among those peoples who are looking for justice as a result of this war and the victory of the United Nations, is the Jewish people. Our problem today, and for the last decade, has been a very tragic one in the world. I need not dwell on that. But we are facing the prospect of a peace with mixed emotions. We are not clear in our minds, and we are not certain in our own hearts, that even the Allied victory—for which we all hope and pray—will give us the solution which this much-tried and sorely afflicted people has the right to hope for. We are thinking of an impoverished and war-ravaged Europe after the war. We assume, of course, that political rights and equality will be restored to the Jews of Europe in the same measure as we hope they will be restored to all peoples who have been deprived of their national rights and of their elementary human rights. But we also know from past experience that political guarantees are no immunity against economic and social pressures. The last war was fought against the same foe and the last war was won by the same people, Britain and the United States. And the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe were not only given their political rights, but in some countries they were also granted minority rights. But almost from the very beginning of the peace there set in in that part of the world an anti-Semitism more ruthless, more thorough-going and more annihilationist in character than at any time in our past history. We are fearful of a repetition of that same danger after the second World War. There will be millions of people, so we believe, who will have to emigrate from Europe, not merely Jews, but especially Jews. And we are afraid that there will be very few places to which they will be able to go. We do not believe that it will be easier for Jewish refugees to find havens of refuge after the World War than before it.

In fact, we fear that it will be more difficult, because nearly every country will be faced with problems of reconstruction, of passing from a war-time to a peace-time economy, and they will not wish to aggravate their problems by the admission of large numbers of impoverished Jewish refugees from the Continent of Europe.

Palestine the Only Solution

I suppose, and we hope, that small groups of Jewish refugees will be welcomed here, there, and in many parts of the world. But we must think not in terms of what you might call trickles of emigration, we must think in terms of mass emigration of tens of thousands, of hundreds of thousands, of our people. We can think of no place to which these people can go or which has been prepared to receive them, other than Palestine.

Palestine is capable, given the proper political setting, of absorbing one and a half million Jews, over a period of years. The country has been prepared over a period of five or six decades by Jewish labour, initiative, by the investment of Jewish capital and industry, to absorb masses of emigration. We demonstrated that a few years ago when we were able, in one year, to absorb 60,000 to 65,000 refugees. The social agencies, the health agencies, are all there. To an extent also land reserves and the preparation of land is there. If we can drain off from the congested centres of Eastern and Central Europe one million or 1½ million Jews, we shall to that extent ease the pressure on the remaining Jews in those countries and tend to the normalising of their status.

We are not thinking of the ultimate solution of the problem of anti-Semitism. That belongs to the long processes of history. We are thinking in terms of easing pressures and tensions, and of solving immediately pressing and urgent problems; and Palestine seems to be the only country which is economically available, where the Jewish people already has an internationally accredited legal status, for which we have Great Britain to thank. The Balfour Declaration was the product of great political vision and statesmanship and emanated, we believe, from the deep humanity of the fine spiritual core of the English people, and the Jewish people will forever remain grateful to this act of statesmanship, of humanity and friendship.

Difficulties will be Overcome

Unfortunately in the last twenty odd years, for one reason or another into which we need not enter at the present moment, difficulties were placed in the way of the full implementation of the letter and the spirit of the Balfour Declaration. White Papers made the work of rehabilitation, reconstruction and actual conversion of Palestine into a homeland for the Jewish people, increasingly more difficult. But we are hopeful that the same vision, the same humanity, the same friendship which the English people evidenced during the last war, will again manifest itself now in the years to come when it must become increasingly clear

to thoughtful people that, *pari passu* with the increased tragic position of European Jewry, the establishment of a National Homeland for the Jewish people in their historic home is an immediate urgency, that it is not a matter of political romanticism, or of national chauvinism.

It is today, in my humble opinion, the greatest single human problem facing mankind. What to do with a race which faces extermination at the hands first, of the most relentless and brutal foe who has ever attacked Israel and humanity, and secondly, in the face of relentless economic forces which seem to make the position of large masses of Jewry in Central and Eastern Europe increasingly more difficult, if not impossible.

The Jewish people is asking Great Britain to treat us as friends and allies, which we are. Great Britain has no more loyal friends in the world, no more loyal friends in that part of the world which has become one of the most critical points in the far-flung battles of the United Nations—in the Near East, than the Jewish people. We ask of this great people not to embarrass us in the United States by such incidents as the Struma affair, by so treating the refugees who have fled from ten thousand hells in Europe to a place which they regarded as sanctuary, by placing refugees in concentration camps in the Holy Land and keeping them there to languish for a year or more. We are asking this great people to use us in this struggle in a way which will be in keeping with the dignity of an ancient people; to permit the Jews of Palestine to fight for the common cause, under British command, but under the flag of the Jewish people in Palestine.

The Work of the Keren Hayesod

The mission which brought me here is, first and foremost, to help in the work of the Keren Hayesod, the Palestine Foundation Fund, which has been responsible for the building up of so many fine and noble institutions in Palestine, the colonies, and the agencies. Without the fruitful work of the Keren Hayesod we could not have taken care in the last few desperate years of so many refugees who have found a haven and a refuge in Palestine. I shall do all that I can in the next few weeks to help the Jews of Great Britain in this important task.

But I have also come to talk over with our friends here, with our Allies, the problem which our people is wrestling with all over the world, to share with them some of our thoughts and ask of them help and co-operation. We are all in for a long, hard war. We will all have to make great sacrifices. We are prepared to do that. The people that has suffered most not merely during the last war years, but during the last ten or twenty years, has been the Jewish people: we are prepared to make a maximum sacrifice in this war for we realise that our very existence is involved in it. But we should like to have the confident hope that when the war is over and a new world order is established with any prospect of permanence and security, the problem of the Jewish people will find a just and honourable solution. It is in the hands of Great Britain and the United States that that solution now lies.

צווייטער ארץ ישראל מלחמה אפיעל

London Times
3-13-42

אונטערנאכט פון

י. ה. הערץ, טשויף רבי. חיים ווייצמאן. איווא רעדינג סימאז מארקס
זעליג בראדעק. בערל לאקאר. בארנעט דזשאנאר.

America Speaks

דר. רבי אבא הלל סילווער
איז דעם לאנד



וועגען א קרן היסוד

Whirlwind Tour

איינער פון די גרעסטע פיהרער פון אמעריקאנער אידענטיט, דר. סילווער, האט א לעבנסגעמישט פאר יעדע אידען אין דעם לאנד. פארפאלט ניט איהם צו הערען ווען ער רעדט אין אייער שטאדט אויף זיין ווהירלווינד טור.

דר. סילווער'ס טאג-בוד

17טען מערץ סאוועהפארט 21טען מערץ האראנייט 24טען מערץ בירמינגהאם	16טען מערץ ניוקאסל 19טען מערץ מאנשעסטער 23טען מערץ שעפיעלד	15טען מערץ גלאזגו 18טען און 20טען מערץ ליווערפול 22טען מערץ ליעדז
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א גרשטע לוסטע פון בייטראגע צום צווייטען ארץ ישראל מלחמה אפיעל וועט און גיבן פארשפאנטלעכט ווערען.
75, Great Russell Street, London, W.C 1.

AMERICA SPEAKS
RABBI DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER IN ENGLAND

MEETING OF WELCOME

at the

CONWAY HALL

Red Lion Square, London, W.C.1

on
THURSDAY, MARCH 12th, 1942

at 7.30 p.m.

Addresses by

The Rt. Hon. Lord Wedgwood
and Mr. Berl Locker.

Mr. Barnett Janner will preside.

L. Bakstansky, LL.B., B.Sc.,
75 Great Russell Street,
London, W.C.1

ZIONIST FEDERATION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

BUILDING A NEW CITADEL

"Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east and will gather thee from the west. I will say to the north: 'Give up,' and to the south: 'Keep not back'; bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth."

In a literal sense this prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled in our day. Palestine is drawing to itself refugees from all parts of the earth and is giving them haven and sanctuary, healing for their broken bodies, and balm for their tortured spirits. From the hundred hells of Europe they are coming—tens of thousands of them—to the Jewish Homeland.

Palestine has absorbed more refugees than the whole of the rest of the world combined. A great love, a great sacrifice, and a great understanding has made that possible. But Palestine is more than a refuge for the bodies of men and women. It is a refuge for the Spirit, the Spirit of these driven and harassed ones, and the Spirit of our entire race. On the rim of the ravaged continent of Europe, where Jewish life has been beaten down into disaster and degradation, our people is building a new and powerful citadel for the spirit of Israel. As if in challenge, as if in defiance, as if in contempt for all the work of the Destroyer, Israel has raised on high in these years of fire and sword, of persecution and war, new banners of undefeated strength, new evidences of survival and indefeasibility.

The Yishuv in Palestine is the inspiration of Israel throughout the world. The storms of war are sweeping around it today. Dangers lurk on its very borders. But Israel in its own land is unafraid. It is resolved to defend what it has builded with its very life and it is confident of its destiny.

Jews who fail to sense the superb drama which embattled Israel in Palestine is now playing are spiritually dead. Jews who fail to help in the heroic task of national redemption are faithless to their heritage.

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver