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National Labor Committee for Palestine, convention, New York,
1944.

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THE NATIONAL LABOR COMMITTEE FOR PALESTINE

21st Annual Convention

Mass Meeting

Carnegie Hall, New York

November 25, 1944



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THE NATIONAL LABOR COMMITTEE FOR PALESTINE
21st ANNUAL CONVENTION

Mass Meeting
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Mr. Joseph Schlossberg, national chairman of the committee presided.

(Welcoming address by Isaac Hamlin)

(Address by Mr. Joseph Schlossberg)

(Yiskor read by David Pinsky)

MR. JOSEPH SCHLOSSBERG: We are fortunate to have with us tonight a distinguished representative from Palestine, only recently arrived in this country. He is the legal advisor to the Jewish Agency. He speaks with authority on the Palestine situation. He knows Palestine and he knows the Histadrut of which he is a member. It is a real pleasure to me to welcome to this convention and present to you Dr. Bernard Joseph.

DR. BERNARD JOSEPH: It gives me great pleasure to bring the greetings of the Yishuv in Palestine to this Palestine Labor Conference. We are meeting in stirring times. The allied armies are on the eve of final victory. They have pierced the German frontiers to the east and on the west. Their armies are giving combat in what may, let us hope, be the final death blow to Nazism in the world.

In these victorious armies Jewish soldiers fight side by side with their comrades in arms. They are fighting for the liberty of man; they are fighting to put an end

to discrimination between peoples. One people fighting with them is still itself being discriminated against, our people, the Jewish people. For us the struggle will not be over until that discrimination is ended. For the allies, as well as for us, the struggle will have been in vain if the peace which follows it does not bring in its wake the end of this discrimination against our people.

This discrimination has taken two forms: acts of omission and acts of commission. The outstanding manifestation of the former is the consistent refusal or failure of the allied powers, after five long years of war against discrimination, to recognize our status as a people and to recognize us as allies in this struggle against the common enemy. The acts of commission have found expression in the British White Paper policy which, alas, is only too well known to all of you.

We have suffered much, much injustice and much material harm, as a result of this White Paper policy applied in Palestine. The first and most calamitous result of this iniquitous policy is that tens of thousands of Jews are dead today in Europe who might otherwise have been in Palestine. I cannot forget that on the eve of the war, and soon after the war began, while there was yet time and while Germany had not yet spread its tentacles over the whole of Europe, my colleagues and I in Jerusalem

pleaded with our administration that they enable us to bring some tens of thousands of Jews from the Balkan countries to Palestine. We said to them: You have entered into a war which may develop into a great world-wide struggle. You will need the sinews of war, you will need munitions, you will need supplies. We have established a base for you in Palestine. There are tens of thousands of skilled workers in the Balkan countries. They will gladly come to Palestine. Give us the certificates with which to bring them. A war has broken out. Forget your White Paper policy. But they would not budge and those Jews remained to be massacred later by the Germans, men who could have been helping in the war effort. Here you have this terrible conflict between the White Paper and the very war requirements of the allies themselves. Here you have the best illustration of how the White Paper has harmed not only the Jews, but the cause for which the allied nations were fighting.

A second result of the White Paper has been that in everything that we have attempted to do to rebuild our land in Palestine, we have run up against this White Paper which was like a constant brake on every attempt to make progress. In every walk of life it was there to hamper us and to hinder us. When we wanted to buy land, the White Paper prevented us. In our own

country, in that respect, we were a second-rate citizen. Nowhere else in the British Empire except in Palestine, where they had promised to help us establish our Jewish National Home, is the Jew not on equal terms with the other residents in the matter of his right to purchase land.

And now, in our own day, we have seen a further result of the White Paper, the terrorism in Palestine. I do not wish to dwell on this subject. It has been spoken of to great length already in this country. Although I would make it clear that I am as vigorous as any of my colleagues in Palestine in the utter and unequivocal condemnation of this terrible thing, which is immoral and wrong from every point of view and harmful to our cause, but let it not be forgotten that these misguided youths, who have gone this evil way, have been driven to take that course by this White Paper policy.

You may, I know, rightfully ask yourself if we have been subjected to this iniquitous policy now for five and a half years, on what can we base our hopes for the future. Can we really look forward hopefully to a just solution of our problem? This question requires an answer. I ask you to throw your minds back to the days in which the Balfour Declaration was issued. Those of you who knew the position in British circles at that time

will remember that the general tendency was anti-Zionist. In the British cabinet sat a Jew, Montague, who was a violent anti-Zionist and who opposed the granting of the Balfour Declaration. The British war office, unlike the British war office today, was definitely against us, unsympathetic. We had very few friends and nevertheless, this Declaration was accorded us. It was because at the helm of political affairs stood men of vision, men who looked to the future, men who realized that here was a world problem which had to be solved, men who considered that this problem might even become more acute in the future if it were not solved - Lloyd George, Balfour, President Wilson, General Smuts. All these men brushed aside the opposition to us and decided that it was right and just and advisable in the world interest, as well as in the Jewish interest, that this Declaration be given us.

Today the men who stand at the helm are of the same big calibre. They are also great statesmen, men of vision - Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin and Smuts. These men, I am sure, will appreciate no less than did their predecessors the urgent need and the right of our people to claim a definitive solution of our problem and they will brush aside this White Paper and any opposition that there may be.

There are other reasons, though, why we may hope that this course will be pursued, that there will be a pro-Zionist decision when the day of reckoning comes. We must remember that if in those days, twenty-six years ago, they feared that the Jewish problem might become more acute, today there is no longer need for them to fear. They know, as a fact, that the problem has become as acute as ever it could and they know it must be solved. If then they were entitled to have doubts and misgivings (a) as to whether the Jewish people would want to go to Palestine and (b) whether, if they went to Palestine, they would be able to make a success of the venture or what one would call the adventure, today those two doubts are removed. They see 600,000 Jews in Palestine. They see the Jewish people knocking at the gates, clamoring for the right to go there in hundreds of thousands. They see a community which has proven its worth, its ability to create and to turn the desert into a Garden of Eden. These two doubts have now been brushed aside by our effort and by the circumstances which prevail today.

There is still a more important reason why I think they should decide in our favor. We have heard a great deal of the need to arrange the world's affairs in an ordered and organized manner when the war comes

to an end. We have constantly been told these last few years that the world's affairs must be regulated so that peace may prevail, so that world trade may be available to all nations, so that the world's national resources and the world's communications may be open to all peoples. For weeks now we have had an air conference in Chicago dealing with one of these particular subjects, a conference which, by the way, was another illustration of the discrimination against our people. You had amongst the fifty odd nations represented there the State of Luxembourg. I have no desire to be disrespectful to the State of Luxembourg, but I imagine if you laid down a large runway which would be used by one of the large bombing planes or one of the large civilian planes that will have to be used after this war, the runway would probably stick out over the frontier. Still, Luxembourg was represented at this conference, but the Jewish people was refused the right to participate because we have not a Jewish state.

So I say, if they are to organize this world order to insure world peace, what are the vital interests of the nations who will wish to insure this in the middle east region? You have firstly the Suez Canal. You all know that this is a life artery to world trade between Europe and the east. That Canal

is today protected and has been protected for years by British troops. Under the treaty between Great Britain and Egypt, British troops will have to be withdrawn to the other side of the Canal when the war is over, that is to say, they will have to be in the Sinai Peninsula Desert. How can you maintain an army in the Sinai Peninsula to defend that Canal without a base in a hinterland? The only hinterland available is Palestine. Secondly, what will happen when some thirty years hence the concession for exploiting that Canal expires? The sole right to control it will fall back into the hands of the Egyptians. We know how unfriendly the people of Egypt are to foreigners. Foreigners are not liked. We do not know what will happen then, whether it will be possible for the nations of the world to use the Canal at that period. Where is there an alternative route through which a new Canal could be laid down? Only through Palestine to Akaba on the Red Sea.

Air bases to connect the air routes of Europe with India and the Far East, they must be situated in the vicinity of Palestine. I submit that they be situated in Palestine. Where is there a port in the eastern Mediterranean which could be used by allied fleets to maintain their right in that part of the world other than at Haifa, if Alexandria

should be ruled out? Fifthly, we must remember that the oil pipe line from Iraq and the oil refineries are situated in Haifa. There are five vital, strategic needs of the allied nations bound up with Palestine and I ask you, on whom will the allied powers depend to secure them these five vital, strategic needs? On the Mufti of Jerusalem who is today still in Berlin helping the Germans against the allies? On Rashid Galani who led the rebellions in Iraq so that British troops had to be sent in to quell the riot in the middle of the war? On Syria which was ridden with Nazi agents so that British troops had to be sent in to drive them out, together with the Vichyites? Those troops were guided and led by Jewish young men from Palestine who acted as their scouts and one of them, the son of one of our chalutzim, was blinded in one eye during that performance of his duties.

In El Alamein, when perhaps the fate of the British army hung in the balance for a time, who led the British troops in those days? The Germans were on Egyptian soil; the fighting was taking place 70 miles from Alexandria. Egypt was almost overrun. Not an Egyptian soldier took part in that campaign, but there were thousands of Jewish young men from Palestine and there would have been more had they only let us.

Therefore, I say when these statesmen stop to contemplate the future of the middle east and look to their own needs and to the needs of the world, I think they are inevitably driven to the conclusion that there must be a strong Jewish Palestine, not only in the Jewish interest but in the world interest and I think they realize today that had there been 2,000,000 Jews in Palestine instead of barely over 500,000 at the time of El Alamein, there might have been no El Alamein and the war today in Europe might possibly already be over.

I know there are some who will say, how can you speak so optimistically, how can you look to the future in this way, how, when you see how they have consistently refused for five and a half years to hearken unto our complaints, to hear our voice. I say let us learn from the example of others. Remember how the Free French have struggled now for several years, coming cap in hand, waiting at doors to be admitted, begging to be heard, saying that France will once again arise from its ruins and will once again be a great nation. No one answered them and no one heard them. But General De Gaulle and his friends around him persevered and refused to give up their struggle because they knew that their demand was just until now at last they are being readmitted in the

counsels of the great nations. France will live again.

I say let us also be patient. Let us also persevere and we also will achieve our results. But I would not have you believe that we may rely solely on the logic of our case. I know full well that people do not always do or usually do what is right or what they should do, particularly in political life. There must be some motive or some driving force. The motive is the logic of our case and it may serve our purpose. To make assurance doubly sure, we must be the driving force. We must continue our persistent demand that the White Paper be abolished and that the policy of the nations toward us be reversed completely. If we do, we may achieve our results.

Now, what is our greatest need? If we look to the record of achievement of the Yishuv, we will see that the greatest thing the Yishuv has done was to give the possibility of a home to many tens of thousands of Jews fleeing from Nazi Germany, those Jews whom people call refugees, but who we in Palestine call Jewish immigrants returning to their homeland, returning residents. The Yishuv in Palestine was fortunately able to render a very major service to our people during this war.

When the news first came out of Nazi Europe that the Nazis had begun to massacre Jews in thousands

and tens of thousands and more - the numbers we heard were so terrifying - the Jewish world was numbed. There was a period of inaction, not because Jews in this country or any other country were unwilling to help or would not have done everything in their power to help, but they were overcome by the immensity of the tragedy, by the brutality of the effect of the things that were being done. I say it is to the everlasting credit of that little Jewish community in Palestine that it was the first to come back to life and to realize that here was a situation which called for action and not for words.

We saw that Europe was surrounded by a great Chinese wall. There was no way of getting into Nazi Europe and it looked as if things were helpless. We knew, though, that a way had to be found and so the Jewish Agency established an office in Istanbul. We didn't know whether anything could be done or what could be done from there, but we knew that there might be telephonic communication between Istanbul and Roumania or Bulgaria. We knew that somehow we had to cause a breach in that wall and get in to help our brethren in Europe. We picked our best young men - and in this this Histadrut may well be proud because it played a major part - we picked our bravest men and women and sent them to find a way to breach that wall. And they found a way.

These young men and women did not have to guard against rules and regulations. Others whom we turned to, powerful, wealthy, financial bodies, drew our attention to regulations laid down by various allied governments which made it impossible to do anything, but we knew that these governments paid no attention to those regulations when it was a matter of saving their own soldiers, prisoners of war who managed to escape from prisoners of war camps in these countries. We said, what you may do, we may do. There is a greater law, a moral law, more important in our eyes than the regulations you lay down and we will break regulations and we will do everything in our power to go and save our Jewish brethren and sisters in Europe. So they went forward and blazed the trail. By underground means and by underworld means and by being dropped by parachutes from planes, they found their way to help those Jews and 17,000 Jews, men, women and children, were brought out of the very clutches of the Nazi hyenas to Palestine in this way.

We did not content ourselves with the human sacrifice which we made, because some of our boys did not come back and will never come back. We knew that you could do nothing without money. Those that we saved we paid for dearly in gold, but the dearly was cheaply in our eyes. No amount of money that was asked did we

refuse to give. The Jewish Agency may take credit in the fact that not a single Jew who could have been saved wasn't saved because of lack of money, even though it wasn't our specific task. We paid no attention to rules and regulations. We said to these boys and girls in Istanbul, as much money you need, for whatever purpose you need and whatever way you use the money to save Jews from Europe, we will pay the bill and afterwards try to collect from the world.

When the work began, the Yishuv in Palestine established a fund to raise money for relief and rescue work for our Jewish brethren and to look after the families of our soldiers who were not receiving a living family allowance from the British authorities. In the twenty-three months ending with June of this year, which are the last figures I happen to have, the Yishuv in Palestine raised, collected in cash, some 1,340,000 pounds or some \$5,500,000. This money given by the small community of less than 600,000 Jews, was not given by what you in this country call big givers. In Palestine we don't follow that policy of looking for the big givers. We believe in people's movements. We think the people are the ones that give big and what we have done has proved that. There are a handful of Jews in Palestine who have made some money in this war, but most of the money collected came from the

workers of Palestine. They said that as long as money is needed for Jews to be saved from Europe, neither I nor the members of my family will see a cinema or any entertainment; not a farthing, not a penny will we spend to take care of our pleasures; all our money that we can spare will go to the fund. It was in that way that we collected our money. Here, too, the Histadrut played a primary part. It arranged, it decided, it imposed upon its various unions that workers in Palestine have deducted from their salaries regular four per cent from their salary to go to the fund, not nominally but actually. I think that is a record with which no Jewish community in the world can compare.

The problem of the Jews of Europe remains the problem of bringing them to Palestine. Let us not forget, my friends - we who have been working for Palestine all these years, at least - let us not forget that the problems of the Jews of Europe did not begin with Hitler and it will not end with Hitler. It existed long before. It was the problem of the homelessness of our people. Let us not be a party to any attempt to delude the Jews of the world into thinking that once Nazism is destroyed, they can live peacefully in Europe. They are entitled to live peacefully in Europe. But we say to them, lussas aderex, learn from the past. If you want to be secure, live

among your own people in Palestine.

Our main problem is the orphaned children of Europe. You may know that at one time it was thought that few Jewish children remained alive in Europe. It was thought that the Germans followed the practice of exterminating the idle mouths who couldn't work, of killing off first the women, children and old men. That was their policy, with one exception. For some reason unknown to us, it appears now, from people who have come out of Europe more recently, that they laid down a rule that orphaned children, without parents, should not be sent to the extermination camps in Poland. When Jewish mothers learned of this, thousands of Jewish mothers committed suicide so that their children might remain alive. There are now tens of thousands of Jewish orphaned children in Europe whom we wish to bring to Palestine, where they will be brought up as Jews, in a Jewish land, cared for lovingly by people who will bring them up as their own children. This is the major task which confronts us in our days. For this task we must demand of the allied nations not to allow any White Paper or any other regulation to stand in the way of bringing these children to Palestine. The gates of Palestine must be opened.

I think it is very sad when we are told, as I learned this week, that the authorities say there are

no ships to spare to bring these children, to bring people from Europe to Palestine. They are needed in the war effort. Last year ships were provided to carry 20,000 pilgrims going to the Mecca from the Lebanon and Syria. Was that needed for the war effort? There were ships to carry these 20,000 pilgrims; there are no ships for Jewish children. Forty thousand Yugoslav refugees, non-Jews, were taken from Europe to Egypt. No ships for Jewish children. Why? I say we must demand that on this matter, at least, there should be no discrimination against our children. We are no worse than the Yugoslavs.

In order that we may have this mass transmigration of Jews from Europe to Palestine, in order that we may be able to absorb them, in order that we may be able to develop the country so that they have work by which to live, we must have governmental authority in our hands. We see how, with the administration in Palestine, we have been thwarted year after year and I wish to be as fair as possible to the administration. I do not come here and in this moment with any complaints. I do not say they were incompetent. I do not say that they were unwilling, although we might well say it and I could say it and prove it, if need be. What I say is that the country is administered by the ordinary

colonial British official. He has a job to do and he does it. But to him it is only a job. To us Jews the development of Palestine is a matter of life and death for our people.

The British official may well go along at the tempo which prevailed in the country thirty years ago, the tempo of the camel. We Jews cannot wait. He may say we are too excitable and too nervous. Perhaps we are, but there is a good reason for it. It is our brothers and sisters who are suffering by every day's delay. So I say, if this tremendous problem is to be handled, handled properly, handled expeditiously and successfully, it can only be done by Jews exercising a governmental authority. That reason above every other reason is why we must insist on Palestine being reconstituted again a Jewish Commonwealth.

My friends, I should like to make it clear beyond any doubt, when we say Palestine, we mean Palestine. I think it is a matter for much gratification that your great president in this country saw fit some weeks ago to make a momentous and historic declaration favoring the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth. I will permit myself to say that great as will be the place which he has earned for himself in the history of his own people, if, as

we have every reason to hope and to expect, that pledge which he has solemnly given the Jewish people materializes, his name will go down immemorially in the history of a people much older than the history of his people. I am bold enough to say that it is not naivete on my part when I feel confident that President Roosevelt will give effect to the promise which he made even though it may have been made some weeks before an election.

I know that there are people who will say and do say, how could we be sure that the Jews are already mature? Shouldn't we wait a little longer? How can we be sure that they will be able to govern themselves? Well, I could say to you very simply, look at what has happened in Palestine where, although we are only a third of the population, we are the people of the country. Ninety-five per cent of the country is Jewish industry; practically all the cultural life of the country, the educational efforts in the country is Jewish; the agricultural development is Jewish. The authorities know full well that those 600,000 Jews in Palestine are governed not by the Palestine administration, but by the Jewish administration of Jewish public bodies in Palestine today.

But I cannot bring everyone to Palestine to

see for himself what we have done, how we have proved our ability to govern ourselves. I turn to history to bear testimony to our abilities, to our capabilities and I ask why should it be suggested that the Jews are not able to govern themselves. Look down the long array of great statesmen that Jews have given to all the countries of the world. One of the Great Prime Ministers of Great Britain, Disraeli, was a Jew; one of their great Viceroy's of India, Reading, was a Jew; the first commander to be a Governor General of Australia, Sir Isaac Isaacs, was a Jew; in their cabinet they have had Home Secretaries and Ministers of Health and Attorney Generals and War Ministers, More Bellah, the last of them, Ministers for India, all Jews. We have had a man who governed Palestine for them, Sir Herbert Samuel. His ability didn't come from the fact that they sent him; he had that innate ability in him and he was a Jew. Why couldn't he be the head of a Jewish state in Palestine as well as High Commissioner for Palestine.

I need not tell you the names of the illustrious Jews who played leading roles in the public life of this country and numerous other countries. I say that all that we Jews have done during the hundreds of years of our recent dispersion

has proved that we have great statesmen in our midst who will know how to govern little Palestine as well as other Jews were able to govern vast continents like India and Australia and the whole British Empire. That attitude which doubts our ability to govern is simply galuth psychology which should not be heeded.

It is not only that the urgent needs of the Jewish people in Palestine today prompts us to ask for a Jewish state, it is our historic right. It is the right of our people to return to its homeland. It is the right of a land to ask back its people. Why should that land be left desolate, neglected and undeveloped as it would be if Jews were not there? Why should parts of that land where Jews have not penetrated be left as it was a thousand years ago? Why should Jews not be given the right to revive that land, to rejuvenate it. The land cries out for its people and the people cry out for their land. I say that on every basis, moral justice demands that Palestine be given back to the Jewish people.

If there be some of you who hesitate to look with sober optimism to the future, who are constantly aware of the Jewish saying, al tivie, put not your faith in princes, I would say to you that we do not put our faith in princes as an ultimate resort; but when there

princes who appear to be willing to help us, we will take that help. I want you to know that there is a second defense line stronger by far than the first and that defense line is the youth of Palestine, that group of young men in Palestine who have unbounded faith in the future of their people, that group of young men and women in Palestine who know the expression twice harmed is he who hath his quarrel just. It is their deep conviction that our quarrel is just, that our claim is just and they have faith, the faith which they have sucked into them from that land and from our Bible, the faith in the future of our people. With your help that group of young men will stand on guard and will fight for the future of our people.

I have the deep conviction, relying upon them, a conviction which is shared by all my colleagues in Eretz Israel, that in our day we will see again the people of Israel a free people in a free land, the land of Israel.

MR. SCHLOSSBERG: For the first time we are privileged to welcome to our convention the man who has won the admiration of all to whom Eretz Israel is dear. He is not only a great champion of the Jewish cause, but he pleads it with an eloquence that carries conviction and inspiration. We have heard him often

at other Jewish meetings. I hope we will also hear him more often at our meetings. It is my pleasure to introduce to you Dr. Abba Hillel Silver.

DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER: My friends, it is a great joy for me to be with you this evening and I would echo the sentiment of your kind chairman in stressing the hope that I may have the privilege of being with you very often in the future.

We are met on the eve of victory, victory for the United Nations, victory, I hope, also for the Jewish people. The Nazi beast is today being tracked to its lair. They who set out to conquer the world are themselves being conquered and beaten into defeat and into utter rout. They are being beaten physically; they are being beaten spiritually. I read in the last few days where the Nazis have begun to claim that they are not a superior race, where they have begun to deny that they ever made such claims, in spite of all that vast, shameless, arrogant literature of national and racial chauvinism of theirs which dates from the days of Vishnu, for that matter, to the last days of ours. They are aware that they are being beaten so decisively and will soon be thrown upon the mercy of the world that, if my eyes do not deceive me and the reports in the newspapers are true, they have issued orders to the Germans to remove all anti-Jewish signs

and placards in their cities, just as they have attempted during the past year or two to obliterate the evidences of the hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children whom they put to death, obliterate the evidences of the charred bones and the broken skeletons of human beings whose sole crime was that they were Jews. This superior race which sought triumph by the sword is being beaten by the sword. This race which sought to set up in the twentieth century a blood cult is being drowned today in its own blood.

Soon there shall be closed the latest episode or chapter in that eternal struggle which, unfortunately, rages so often in the world, between what one might call the Esau complex and the Jacob complex; between the pure adam and the ish tam; between the wild man, the hairy man, the man of the jungle, the man who lives by the sword, whose hand is against everyone and everyone's hand is against him; and the ish tam, the yoshev cholim, the peaceful man, the man who seeks perfection for himself and for all others and the quiet tense of work and study. This is an irreconcilable struggle of two opposing ways of life, of two opposing types of culture: the one which in our day is represented by the Fascist-Nazi horde which seeks to establish the ir ha-damim, the city of blood, a civilization built by blood upon a

cult of blood, by conquest upon the tears and sufferings of other people; and the ir ha-tsedik, that civilization and that culture which aims to establish a free and noble society, a city of justice and righteousness built through the cooperation and the good-will of all men working together in peace and concord and fellowship and pity and compassion and helpfulness.

I think that it is true to say that every people somehow comes to reflect its essential life interest in its concept of the other world, of the hereafter. Thus, for example, the Indian in this country thought of the hereafter in terms of the Happy Hunting Ground and saw himself chasing the bison and the buffalo in a blissful future in the hereafter. The German, who represents in the modern world what I call the Esau complex, conceived of his hereafter in terms of Valhalla, a world in which there is war and strife and much carousing and the wildfire cries of the Valkyrie. The Jewish people, who represent in the world the Jacob complex, conceived of the hereafter in what terms? In terms of tsedikim yeshvim ve-atorothaim bereshaim - the righteous people spending their time in the joyous contemplation of divinity.

I maintain that in these concepts you have a reflection of the basic life interest of these two

cultures: one viewing the world as the hunter views the hunted, in terms of war and conquest; and the other viewing the world as a great human adventure, in the undiscovered countenance of truth seeking more knowledge and through more knowledge the greater truth, greater freedom and greater happiness for all men. Well, in this war, my good friends, which is now, we hope, speedily coming to a close, as in the past it is the Jacob motive which is coming out triumphant. That old philosophy is coming true again as it always comes true - (in Hebrew) - the primitive, the primordial, the jungle is mastered and subjugated by the progress of the young, by that which looks to the future.

This war will be a victory for the prophetic idealism of the Jewish people, of that I am sure. But that does not mean, my good friends, that the conclusion of this war, that the victory of the United Nations will automatically spell a victory for the Jewish people. Very often, as you know, it is the fate of the prophet to bring great liberating ideals to mankind but he himself suffers because of his missions. You may recall that phrase of Isaiah, the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we were healed. The world obtains peace and healing through the work, the sacrifice of the prophet, but the prophet receives

the chastisement and the stripes.

Our people, my good friends, are likely to emerge from this war the most ravaged of all the peoples on earth, the most devastated. Our casualties have already mounted in the millions. Literally thousands of Jewish communities in the old world have been destroyed. Old centers of Jewish life where the Jewish spirit thrived and glowed for centuries, centers of Jewish culture, schools, academies, Yeshivas, have all been obliterated. The roads of the world, the broken highways of the world, are clogged with Jewish refugees. That which has fallen is far more than that which remains standing.

The Jewish people in Europe - as far as Jewish people have survived in Europe - represent a floating population of human misery. They, unfortunately, will have very few homes to return to after this war. There will be no official obstacles put in their way to return, of that I am sure, because the political climate of the world will not permit it. Quite the contrary; it will favor it. Nevertheless, many of the positions which Jews occupied before the war have now come to be occupied by others, not necessarily by the invaders, but by the native population. There will be resistance to the reoccupation of these positions

which the Jews formerly held in business, in the professions, in arts and crafts and artisanship. I am afraid that in many instances the Jews will have nothing to return to in eastern Europe but desecrated cemeteries and graveyards. They will return to a world to be sure liberated from the Nazi yoke, but, nevertheless, a world full of tensions, full of internal disorganization, worthless currency, political parties struggling for mastery, perhaps more people than there are jobs, more mouths to feed than there will be food for them. Each country will have its problems of demobilization and reconstruction.

In such a world of stress and tension and misery, the position of any minority is bad. The position of a Jewish minority might be extremely bad. If we are realists about the situation - and we should be without being pessimists because a realist is not necessarily a pessimist - world Jewry faces after the war a physical and spiritual crises of appalling proportions. Therefore, I say, that as a people we may come out of this war the most ravaged, the least compensated, the least rewarded for our multitudinous sacrifices and the fighting of a million and a half Jews on all the battle fronts in the world, perhaps the most betrayed of all the smaller peoples of the world.

Against that we must be on guard today.

Why is that so? Why am I afraid of that condition? Because the world is still not thinking as clearly as it should about solving our national problem along politic lines. It is still thinking and hoping to solve the problem of individual Jews along philanthropic lines and that is no solution at all. The world, and a great many Jews, do not yet face the fact frankly that at the root of the persistent refugee problem of the Jew through the ages and the root of the tragic status of the Jew in the world, is the fact of galuth, national homelessness. The solution for national homelessness is not the finding of refugee asylum or plans of UNRRA or providing food, clothing and medicine for this or that group of suffering human beings. The solution for national homelessness is the creation of a national home for the people.

This fact of galuth creates for our people a refugee problem sooner or later. That is the law of our history in every land regardless. Now, there are certain well intentioned non-Jews and Jews (or perhaps not so well intentioned Jews, because Jews should know better), who beguile themselves with the fact that Jewish persecution will end with the advance of civilization, that persecution belongs only to

the dark ages. Well, logically it would seem so, wouldn't it? As soon as people are enlightened and civilized, as soon as you have democratic government, anti-Semitism should logically disperse. But like so many facts in our history, they have nothing to do with logic. They have more to do with psychology and history than they have to do with logic. The great moving and controlling forces of life are not always the logical forces.

It is a fundamental error to assume that Jewish persecution belongs only to the dark ages. You take the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, for example, in 1492. People have come to believe that that was a dark age, but that wasn't a dark age at all. At the time that the Jews were expelled from Spain, it was the height of the Renaissance in Europe, the re-awakening, the spread of humanism. It was a glorious and exciting period in human history, when science and art and scholarship and the exploration of discovery was in full swing. It was a great new birth for the world. At that greatest hour, the richest, the oldest, the strongest Jewish community in Europe, that of Spain and Portugal, was uprooted as brutally as the German Jewish community in our day and cast out.

No, persecution doesn't belong to the dark

ages. It remained for the twentieth century, the most advanced century and for Germany - I don't know whether you can call it civilized, but scientifically, certainly, the most advanced country in Europe - to launch the cruelest, the most gruesome, the most catastrophic era of persecution that our checkered history of 2000 years has ever known. Being realists you ought to keep that fact in mind because it will help our thinking for the future.

There is another delusion to which well intentioned non-Jews and Jews frequently fall victim, namely, that our problem is just another minority problem and as soon as political progress will catch up with mankind, then the minority problems will be automatically solved and so will the Jewish minority problem. That too is false. Our minority problem is not at all like that of other minorities. It is a unique minority problem. Most every minority has a homeland to which it can point, usually across the border, a homeland which sometimes comes to its defense, which champions for it, which speaks up for it when the occasion permits. The Jewish minority is a minority everywhere in the world and nowhere a homeland. It is a unique, a tragically unique situation. Therefore, minority hostility has a

selective killing effect upon the Jewish minority, just as some substances which leave normal tissue cells unharmed but are deadly to a specific abnormal cell.

I say all this to drive home the point that ought to become crystal clear to those statesmen who earnestly are striving to help the Jewish people solve its problem in the world. The root of our tragedy is the lack of national status and if one wants really constructively to help us, he must help us in that area, namely, the creation of national status for our people in the world. That does not mean, of course, that the Jews are turning their backs upon the rest of the world, that the Jews everywhere are thinking in terms of immigration or that Zionists are not interested in establishing the rights of the individual human being wherever he lives. Quite the contrary. We Jews and we Zionists maintain that one of the prerequisites of the common peace, of the peace which is to be, should be a universal bill of rights which will give to every human being his inalienable right to life, to earn a living wherever he lives, regardless.

The time has come for society to reestablish the individual human being in his legitimate domain and to make that domain inviolate. This last crazy, mad, shameless decade or two or ours through which we have

passed, has simply destroyed in most parts of the world all those constitutional guarantees, all those bill of rights, all those charters of human liberties for which men have struggled and fought through all these long and bitter centuries. As a result, never was the stature of the individual so low as it is today, never did man feel himself so insecure, so covered and overwhelmed by the state or by the menace of the tyrannical majority as mankind finds itself in the world today.

One of the most remarkable sentences which the founding fathers of this great blessed Republic of ours wrote into that revolutionary document called the Declaration of Independence is the very sentence around which the blood of millions of men are being shed today:—"We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal," -- and this is the sentence -- "... that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights ..." Every human being is endowed by his God, not by the state or by a parliament or by a Fuehrer or by a majority, but he is endowed at birth by his Creator with certain rights which because they were granted to him by his God are his inalienably. No parliament, no state, no class, no dictatorship has the right to deprive him of those

rights. And these rights are not insignificant ones. The Declaration proceeds to define them, "... the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness ..." - great monumental human rights which give dignity and stature and security to every human being because he is a child of God. This age of ours, these last twenty odd years, have simply taken these tremendous constitutional guarantees which protected man against the encroachment of state and majorities and tore them into shreds, made scraps of paper out of them. The coming peace has to restore those rights to every human being regardless of race, creed and color and regardless of where he lives.

But being an old people and having had long experience in the world, we ought not to raise our hopes too high. We ought not to do what Hordau warned us not to do, become too heedlessly logical about this thing called emancipation. Constitutional equality does not yet mean real equality. Political equality is not yet brotherhood. A country may be formally democratic and its people may be bitterly anti-Semitic. We had that in pre-war Poland. We had that in Weimar Germany. Strangely enough, that ought to give us pause, we who are thinking of the future, that a century and a half of Jewish emancipation since the days of the French

Revolution in Europe has not decreased, but, unfortunately, increased the virulence, the spread and the tempo of anti-Semitism all over Europe.

Jewish emancipation was largely a by-product of new political theories concerning the rights of man which the French Revolution popularized. The Jews, naturally, had to be included within that scope, but that does not mean that the peoples of Europe actually sanctioned or approved of that fundamental equality or that all differences were obliterated because of these formal grants of citizenship. We remained in Europe, whether we liked it or not, whether we wanted it or not, a distinctive people without a national home and that fact was ever present. It was like the ghost at the feast. We could never escape it. Some of the enlightened, emancipated Jews of Berlin, Paris and Rome thought they would escape it, but it returned over and over again to plague them and to plague our people.

Another point which I am endeavoring to make, good friends, is that if the statesmen of the world in whose hands are today the destinies of reshaping the world for generations to come -- and there are not many of these; you can name them perhaps on the fingers of your one hand -- if the great and responsible leaders of mankind today actually want to give a historic and

lasting solution to this problem which has plagued not only our people, but plagued the world for centuries, if they want to give the radical and constructive solution, they must help us rebuild the Jewish national home in Palestine as it was originally conceived.

The world had a vision of this constructive solution twenty-five years ago and that vision was embodied in the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate. The Balfour Declaration was a political answer, a political solution to the Jewish problem. It recognized the existence of a Jewish people. It recognized the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine. It resolved that the Jewish national home be rebuilt and it instructed a mandatory power which voluntarily assumed the responsibility to facilitate Jewish immigration into the country in order to help the Jewish people reconstruct Palestine as their national home. That was the program. That was the vision, valid then, valid today. The fact that in the interim this great ideal, like so many other noble ideas of mankind, has been torn upon the wheel, the fact that mankind lost its vision during these terrible years and its perspective and its power of the spirit and become mean, small and petty, the fact that this Declaration and Mandate

were whittled down and twisted and torn out of all proportion so that it has emerged the political and immoral thing which it is today, does not mean that the basic idea was unsound or that the attempt should not be made now, at this time, to complete what was begun so hopefully and so nobly a quarter of a century ago.

This is not the time, good friends, to review our grievances against Great Britain. There is nothing to be gained by it, really. We have many such grievances, of course. Had the colonial office and the mandatory administrator lived up to the letter and spirit of their obligations and commitments, we would today have a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, no doubt about it. These things did not take place. Instead, there was whittling down, restrictions, obstacles, interferences and the closing ever tighter of the doors of hope and of refuge at the time when the doors should have been opened ever wider because of the growing Jewish tragedy of the last fifty years. The result is that there have been created in Palestine, tensions, tensions and stresses which tragically and unfortunately break out here and there in acts of terrorism which every Jew condemns but for which the Jewish people cannot

assume any responsibility. (In Hebrew) The surest way to relieve tension and end terrorism in Palestine is to return in a full generosity of the spirit to the implementation of the letter and the spirit of the Balfour Declaration and Mandate.

What is it we ask for of the world today? What is it your friends in Palestine ask for today? What is it that the tens of thousands of members of the Histadrut ask for? Favors? Not at all. They ask for the removal of the stumbling blocks from before their way. They ask that they be permitted to move forward to their national salvation without let and without hindrance. They will do the building. Just don't interfere with them, that's all. They know how to build. They will demonstrate to you. Hope and despair hath taught our people how to build. They know what it takes to build a country and they are ready to pay the price with their own blood, their own sweat and their own tears, not the blood, sweat and tears of other people. They have the will to build. They have the vision of a new kind of building, perhaps a vision which was bequeathed unto them by their forefathers who knew how to rebuild the waste places of the world.

They have a vision which has become part of

the classic tradition of our people - letaken clam bemalkhut shaddai - to perfect the world according to the pattern of divinity itself. They want to build a free and a noble society, a society built not upon exploitation but upon cooperation, not upon expropriation but upon the voluntary sharing of men, of their skills and their abilities and their substances. They want to build, not for the wealth of the few, but for the common wealth of all. They want to build not through regimentation and iron dictatorship, but through national self-discipline and the sublimation of man by his own spirit to higher levels of thought and conduct. They want to build on that blessed land, stored with Jewish heroism and Jewish aspiration, a kind of society which will have something of what that mystic Ramban said. When Jacob sent his children to Egypt, he said to them: Kol hohamin mi-gizral ha-aretz - take from the yield of the soil of Palestine with you. So this fine mystic, who understood so profoundly the birth of the people and the spirit of the land, said: (In Hebrew) Take with you the song of Eretz Israel. Those who are building in Palestine today are thinking of bringing song into life and song into labor and the lyric quality of living beauty and orderliness, not the grasping and

clawing and the tearing and the accumulating, but the sharing together in joyous fellowship of all that men can produce in the world.

So I say to you, good friends, I pray that the statesmen of the world will give these builders, who are building in such faithfulness of spirit and such high devotion, their opportunity to build well their new civilization in the ancient land.

I close on this word. There are trying days ahead for our cause. Our battle days are not over. Let us never lose our courage. The Rabbis say that out of the wilderness, out of the midbar, where the Jews spent forty years in wandering, where a whole generation perished, out of the wilderness came the Torah, the mishkan, the tabernacle, out of the wilderness came manna, out of the wilderness came the mishkan, and out of the wilderness came many a good thing. A wilderness may sometimes be productive of great and good things. Our generation is passing through a terrible wilderness in which a whole generation has perished. We hope, and being men of faith, we are confident that out of this terrible wilderness, too, will come great and good things for our people.

(In Hebrew) - Rebuild Jerusalem to which hundreds of thousands of our people, our sons and

daughters, will stream from all the ends of the world. Out of this wilderness will come the third and final redemption to the third and final exile. Out of this wilderness will come a reborn home in a free and democratic Israel. The future is ours.

(Musical Interlude)

(Meeting adjourned at 11:30 P.M.)

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