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House Foreign Affairs Committee, 1944.

STATEMENT OF DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER, CHAIRMAN OF THE EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE, AMERICAN ZIONIST EMERGENCY COUNCIL

I am deeply grateful to the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee for the privilege afforded me to appear here and speak in approval of the Resolutions #418 and #419 which have been introduced in the House. These Resolutions reflect the spirit of a similar resolution adopted unanimously by both Houses of Congress in 1922. They evidence again the profound interest of the American people, speaking through their chosen representatives in Congress, in the great historic cause of the rebuilding of the Jewish National Home in Palestine.

May I say, at the outset, that nothing is further from the minds of those for whom I speak -- and I believe I speak for millions of Jewish citizens of the United States -- who through the representatives of their national organizations and the elected delegates of their respective communities gathered at the great American Jewish Conference last September and voiced overwhelmingly their endorsement of the Jewish commonwealth in Palestine and called for the abrogation of the White Paper than to embarrass our great and gallant ally Great Britain, whose heroic defense of civilization against Nazi barbarism in the dark days when she stood alone will remain an epic of high courage and spiritual grandeur to inspire all future generations. We have no quarrel with Great Britain. We can never forget that it was Great Britain which, first among the nations, gave recognition to the national aspirations of the Jewish people in the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. But a wrong and unjustifiable political policy affecting the Jewish national home which this very declaration welcomed and committed His Majesty's Government to its achievement, is about to be consummated. It would to all intents and purposes liquidate the Jewish national home. It is this policy, which has been sharply criticized by the foremost statesmen of Great Britain herself, that we ask to be rescinded. We retain our strong confidence in the integrity and the abiding goodwill of Great Britain that this will be done.

We feel that this very resolution when adopted will, as was pointed out here a moment ago, strengthen the hands of our many friends in Great Britain who wish to see this wrong, unwise, and illegal policy abrogated.

May I also be permitted to give a brief historical background to the movement to reconstitute the Jewish commonwealth in Palestine, perhaps a subject which will not be covered by the other people who will speak here? It is not a recent movement. It did not begin with modern Zionism, nor with the first Zionist colonies which were established in Palestine 65 years ago. The ideal of national restoration dates from the year of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple in the year 70 A.D., and from the beginning of the widespread dispersion of the Jewish people.

Throughout the following centuries the hope of rebuilding their national home was never absent from among our people. Modern Zionism is only the latest expression of that undeviating will to national restoration which has persisted throughout the ages.

For fifteen centuries and more prior to the time of the great Dispersion, the Jewish people lived in Palestine as a nation, undergoing all the changing political vicissitudes which all nations, large or small, are bound to experience over a long period of time.

During some of those centuries they made their greatest contribution to civilization in the religious field. They gave the Bible to the world and formulated the great spiritual and ethical ideals of mankind. In Palestine and from the Jewish Nation came both Judaism and Christianity.

Whenever disaster threatened their national existence, they found strength to surmount it. The destruction of the first temple in the sixth century B.C., and the exile of the best part of Israel to Babylonia did not result in the death of the nation. By the rivers of Babylon they sat down and wept as they remembered Zion, and in their exile they vowed: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning."

In the second pre-Christian century, the Jews revolted against their Syrian overlords and regained their political independence. A century later they lost it again to the Romans. When the oppression of the Romans became too great, they revolted again. This great revolt lasted for 6 years, until 70 A.D., when Jerusalem and the temple was destroyed. But the Jewish Nations did not perish then. In 115 the Jewish people revolted again. And in 135 they revolted a third time. Determinedly they resisted the greatest empire of the earth in defense of their national life and liberties.

In the following centuries and as a result of persecution, Jewish life in Palestine sharply declined from its high levels, but it continued in a relatively large scale up to the seventh century, when we again hear of Jews fighting for their freedom. Jews clung to Palestine all through Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Christian, and Turkish domination, to this very day. "Throughout the ages, even in the darkest periods of the Crusades, the protracted wars of the Middle Ages, and in modern times, the Jews never entirely left the soil of Palestine." They never surrendered the hope that some day they would rebuild their national life there. The bitter experiences of 2,000 years of exile, outlawry, ghettos, and massacres only served to reinforce that hope.

The effort to return to Palestine was unremitting through the ages. The living bond with Palestine was never broken. The hope of return became part of the Jews' creed. It echoed through the pages of his prayer book. His festivals were redolent of memories and hopes of Palestine. The Messianic hope which sustained the spirits of our people throughout the bleak centuries was essentially the hope of Israel's return to Palestine. All through the Middle Ages, when traveling was most difficult and dangerous, Jews found ways singly or in groups, to return to Palestine.

In the nineteenth century this age-old national aspiration finally entered the phase of political organization and practical action.

Orthodox rabbis and lay leaders, moved by convictions both religious and national, were among the first to advocate planned and concerted colonization projects to Palestine.

A strong urge towards political action for national emancipation came also from the circles of Jews of western Europe who had become disillusioned with the results of the nineteenth century enlightenment and emancipation. Sudden and violent outbursts of anti-Semitism in unexpected places forced upon these Jews who had so sanguinely awaited the early liquidation of the Jewish problems, the necessity of taking stock of their position anew.

They realized that the problem of the national homelessness of the Jewish people was the principal source of the Jewish millennial tragedy and that it remained as stark and as menacing as ever. It simply could not be circumvented by wishful thinking or pleasant daydreaming.

These Jews began to look for the basic solution of the problem and they soon discovered it. Fundamentally the root of all the trouble was that the Jewish people was a national homeless people in the world and the only solution for national homelessness is a national home.

Great thinkers from among the intellectual circles of westernized Europe Jewry formulated this new insight and conviction. The theme common to all was emancipation through national restoration. Not that all Jews should return to Palestine any more than that all Englishmen in all parts of the world should return to England, or all Frenchmen to France, or all Germans to Germany. Every nation today has many of its former nationals, citizens of other countries. The Jews in other parts of the world will remain as heretofore loyal citizens of the country which will permit them to remain equal citizens of those countries, and the American Jews who have served their country so faithfully both in peace and in war, intend to remain citizens of the United States, and their relationship with the Jewish commonwealth will be no different from that of other American citizens with

respect to their ancestral homes. But, just as there is an England, a France, and a Germany, so must there be a Land of Israel in order that the status of the Jewish people might be normalized throughout the world. Politically the Jewish people as a people must become, like every other people, possessed of an independent life in a national home.

In 1897, Theodore Herzl convoked the first Zionist Congress at Basle, Switzerland. There the official Zionist platform was adopted; "The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law."

Within 20 years of the organization of modern political Zionism, the movement received formal approval at the hands of the greatest empire on earth -- Great Britain.

On November 2, 1917, Arthur James Balfour, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, issued the famous declaration in the name of the British Government:

"His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home --

Note the term "national" --

for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

The Balfour Declaration, which represents a turning point in the history of the Jewish people, was not, as has sometimes been represented, a purely British formulation of policy. It was for many months the subject of long and earnest negotiation between the principal Allied Powers. In February and March of 1918 the French and Italian Governments, respectively, issued parallel statements in support of the Balfour Declaration. President Wilson had followed the negotiations and had encouraged the issuance of that declaration, and our Government insisted on having a hand in the drafting of the mandate.

At a meeting of the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers, held at San Remo in April 1920, the Balfour Declaration was unanimously adopted and embodied in the

Mandate for Palestine which was offered to Great Britain.

On July 24, 1922, the Council of the League of Nations unanimously ratified the British mandate, with the incorporated declaration as an integral part. That same year the Congress of the United States adopted the resolution which has been read to you this morning:

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the United States of America favors the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done, etc. --

And then occurs the rest of the Balfour Declaration.

The preamble to the mandate contains this significant clause, and I would like to call it to your attention:

"Whereas recognition has hereby been given to the historical connections of the Jewish people with Palestine and the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country * * * .

These are the words of the preamble of the mandate. In other words, the creation, or reconstitution, of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was thus accepted as a world policy. It was also regarded as an act of restitution. It was a recognition both of the present need of the Jewish people and of the continuity of its claim to its homeland, a continuity unbroken by the vicissitudes of 2,000 years of history.

What did the framers of the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine mandate have in mind when they spoke of the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine? Their utterances leave no doubt as to their clear intent. They meant a Jewish state, a Jewish commonwealth.

Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain at the time of the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, writes in his memoirs:

"It was not their (the British Cabinet's) idea that a Jewish state should be set up immediately by the peace treaty without reference to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants. On the other hand, it was contemplated that when the time arrived for according representative institutions to Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity afforded

them by the idea of a national homeland and had become a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish commonwealth. The notion that Jewish immigration would have to be artificially restricted in order to ensure that the Jews should be a permanent minority never entered into the head of anyone engaged in framing the policy. That would have been regarded as unjust and as a fraud on the people to whom we were appealing.

General Smuts, still one of Great Britain's foremost statesmen, perhaps next to Churchill the most powerful political figure in the British Empire, who, in 1919 was a member of the Imperial War Cabinet, declared that he envisaged an increasing stream of Jewish immigration into Palestine and in generations to come a great Jewish state rising there once more, and that he is convinced today, no less than he was in 1917, of the necessity of establishing a Jewish State in Palestine; and he expressed the hope and confidence that there could and would be peace and cooperation between the Jewish State and other neighboring states.

Winston Churchill, when he was Secretary of State in 1920, declared:

"If, as may well happen, there should be created in our lifetime by the banks of the Jordan a Jewish State under the protection of the British Crown, which might comprise 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 Jews, an event will have occurred in the history of the world which would from every point of view be beneficial and would be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire."

President Wilson, in 1919, declared:

"I am persuaded that the Allied nations, with the fullest concurrence of our Government and our people, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish commonwealth."

Our then Secretary of State, Charles E. Hughes, writing to Lord Balfour in January 1922, concerning the mandate for Palestine, which was a subject of extensive negotiation between our Government and Great Britain, and which negotiations resulted in substantial modifications in the draft of the mandate, assumes that what was being planned in Palestine was a Jewish State. There were three or four drafts. (See p. 60, Mandate for Palestine -- prepared in the Division of Near Eastern Affairs -- publication of the Department of State, Washington, 1931.)

It is, therefore, historically accurate, and in view of what has transpired since those years, politically sound, for the resolutions which have been introduced in the House, to speak of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth. It is not a new concept. It is exactly what was originally contemplated. Attempts have been made to whittle down the meaning of the terms, "a national home," employed in the Balfour Declaration and the mandate. It has been asserted that a Jewish national home already exists in Palestine and that a permanent Jewish minority within a Palestine state, such as the White Paper envisages, is quite consistent with the avowed purposes of the mandate. This, of course, is not the case. It is well, therefore, to stress the true objective of the mandate which was the reconstitution of the Jewish commonwealth, which presupposes a Jewish majority in the country, as Mr. Lloyd George correctly points out. The experiences of the last 25 years indicate that no such majority will ever be attained unless the control of immigration is vested with the Jewish agency, which alone is interested in the creation of absorptive capacity and in the intensive agricultural and industrial development of the land in order to absorb rapidly large numbers of immigrants and provide them with the means of earning a livelihood.

It was not contemplated to set up two states in Palestine, or to set up a Palestine state in which Jews would be a permanent minority. The mandate made Great Britain "responsible for putting into effect the declaration officially made on November 2, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty," i.e., the Balfour Declaration. The mandatory was charged with the responsibility "for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home" (art. 2). The mandate nowhere speaks of the establishment of an Arab national home in Palestine.

The mandate calls for the recognition of "an appropriate Jewish agency as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment

of the Jewish national home * * * and to assist and take part in the development of the country." The mandate nowhere speaks of the recognition of an Arab agency, for it was not required, inasmuch as it was not contemplated to set up in Palestine an Arab national state.

Under the terms of the mandate the Zionist organization of the world was invited "to secure the cooperation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home" (art. 4).

The mandatory was charged with the duty of "facilitating Jewish immigration" into Palestine and of encouraging "in cooperation with the Jewish agency" close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes (art. 6).

It was called upon to enact a nationality law -- "so as to facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine (art. 7).

There are no provisions in the mandate for facilitating Arab immigration into Palestine or their close settlement on the land.

The administration of Palestine was asked to -- "arrange with the Jewish agency to construct or operate any public works, services, and utilities, and to develop any of the national resources of the country (article 11).

What do all those clear provisions mount up to? That Palestine was to be built up as a Jewish national state -- and that for the transition period, until a Jewish majority is achieved and the country is ready for self-governing institutions, Great Britain was entrusted by the principal Allied Powers with a mandate to administer the country upon terms and powers clearly defined in the mandate by the Council of the League of Nations.

Was the proposed reestablishment of the Jewish commonwealth in Palestine unfair to the Arabs? May I be permitted to quote the words of the Right Honorable

Alfred Duff Cooper, former First Lord of the British Admiralty, spoken here in Washington in the spring of 1940:

"In 1914 there was hardly any territory which the Arabs could call their own. They were almost throughout the Near East subject to Turkish suzerainty. Since 1914, they have acquired vast tracts of territory where they are independent; the whole of Arabia; Transjordan, which was taken away from the original conception of Palestine; Syria, where again they exercise semi-independent rights. No nation in the world has so little ground for complaining of what the Germans call lack of lebenstraum as the Arab race. They have vast spaces in which to expand. They have been amongst the greatest beneficiaries of the World War, and now they are subject to no particular evils."

Realizing that the Arabs would have their national aspirations satisfied after the war by the establishment of a number of Arab national states, and that these states would have land areas so large that it would take them centuries to develop them, and realizing also that the Jews stood in desperate need of a place of refuge, for their people, the Allies reserved "the tiny notch" of Palestine, as Balfour called it -- just 10,000 square miles for the Jewish people. The Arab lands cover more than a million square miles and they are underpopulated and largely undeveloped.

Provision, of course, was made in the Balfour Declaration and in the mandate for the political equality of all citizens and for the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities. These rights have been fully protected. The Palestine Arab has not been exploited. In fact, there are no Arabs on the face of the earth today more prosperous than the Arabs of Palestine.

The establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine will, we believe, be a great boon to the entire Near East and to all the Arab peoples. Jews are bringing scientific skill, technical knowledge, material resources, and high enthusiasm to the upbuilding of Palestine. Palestine is destined to become the hub of a great and rapid economic development of the entire Near East. The prosperity of Palestine will stimulate, and, in the course of time will come to depend upon the prosperity of all adjacent Arab countries.

It has been alleged that promises were also made to the Arabs during the last war to the effect that Palestine was to be included in the area in which Arab independence would be established. Sir Henry McMahon, then His Majesty's High Commissioner in Egypt, who negotiated with the Sherif of Mecca, later King Hussein, is alleged to have made such a promise. The British Government has consistently maintained that Palestine was definitely excluded from McMahon's pledge.

McMahon, himself, in a letter to the Times, London, July 23, 1937, stated:

"I feel it my duty to state, and I do so definitely and emphatically, that it was not intended by me in giving this pledge to King Hussein, to include Palestine in the area in which Arab independence was promised.

I also had every reason to believe at the time that the fact that Palestine was not included in my pledge was well understood by King Hussein."

During the years 1917 to 1921 no claims to Palestine were raised by the Arab representatives. Indeed, they did in various ways explicitly agree to Palestine being treated differently from Arab territories.

Emir Feisal, son of Hussein, afterward King of Iraq, the leader of the Arabs in the crucial war years, stated in December 1918:

"The two main branches of the Semitic family, Arabs and Jews, understand one another, and I hope that as a result of interchange of ideas at the Peace Conference, which will be guided by ideals of self-determination and nationality, each nation will make definite progress toward the realization of its aspirations. Arabs are not jealous of Zionist Jews and intend to give them fair play, and the Zionist Jews have assured the Nationalist Arabs of their intention to see that they too have fair play in their respective areas."

And in January 1919, Emir Feisal, for the Arab Kingdom of Hedjaz, and Dr. Chaim Weizmann, on behalf of the Zionist Organization, signed a treaty of friendship which clearly shows that Feisal regarded Palestine as a land reserved for Jewish national settlement. He also submitted to the Peace Conference a memorandum on the Arab claims in which he asked for the independence of a number of Arabic areas with the explicit exception of Palestine.

If I may be permitted, Mr. Chairman, I should like to read into the record the documents to which I have referred.

The record, then, of what was intended for Palestine and what was undertaken is quite clear. The civilized world recognized the right of the Jewish people to rebuild their national home in Palestine. Great Britain accepted a mandate to facilitate its consumption. The Jews of the world set themselves to the task of upbuilding.

Thus a new era in Jewish history was ushered in. The Jewish people threw themselves into the work of upbuilding with incomparable zeal and enthusiasm. The task was enormous -- untrained hands, inadequate means, overwhelming difficulties. The land was stripped and poor -- neglected through the centuries. European Jewry was shattered and impoverished by the war and could not be quickly rallied to the work of reconstruction. Plans had to be improvised and carried through piecemeal. Nevertheless, the record of pioneering achievement of the Jewish people in Palestine in the 20 years between two world wars, the story of their heroic labors and sacrifices and their courageous experimentation have received the acclaim of the entire world. A veritable miracle of colonization was performed. The Jewish population increased from 55,000 to 600,000. Close to 300 colonies have been established. Social vision and high human idealism went into the planning and structure of many of them. Some 2,000 factories and 4,000 small workshops were opened. The waters of the Jordan were harnessed for electric power. The Dead Sea was made to yield up its vast chemical resources. Barren hills and valleys were reforested. Marshes were drained. A splendid educational system was developed, crowned by the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus. A modern health service was established throughout the country, available to Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians alike.

I hope you will have the privilege of hearing later on one of the great experts of our country, Dr. Lowdermilk tell you of what has been accomplished in Palestine.

It was fortunate indeed that Palestine was available, readied and prepared by the labor of these Jewish pioneers, when the horrible Hitler persecutions swept over European Jewry. For that little country was able to absorb more than 300,000 refugees from Germany and Central Europe, a country so small that it could hide itself in one of the great States that you represent. Today Jewish Palestine is again vindicating its claim to full life and national freedom by the extraordinary contributions which it is making to the war effort of the United Nations, have fought bravely, many of them with rare distinction. The civilian population is engaged in an all-out effort to back up the fighting armies in the Near East by providing them with many vital supplies and services; 50,000 Palestinian Jews are engaged in defense work.

And here we come to the point back of this resolution. The administration of Palestine has unfortunately not always been conducted on a plane corresponding to the high intentions of the framers of the Balfour Declaration, nor did it reflect the good will and unflagging sympathy of the English people whose historic friendship the Jewish people will never forget. Local British officials, though of high integrity, have shown little understanding of the processes involved in the building of the Jewish homeland, and there are always great difficulties associated with the upbuilding of a new homeland. They have not grasped the implications of the organic relationship between the Jewish people outside of Palestine, to whom the Balfour Declaration was issued, and the land which they administered. The rebuilding of the Jewish homeland implies a dynamic outlook. The outlook of British officials has been in the main static, based on the tacit assumption that Palestine alone, and not the integration of large numbers of immigrants with an evolving Jewish homeland, was their concern.

They have, therefore, tended to look upon the local difficulties associated with the upbuilding of the Jewish homeland as unnecessary disturbances of the status quo, instead of a natural part of the task assigned to them. No corrective

to this attitude was applied by the home government in London. No consistent attempt was made to bring home to the Arabs of Palestine the fact that the Balfour Declaration was an interallied policy, and later, that the mandate was international law, and the first evidence of recalcitrance on their part -- namely, the riots of May 1921 -- was rewarded by a temporary suspension of Jewish immigration.

Concession led to concession. The White Paper issued in 1922 declared that--
"the terms of the Balfour Declaration do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish national home, but that such a home should be established in Palestine."

This was the beginning of reinterpretation. It introduced an element of ambiguity into what had been quite clear till then.

The Palestine contemplated in the mandate had consisted of Transjordan and cis-Jordan. In the year 1922, Transjordan--three times the area of cis-Jordan--was closed to Jewish immigration.

In subsequent years, Palestine's British officials took the view that they were not primarily concerned with the facilitation of the creation of a Jewish homeland, but with the administration of the country in its existing condition.

This view has dominated the policies and actions of the Palestine administration ever since. The national rights of the Jewish people in relation to Palestine which had been internationally acknowledged and which alone gave legal basis for the mandatory presence there at all were progressively and consistently sacrificed.

Following the disturbances of 1936, a Palestine Royal Commission was sent to Palestine to investigate. Its report proposed to partition the country, to create an Arab and a Jewish state, and an area reserved for British administration.

A technical commission was then set up to work out the details of a partition plan. It finally declared that the partition plan was unworkable.

Following discussions in London in 1939, to which representatives of Arabs and Jews were invited and which brought no positive results, the British Government of the late Mr. Chamberlain prepared the White Paper of May 17, 1939. The House of

Commons reluctantly consented to it during a tense period of international complications, only after the Government insisted on acceptance as a vote of confidence. The White Paper was formally disapproved by the Permanent Mandates Commission. It was never submitted for approval to the Council of the League of Nations, although article 27 of the mandate clearly states that--

"the consent of the Council of the League of Nations is required for any modifications of the terms of the mandate."

It was thus denied legal validity. However, despite all this, it was put into effect.

Under the terms of this White Paper, Jewish immigration was limited to 10,000 a year for the next 5 years. A bonus immigration of an additional 25,000 was allowed in consideration of the plight of Jewish refugees. However, after March of this year, 1944, Jewish immigration is to be discontinued entirely "unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it."

The White Paper likewise grants the High Commissioner of Palestine general powers to prohibit and regulate transfers of land. Regulations have been issued according to which Jews are allowed the right of free purchase in only 2.6 percent of the total area of Palestine -- 260 square miles! A total prohibition on transfer of land to Jews was imposed in about two-thirds of the country, in the remaining area transfer is permissible only under severe restriction and subject to the consent of the High Commissioner. Thus discriminatory laws against Jews were introduced in their own national home!

Thus the Jews were left to build their national home without men and without land, just as their ancestors in Egypt were expected to make brick without straw.

The White Paper is by no stretch of the imagination the fulfillment of the national aspirations of the Jewish people recognized in the mandate. It is their total liquidation. This White Paper when it was issued in 1939, in the disastrous Munich appeasement era and as part of that tragic political and spiritual debacle

of those days, aroused the bitterest opposition. It was denounced both at home and abroad. It was violently opposed by some of the foremost statesmen of Great Britain. I would just like to quote this sentence from the great statement of Winston Churchill which he made in the House of Commons when the policy of the White Paper was being discussed. He said:

"We are now asked to submit, and this rankles most with me, to an agitation which is fed with foreign money and ceaselessly inflamed by Nazi and by Fascist propaganda."

If the White Paper was found odious and morally unjustifiable in 1939, before the Second World War and before the appalling disasters swept over the Jewish communities of Europe, driving hundreds of thousands of Jews helpless and impoverished from their homes to wander over the face of the earth, how utterly insupportable and insufferable it is today!

The last 5 years have been the blackest in Jewish history. They climaxed 5 other years which the Nazi regime ushered in, during which one Jewish community after another in central and eastern Europe was broken and myriads of Jews were driven into exile from countries and homes where they had known dignity, honor, and where they and their ancestors had lived for centuries. Myriads of them crowded the highways of the world in quest of refuge and sanctuary and finding most doors barred against them. But a worse fate awaited those who could not escape in time. For them Hitler has decreed total extermination -- systematic, ruthless annihilation -- in gas chambers, by machine guns, in human slaughter pens. Two million perished. Some who managed to escape, and after months of wandering finally reached the shores of Palestine -- the shores of the Jewish national home -- were turned away. They were refused admission. They had no certificates. The last door of hope was shut to them. Many tried to enter illegally. Hundreds of them were apprehended, sent to concentration camps, and later forcibly evacuated to the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean where they are rotting to this day. Many perished in Haifa Bay; 760 souls perished in the Black Sea on the ill-fated STRUMA,

because permission to enter Palestine was refused to them. But for this infamous White Paper they might have been saved. Had the doors of Palestine been wide open these last years of Nazi terror and had the mandatory government fully cooperated in the task, tens of thousands of additional refugees might have been saved from Hitler's mass execution.

In March of this year, the pitifully restricted immigration schedule permitted under the White Paper will come to an end. Only the 30,000 unused visas -- unused, principally because of the administrative difficulties put in the way by Palestine officials -- remain. Thereafter no more Jews will be permitted to Palestine except on Arab sufferance and consent. This confronts the Jewish people and the whole civilized world with an appalling prospect. It is self-evident that Jewish homelessness will be widespread after the war. There will be hundreds of thousands of Jews, perhaps millions, who will seek new homes in a world which will be inhospitable to immigration. The struggle for existence in a ravaged post-war Europe will be harsh and bitter. Famine, poverty, and misery will stalk over the fact of that war-riven continent. There will be ruined economies, worthless currencies, social collapse and revolutions in every defeated country -- just as after the last war. The youth of half of half the world which has been indoctrinated with the racial and nationalistic mythologies of Nazi-Fascist dictatorship will be spiritually lost and unsuited to a democratic way of life which they have been taught to hate and despise -- and they will be virulent Jew haters. Jews will again be eyed sullenly as unwelcome economic competitors by millions of job-hungry and career-hungry men. Economic hostility will once again be rationalized into the well-known and quite serviceable anti-Semitic thesis.

No doubt the Jews of Europe, following an Allied victory, will be restored to their political rights and to equality of citizenship. But they possessed these rights after the last war -- even minority rights in some of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe; and anti-Semitism was never so rampant and so vicious as after the last war.

Can Europe, can the world, can America, which is for all time to come so inextricably bound up with the rest of the world, permit this menacing situation to continue indefinitely after the war?

The Jewish people must be permitted and helped to develop their homeland in Palestine in such a way as to be able to drain off, in a relatively short time, two or three million Jews from the crowded and economically tensioned centers of central and eastern Europe. This will ease the pressures upon the Jews who will remain there, who will then cease to be foci of irritation, conflict, and unrest.

And this brings me back to what Mr. Hamilton Fish said. He told you a fine story of what he tried to do and earnestly tried to do about the establishment of other colonies, but you heard the conclusion of it. Nothing was done. We have had experience with other colonies. There was one recently founded in Santo Domingo in which we placed very high hopes but which perhaps will take care of only a few thousand souls, perhaps of only a few hundred souls.

There are no other opportunities for mass emigration of Jews anywhere else in the world. There will be none. We wish 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; but it is with waves and not with trickles that we must concern ourselves. We Zionists are not opposed to Jewish immigration to any country in the world. Quite the contrary. We hope and pray all countries will open their doors to refugees. But those things do not happen.

We must not forget the experience of Jewish refugees in the last 10 years. These experiences will be no different after the war. They may be even more difficult; for nations will then be in the grip of vast economic dislocations and they will be thinking in terms of helping their own people over the extremely formidable transition period when their national economies will be passing from a wartime to a peacetime footing. They will refuse to complicate their lives with large influxes

of impoverished immigrants. The Jewish colonies are ready to expand and take in Jewish immigrants.

A free and open Palestine is the indispensable condition not only for a peaceful solution of this most obdurate problem of Europe, but also for the pacification of Europe and the world.

Statesmen should clearly understand this. If the problem of mass Jewish emigration and of the national homelessness of the Jewish people is not clearly faced and solved after the war, it will return over and over again to harass and unsettle the world. Reaction will exploit the situation again and again. The defenseless position of the Jews was exploited by the Nazis to rise to power. They employed it as a weapon to achieve the disintegration of Europe. Fascist adventurers after the war will continue to exploit it. The Jewish problem is quite as much the world's problem as it is that of the Jews.

What the world will do concerning the Jewish people and concerning the restoration of its national life in Palestine after the war will be the true index of the nature and character of the entire program of world reconstruction. The world patterns of reconstruction will unerringly reflect the decisions which will be made concerning the Jewish people and its national status. If in the case of the Jewish people, which possesses no armies or navies, and which will emerge from the World War the most shattered of all peoples, the United Nations will act in a spirit of justice, vision, and true statesmanship, then there is hope that by the same spirit the entire world will be healed and saved.

Surely, the Jewish people are no less deserving than other peoples whose national independence and freedom have been guaranteed by the United Nations. They have been the worst victims of Nazi brutality, and their casualties have been proportionately the heaviest. The Jewish people desperately needs Palestine for its homeless millions now and after the war, and for its national security, dignity, and normalcy. Jews have shown a remarkable capacity for pioneering, for labor and

sacrifice. They have built worthily and well in Palestine. They have made Palestine their own again by their heroic labor, by their blood and sweat. Nearly all ^{that} is hopeful, promising, and progressive in that country today, the Jews have created.

What has been called the noblest enterprise of our time must not now be cruelly sapped and undermined.

These resolutions which have been introduced in the House and in the Senate, and which have received the endorsement of the leaders of both political parties, ask our Government to use its good offices, as it did once before, to assist a sorely tried and harassed people in accomplishing the task of rebuilding its national life in its ancestral home -- a task approved of by our Government and our people and by 52 other nations at the close of the last war -- a task, however, which cannot be accomplished without the free entry of Jews into the country and without the fullest opportunities for colonization and economic development. The reconstitution of Palestine as a Jewish commonwealth ~~will be to us men of faith a fulfillment of prophecy and to all an act of historic justice to an ancient and long-martyred people.~~

WRHS ARCHIVES

STATEMENT OF DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER, CHAIRMAN
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, AMERICAN
ZIONIST EMERGENCY COUNCIL

I am deeply grateful to the members of the Foreign affairs Committee for the privilege afforded me to appear here and speak in approval of the Resolutions #418 and #419 which have been introduced in the House. These Resolutions reflect the spirit of a similar resolution adopted unanimously by both Houses of Congress in 1922. They evidence again the profound interest of the American people, speaking through their chosen representatives in Congress, in the great historic cause of the rebuilding of the Jewish National Home in Palestine.

May I say, at the outset, that nothing is further from the minds of those for whom I speak -- and I believe I speak for millions of Jewish citizens of the United States -- who through the representatives of their national organizations and the elected delegates of their respective communities gathered at the great American Jewish Conference last September and voiced overwhelmingly their endorsement of the Jewish commonwealth in Palestine and called for the abrogation of the White Paper than to embarrass our great and gallant ally Great Britain, whose heroic defense of civilization against Nazi barbarism in the dark days when she stood alone will remain an epic of high courage and spiritual grandeur to inspire all future generations. We have no quarrel with Great Britain. We can never forget that it was Great Britain which, first among the nations, gave recognition to the national aspirations of the Jewish people in the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. But a wrong and unjustifiable political policy affecting the Jewish national home which this very declaration welcomed

and committed His Majesty's Government to its achievement, is about to be consummated. It would to all intents and purposes liquidate the Jewish national home. It is this policy, which has been sharply criticized by the foremost statesmen of Great Britain herself, that we ask to be rescinded. We retain our strong confidence in the integrity and the abiding goodwill of Great Britain that this will be done.

We feel that this very resolution when adopted will, as was pointed out here a moment ago, strengthen the hands of our many friends in Great Britain who wish to see this wrong, unwise, and illegal policy abrogated.

May I also be permitted to give a brief historical background to the movement to reconstitute the Jewish commonwealth in Palestine, perhaps a subject which will not be covered by the other people who will speak here? It is not a recent movement. It did not begin with modern Zionism, nor with the first Zionist colonies which were established in Palestine 65 years ago. The ideal of national restoration dates from the year of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple in the year 70 A.D., and from the beginning of the widespread dispersion of the Jewish people.

Throughout the following centuries the hope of rebuilding their national home was never absent from among our people. Modern Zionism is only the latest expression of that undeviating will to national restoration which has persisted throughout the ages.

For fifteen centuries and more prior to the time of the great Dispersion, the Jewish people lived in Palestine as a nation, undergoing

all the changing political vicissitudes which all nations, large or small, are bound to experience over a long period of time.

During some of those centuries they made their greatest contribution to civilization in the religious field. They gave the Bible to the world and formulated the great spiritual and ethical ideals of mankind. In Palestine and from the Jewish National came both Judaism and Christianity.

Whenever disaster threatened their national existence, they found strength to surmount it. The destruction of the first temple in the sixth century B.C., and the exile of the best part of Israel to Babylonia did not result in the death of the nation. By the rivers of Babylon they sat down and wept as they remembered Zion, and in their exile they vowed: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning."

In the second pre-Christian century, the Jews revolted against their Syrian overlords and regained their political independence. A century later they lost it again to the Romans. When the oppression of the Romans became too great, they revolted again. This great revolt lasted for 6 years, until 70 A.D., when Jerusalem and the temple was destroyed. But the Jewish Nations did not perish then. In 115 the Jewish people revolted again. And in 135 they revolted a third time. Determinedly they resisted the greatest empire of the earth in defense of their national life and liberties.

In the following centuries and as a result of persecution, Jewish life in Palestine sharply declined from its high levels, but it continued in a relatively large scale up to the seventh century, when we

again hear of Jews fighting for their freedom. Jews clung to Palestine all through Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Christian, and Turkish domination, to this very day. "Throughout the ages, even in the darkest periods of the Crusades, the protracted wars of the Middle Ages, and in modern times, the Jews never entirely left the soil of Palestine." They never surrendered the hope that some day they would rebuilt their national life there. The bitter experiences of 2,000 years of exile, outlawry, ghettos, and massacres only served to reinforce that hope.

The effort to return to Palestine was unremitting through the ages. The living bond with Palestine was never broken. The hope of return became part of the Jews' creed. It echoed through the pages of his prayer book. His festivals were redolent of memories and hopes of Palestine. The Messianic hope which sustained the spirits of our people throughout the bleak centuries was essentially the hope of Israel's return to Palestine. All through the Middle Ages, when traveling was most difficult and dangerous, Jews found ways singly or in groups, to return to Palestine.

In the nineteenth century this age-old national aspiration finally entered the phase of political organization and practical action.

Orthodox rabbis and lay leaders, moved by convictions both religious and national, were among the first to advocate planned and concerted colonization projects to Palestine.

A strong urge towards political action for national emancipation came also from the circles of Jews of western Europe who had become disillusioned with the results of the nineteenth century enlightenment and

emancipation. Sudden and violent outbursts of anti-Semitism in unexpected places forced upon these Jews who had so sanguinely awaited the early liquidation of the Jewish problems, the necessity of taking stock of their position anew.

They realized that the problem of the national homelessness of the Jewish people was the principal source of the Jewish Millennial tragedy and that it remained as stark and as menacing as ever. It simply could not be circumvented by wishful thinking or pleasant daydreaming.

These Jews began to look for the basic solution of the problem and they soon discovered it. Fundamentally the root of all the trouble was that the Jewish people was a national homeless people in the world and the only solution for national homelessness is a national home.

Great thinkers from among the intellectual circles of westernized Europe Jewry formulated this new insight and conviction. The theme common to all was emancipation through national restoration. Not that all Jews should return to Palestine any more than that all Englishmen in all parts of the world should return to England, or all Frenchmen to France, or all Germans to Germany. Every nation today has many of its former nationals, citizens of other countries. The Jews in other parts of the world will remain as heretofore loyal citizens of the country which will permit them to remain equal citizens of those countries, and the American Jews who have served their country so faithfully both in peace and in war, intend to remain citizens of the United States, and their relationship with the Jewish commonwealth will be no different from that of other American citizens with respect to their ancestral homes. But, just as there is

an England, a France, and a Germany, so must there be a Land of Israel in order that the status of the Jewish people might be normalized throughout the world. Politically the Jewish people as a people must become like every other people, possessed of an independent life in a national home.

In 1897, Theodore Herzl convoked the first Zionist Congress at Basle, Switzerland. There the official Zionist platform was adopted: "The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law."

Within 20 years of the organization of modern political Zionism, the movement received formal approval at the hands of the greatest empire on earth -- Great Britain.

On November 2, 1917, Arthur James Balfour, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, issued the famous declaration in the name of the British Government:

"His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home --

Note the term "national" --

for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

The Balfour Declaration, which represents a turning point in the history of the Jewish people, was not, as has sometimes been represented, a purely British formulation of policy. It was for many months the subject of long and earnest negotiation between the principal Allied Powers. In

February and March of 1918 the French and Italian Governments, respectively, issued parallel statements in support of the Balfour Declaration. President Wilson had sympathetically followed the negotiations and had encouraged the issuance of that declaration, and our Government insisted on having a hand in the drafting of the mandate.

At a meeting of the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers, held at San Remo in April, 1920, the Balfour Declaration was unanimously adopted and embodied in the Mandate for Palestine which was offered to Great Britain.

On July 24, 1922, the Council of the League of Nations unanimously ratified the British mandate, with the incorporated declaration as an integral part. That same year the Congress of the United States adopted the resolution which has been read to you this morning:

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the United States of America favors the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done, etc.--

And then occurs the rest of the Balfour Declaration.

The preamble to the mandate contains this significant clause, and I would like to call it to your attention:

"Whereas recognition has hereby been given to the historical connections of the Jewish people with Palestine and the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country***."

These are the words of the preamble of the mandate. In other words, the "reconstitution" of a Jewish homeland in Palestine was thus accepted as a world policy. It was regarded as an act of restitution. It was a recognition both of the present need of the Jewish people and of

the continuity of its claim to its homeland, a continuity unbroken by the vicissitudes of 2,000 years of history.

What did the framers of the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine mandate have in mind when they spoke of the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine? Their utterances leave no doubt as to their clear intent. They meant a Jewish state, a Jewish commonwealth.

Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain at the time of the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, writes in his memoirs:

"It was not their (the British Cabinet's) idea that a Jewish state should be set up immediately by the peace treaty without reference to the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants. On the other hand, it was contemplated that when the time arrived for according representative institutions to Palestine, if the Jews had meanwhile responded to the opportunity offered them by the idea of a national homeland and had become a definite majority of the inhabitants, then Palestine would thus become a Jewish commonwealth. The notion that Jewish immigration would have to be artificially restricted in order to ensure that the Jews should be a permanent minority never entered into the head of anyone engaged in framing the policy. That would have been regarded as unjust and as a fraud on the people to whom we are appealing."

General Smuts, still one of Great Britain's foremost statesmen, perhaps next to Churchill the most powerful political figure in the British Empire, who, in 1919 was a member of the Imperial War Cabinet, declared that he envisaged an increasing stream of Jewish immigration into Palestine and in generations to come a great Jewish state rising there once more. In 1941 he declared that he is convinced today, no less than he was in 1917, of the necessity of establishing a Jewish State in Palestine and he expressed the hope and confidence that there could and would be peace and cooperation between the Jewish State and other neighboring states.

Winston Churchill, when he was Secretary of State in 1920, declared:

"If, as may well happen, there should be created in our lifetime by the banks of the Jordan a Jewish State under the protection of the British Crown, which might comprise 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 Jews, an event will have occurred in the history of the world which would from every point of view be beneficial and would be especially in harmony with the truest interests of the British Empire."

President Wilson, in 1919, declared:

"I am persuaded that the Allied nations, with the fullest concurrence of our Government and our people, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish commonwealth."

Our then Secretary of State, Charles E. Hughes, writing to Lord Balfour in January 1922, concerning the mandate for Palestine, which was a subject of extensive negotiation between our Government and Great Britain, (and which negotiations resulted in substantial modifications in the draft of the mandate,) assumed that what was being planned in Palestine was a Jewish State. There were three or four drafts. (See p. 60, Mandate for Palestine -- prepared in the Division of Near Eastern Affairs -- publication of the Department of State, Washington, 1931.)

It is, therefore, historically accurate, and in view of what has transpired since those years, politically sound, for the resolutions which have been introduced in the Senate to speak of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth. It is not a new concept. It is exactly what was originally contemplated. Attempts have been made to whittle down the meaning of the terms, "a national home," employed in the Balfour Declaration and the mandate. It has been asserted that a Jewish national home already exists in Palestine and that a permanent Jewish minority within a Palestine state,

such as the White Paper envisages, is quite consistent with the avowed purposes of the mandate. This, of course, is not the case. It is well, therefore, to stress the true objective of the mandate which was the reconstitution of the Jewish commonwealth, which presupposes a Jewish majority in the country, as Mr. Lloyd George correctly points out. The experiences of the last 25 years indicate that no such majority will ever be attained unless the control of immigration is vested with the Jewish Agency, which alone is interested in the creation of absorptive capacity and in the intensive agricultural and industrial development of the land in order to absorb rapidly large numbers of immigrants and provide them with the means of earning a livelihood.

It was not contemplated to set up two states in Palestine, or to set up a Palestine state in which Jews would be a permanent minority. The mandate made Great Britain "responsible for putting into effect the declaration officially made on November 2, 1917, by the Government of His Britannic Majesty" i.e., the Balfour Declaration. The mandatory was charged with the responsibility "for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home" (art. 2). (The mandate nowhere speaks of the establishment of an Arab national home in Palestine).

The mandate calls for the recognition of "an appropriate Jewish agency as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home * * * and to assist and take part in the development of the country." (The mandate

nowhere speaks of the recognition of an Arab agency, for it was not required, inasmuch as it was not contemplated to set up in Palestine an Arab national state.)

Under the terms of the mandate the Zionist organization of the world was invited "to secure the cooperation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home" (art. 4)

The mandatory was charged with the duty of "facilitating Jewish immigration" into Palestine and of encouraging "in cooperation with the Jewish agency" close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes (art. 6)

It was called upon to enact a nationality law -- "so as to facilitate the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews who take up their permanent residence in Palestine (art. 7)

(There are no provisions in the mandate for facilitating Arab immigration into Palestine or their close settlement on the land.)

The administration of Palestine was asked to -- "arrange with the Jewish agency to construct or operate any public works, services, and utilities, and to develop any of the national resources of the country (art. 11)

What do all those clear provisions mount up to? That Palestine was to be built up as a Jewish national state -- and that for the transition period, until a Jewish majority is achieved and the country is ready for self-governing institutions, Great Britain was entrusted by the principal Allied Powers with a mandate to administer the country upon terms and powers clearly defined in the mandate by the Council of the League of Nations.

Was the proposed reestablishment of the Jewish commonwealth in Palestine unfair to the Arabs? May I be permitted to quote the words of the Right Honorable Alfred Duff Cooper, former First Lord of the British Admiralty, spoken here in Washington in the spring of 1940:

"In 1914 there was hardly any territory which the Arabs could call their own. They were almost throughout the Near East subject to Turkish suzerainty. Since 1914, they have acquired vast tracts of territory where they are independent; the whole of Arabia; Transjordan, which was taken away from the original conception of Palestine; Syria, where again they exercise semi-independent rights. No nation in the world has so little ground for complaining of what the Germans call lack of lebensraum as the Arab race. They have vast spaces in which to expand. They have been amongst the greatest beneficiaries of the World War, and now they are subject to no particular evils."

Realizing that the Arabs would have their national aspirations satisfied after the war by the establishment of a number of Arab national states, and that these states would have land areas so large that it would take them centuries to develop them, and realizing also that the Jews stood in desperate need of a place of refuge, for their people, the Allies reserved "the tiny notch" of Palestine, as Balfour called it -- just 10,000 square miles for the Jewish people. The Arab lands cover more than a million square miles and they are underpopulated and largely undeveloped.

Provision, of course, was made in the Balfour Declaration and in the mandate for the political equality of all citizens and for the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities. These rights have been fully protected. The Palestine Arab has not been exploited. In fact, there are no Arabs on the face of the earth today more prosperous than the Arabs of Palestine.

The establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine will, we believe, be a great boon to the entire Near East and to all the Arab peoples. Jews are bringing scientific skill, technical knowledge, material resources, and high enthusiasm to the upbuilding of Palestine. Palestine is destined to become the hub of a great and rapid economic development of the entire Near East. The prosperity of Palestine will stimulate, and, in the course of time will come to depend upon the prosperity of all adjacent Arab countries.

It has been alleged that promises were also made to the Arabs during the last war to the effect that Palestine was to be included in the area in which Arab independence would be established. Sir Henry McMahon, then His Majesty's High Commissioner in Egypt, who negotiated with the Sherif of Mecca, later King Hussein, is alleged to have made such a promise. The British Government has consistently maintained that Palestine was definitely excluded from McMahon's pledge.

McMahon, himself, in a letter to the Times, London, July 23, 1937, stated:

"I feel it my duty to state, and I do so definitely and emphatically, that it was not intended by me in giving this pledge to King Hussein, to include Palestine in the area in which Arab independence was promised.

"I also had every reason to believe at the time that the fact that Palestine was not included in my pledge was well understood by King Hussein."

During the years 1917 to 1921 no claims to Palestine were raised by the Arab representatives. Indeed, they did in various ways explicitly agree to Palestine being treated differently from Arab territories.

Emir Feisal, son of Hussein, afterward King of Iraq, the leader of the Arabs in the crucial war years, stated in December 1918:

"The two main branches of the Semitic family, Arabs and Jews, understand one another, and I hope that as a result of interchange of ideas at the Peace Conference, which will be guided by ideals of self-determination and nationality, each nation will make definite progress toward the realization of its aspirations. Arabs are not jealous of Zionist Jews, and intend to give them fair play, and the Zionist Jews have assured the Nationalist Arabs of their intention to see that they too have fair play in their respective areas."

And in January 1919, Emir Feisal, for the Arab Kingdom of Hedjaz, and Dr. Chaim Weizmann, on behalf of the Zionist Organization, signed a treaty of friendship which clearly shows that Feisal regarded Palestine as a land reserved for Jewish national settlement. He also submitted to the Peace Conference a memorandum on the Arab claims in which he asked for the independence of a number of Arabic areas with the explicit exception of Palestine.

If I may be permitted, Mr. Chairman, I should like to read into the record the documents to which I have referred.

The record, then, of what was intended for Palestine and what was undertaken is quite clear. The civilized world recognized the right of the Jewish people to rebuild their national home in Palestine. Great Britain accepted a mandate to facilitate its consumption. The Jews of the world set themselves to the task of upbuilding.

Thus a new era in Jewish history was ushered in. The Jewish people threw themselves into the work of upbuilding with incomparable zeal and enthusiasm. The task was enormous -- untrained hands, inadequate means,

overwhelming difficulties. The land was stripped and poor -- neglected through the centuries. European Jewry was shattered and impoverished by the war and could not be quickly rallied to the work of reconstruction. Plans had to be improvised and carried through piecemeal. Nevertheless, the record of pioneering achievement of the Jewish people in Palestine in the 20 years between two world wars, the story of their heroic labors and sacrifices and their courageous experimentation have received the acclaim of the entire world. A veritable miracle of colonization was performed. The Jewish population increased from 55,000 to 600,000. Close to 300 colonies have been established. Social vision and high human idealism went into the planning and structure of many of them. The waters of the Jordan were harnessed for electric power. Some 2,000 factories and 4,000 small workshops were opened. The Dead Sea was made to yield its vast chemical resources. Barren hills and valleys were reforested. Marshes were drained. A splendid educational system was developed, crowned by the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus. A modern health service was established throughout the country, available to Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians alike.

(I hope you will have the privilege of hearing later on one of the great experts of our country, Dr. Lowdermilk tell you of what has been accomplished in Palestine.)

It was fortunate, indeed, that Palestine was available, readied and prepared by the labor of these Jewish pioneers, when the horrible Hitler persecutions swept over European Jewry. For that little country

was able to absorb more than 300,000 refugees from Germany and Central Europe, a country so small that it could hide itself in one of the great States that you represent. Today Jewish Palestine is again vindicating its claim to full life and national freedom by the extraordinary contributions which it is making to the war effort of the United Nations, have fought bravely, many of them with rare distinction. The civilian population is engaged in an all-out effort to back up the fighting armies in the Near East by providing them with many vital supplies and services; 50,000 Palestinian Jews are engaged in defense work.

And here we come to the point of this resolution. The administration of Palestine has unfortunately not always been conducted on a plane corresponding to the high intentions of the framers of the Balfour Declaration, nor did it reflect the good will and unflagging sympathy of the English people whose historic friendship the Jewish people will never forget. Local British officials, though of high integrity, have shown little understanding of the processes involved in the building of the Jewish homeland, and there are always great difficulties associated with the upbuilding of a new homeland. They have not grasped the implications of the organic relationship between the Jewish people outside of Palestine, to whom the Balfour Declaration was issued, and the land which they administered. The rebuilding of the Jewish homeland implies a dynamic outlook. The outlook of British officials has been in the main static, based on the tacit assumption that Palestine alone, and not the integration of large numbers of immigrants with an evolving Jewish homeland, was their concern.

They have, therefore, tended to look upon the local difficulties

associated with the upbuilding of the Jewish homeland as unnecessary disturbances of the status quo, instead of a natural part of the task assigned to them. No corrective to this attitude was applied by the home government in London. No consistent attempt was made to bring home to the Arabs of Palestine the fact that the Balfour Declaration was an interallied policy, and later, that the mandate was international law, and the first evidence of recalcitrance on their part -- namely, the riots of May 1921 -- was rewarded by a temporary suspension of Jewish immigration.

Concession led to concession. The White Paper issued in 1922 declared that --

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"the terms of the Balfour Declaration do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish national home, but that such a home should be established in Palestine."

This was the beginning of reinterpretation. It introduced an element of ambiguity into what had been quite clear till then.

The Palestine contemplated in the mandate had consisted of Trans-jordan and cis-Jordan. In the year 1922, Transjordan--three times the area of cis-Jordan--was closed to Jewish immigration.

In subsequent years, Palestine's British officials took the view that they were not primarily concerned with the facilitation of the creation of a Jewish homeland, but with the administration of the country in its existing condition.

This view has dominated the policies and actions of the Palestine administration ever since. The national rights of the Jewish people in relation to Palestine which had been internationally acknowledged and which

alone gave legal basis for the mandatory presence there at all were progressively and consistently sacrificed.

Following the disturbances of 1936, a Palestine Royal Commission was sent to Palestine to investigate. Its report proposed to partition the country, to create an Arab and a Jewish state, and an area reserved for British administration.

A technical commission was then set up to work out the details of a partition plan. It finally declared that the partition plan was unworkable.

Following discussions in London in 1939, to which representatives of Arabs and Jews were invited and which brought no positive results, the British Government of the late Mr. Chamberlain prepared the White Paper of May 17, 1939. The House of Commons reluctantly consented to it during a tense period of international complications, only after the Government insisted on acceptance as a vote of confidence. The White Paper was formally disapproved by the Permanent Mandates Commission. It was never submitted for approval to the Council of the League of Nations, although article 27 of the mandate clearly states that --

"the consent of the Council of the League of Nations is required for any modifications of the terms of the mandate."

It was thus denied legal validity. However, despite all this, it was put into effect.

Under the terms of this White Paper, Jewish immigration was limited to 10,000 a year for the next 5 years. A bonus immigration of an additional 25,000 was allowed in consideration of the plight of Jewish refugees.

However, after March of this year, 1944, Jewish immigration is to be discontinued entirely "unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it."

The White Paper likewise grants the High Commissioner of Palestine general powers to prohibit and regulate transfers of land. Regulations have been issued according to which Jews are allowed the right of free purchase in only 2.6 percent of the total area of Palestine -- 260 square miles. A total prohibition on transfer of land to Jews was imposed in about two-thirds of the country, in the remaining area transfer is permissible only under severe restriction and subject to the consent of the High Commissioner. Thus discriminatory laws against Jews were introduced in their own national home!

Thus the Jews were left to build their national home without men and without land, just as their ancestors in Egypt were expected to make brick without straw.

The White Paper is by no stretch of the imagination the fulfillment of the national aspirations of the Jewish people recognized in the mandate. It is their total liquidation. This White Paper when it was issued in 1939 in the disastrous Munich appeasement era and as part of that tragic political and spiritual debacle of those days, aroused the bitterest opposition. It was denounced both at home and abroad. It was violently opposed by some of the foremost statesmen of Great Britain. I would just like to quote this sentence from the great statement of Winston Churchill which he made in the House of Commons when the policy of the White Paper was being discussed. He said:

"We are now asked to submit, and this rankles most with me, to an agitation which is fed with foreign money and ceaselessly inflamed by Nazi and by Fascist propaganda."

If the White Paper was found odious and morally unjustifiable in 1939, before the Second World War and before the appalling disasters swept over the Jewish communities of Europe, driving hundreds of thousands of Jews helpless and impoverished from their homes to wander over the face of the earth, how utterly insupportable and insufferable it is today!

The last 5 years have been the blackest in Jewish history. They climaxed 5 other years which the Nazi regime ushered in, during which one Jewish community after another in central and eastern Europe was broken and myriads of Jews were driven into exile from countries where they had no dignity, honor, and where they and their ancestors had lived for centuries. Myriads of them crowded the highways of the world in quest of refuge and sanctuary and finding most doors barred against them. But a worse fate awaited those who could not escape in time. For them, Hitler has decreed total extermination -- systematic, ruthless annihilation -- in gas chambers, by machine guns, in human slaughter pens. Two million perished. Some who managed to escape, and after months of wandering finally reached the shores of Palestine -- the shores of the Jewish national home -- were turned away. They were refused admission. They had no certificates. The last door of hope was shut to them. Many tried to enter illegally. Hundreds of them were apprehended, sent to concentration camps, and later forcibly evacuated to the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean where they are rotting to this day. Many perished in

Haifa Bay; 760 souls perished in the Black Sea on the ill-fated STRUMA because permission to enter Palestine was refused to them. But for this infamous White Paper they might have been saved. Had the doors of Palestine been wide open these last years of Nazi terror and had the mandatory government fully cooperated in the task, tens of thousands of additional refugees might have been saved from Hitler's mass execution.

In March of this year, the pitifully restricted immigration schedule permitted under the White Paper will come to an end. Only the 30,000 unused visas -- unused, principally because of the administrative difficulties put in the way by Palestine officials -- remain. Thereafter, no more Jews will be permitted into Palestine except on Arab sufferance and consent. This confronts the Jewish people and the whole civilized world with an appalling prospect. It is self-evident that Jewish homelessness will be widespread after the war. There will be hundreds of thousands of Jews, perhaps millions, who will seek new homes in a world which will be inhospitable to immigration. The struggle for existence in a ravaged post-war Europe will be harsh and bitter. Famine, poverty and misery will stalk over the face of that war-riven continent. There will be ruined economies, worthless currencies, social collapse and revolutions in every defeated country -- just as after the last war. The youth of half of half the world which has been indoctrinated with the racial and nationalistic mythologies of Nazi-Fascist dictatorship will be spiritually lost and unsuited to a democratic way of life which they have been taught to hate and despise -- and they will be virulent Jew haters. Jews will again be eyed sullenly as unwelcome economic competitors by millions of job-hungry and career-

hungry men. Economic hostility will once again be rationalized into the well-known and quite serviceable anti-Semitic thesis.

No doubt the Jews of Europe, following an Allied victory, will be restored to their political rights and to equality of citizenship. But they possessed these rights after the last war -- even minority rights in some of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and anti-Semitism was never so rampant and so vicious as after the last war.

Can Europe, can the world, can America, which is for all time to come so inextricably bound up with the rest of the world, permit this menacing situation to continue indefinitely after the war?

The Jewish people should be permitted and helped to develop their homeland in Palestine in such a way as to be able to drain off, in a relatively short time, two or three million Jews from the crowded and economically tensioned centers of central and eastern Europe. This will ease the pressures upon the Jews who will remain there, who will then cease to be foci of irritation, conflict, and unrest.

And this brings me back to what Mr. Hamilton Fish said. He told you a fine story of what he tried to do and earnestly tried to do about the establishment of other colonies, but you heard the conclusion of it. Nothing was done. We have had experience with other colonies. There was one recently founded in Santo Domingo in which we placed very high hopes but which perhaps will take care of only a few thousand souls, perhaps of only a few hundred souls.

There are no other opportunities for mass emigration of Jews anywhere

else in the world. There will be none. We wish 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; but it is with waves of immigration and not with trickles that we must concern ourselves. We Zionists are not opposed to Jewish immigration to any country in the world. Quite the contrary. We hope and pray all countries will open their doors to refugees. But those things do not happen.

We must not forget the experiences of Jewish refugees in the last 10 years. These experiences will be no different after the war. They may be even more difficult; for nations will then be in the grip of vast economic dislocations and they will be thinking in terms of helping their own people over the extremely formidable transition period when their national economies will be passing from a wartime to a peacetime footing. They will refuse to complicate their lives with large influxes of impoverished immigrants. The Jewish colonies are ready to expand and take in Jewish immigrants.

A free and open Palestine is the indispensable condition not only for a peaceful solution of this most obdurate problem of Europe, but also for the pacification of Europe and the world.

Statesmen should clearly understand this. If the problem of mass Jewish emigration and of the national homelessness of the Jewish people is not clearly faced and solved after the war, it will return over and over again to harass and unsettle the world. Reaction will exploit the

situation again and again. The defenseless position of the Jews was exploited by the Nazis to rise to power. They employed it as a weapon to achieve the disintegration of Europe. Fascist adventurers after the war will continue to exploit it. The Jewish problem is quite as much the world's problem as it is that of the Jews.

What the world will do concerning the Jewish people and concerning the restoration of its national life in Palestine after the war will be the true index of the nature and character of the entire program of world reconstruction. The world patterns of reconstruction will unerringly reflect the decisions which will be made concerning the Jewish people and its national status. If in the case of the Jewish people, which possesses no armies or navies, and which will emerge from the World War the most shattered of all peoples, the United Nations will act in a spirit of justice, vision, and true statesmanship, then there is hope that by the same spirit the entire world will be healed and saved.

Surely, the Jewish people are no less deserving than other peoples whose national independence and freedom have been guaranteed by the United Nations. They have been the worst victims of Nazi brutality, and their casualties have been proportionately the heaviest. The Jewish people desperately needs Palestine for its homeless millions now and after the war, and for its national security, dignity, and normalcy. Jews have shown a remarkable capacity for pioneering, for labor and sacrifice. They have built worthily and well in Palestine. They have made Palestine their own

again by their heroic labor, by their blood and sweat. Nearly all that is hopeful, promising, and progressive in that country today, the Jews have created.

What has been called the noblest enterprise of our time must not now be cruelly sapped and undermined.

These resolutions which have been introduced in the House and in the Senate, and which have received the endorsement of the leaders of both political parties, ask our Government to use its good offices, as it did once before, to assist a sorely tried and harassed people in accomplishing the task of rebuilding its national life in its ancestral home -- a task approved of by our Government and our people and by 52 other nations at the close of the last war -- a task, however, which cannot be accomplished without the free entry of Jews into the country and without the fullest opportunities for colonization and economic development. The reconstitution of Palestine as a Jewish commonwealth would be to us men of faith a fulfillment of prophecy and to all an act of historic justice to an ancient and long-martyred people.

44-24

Palestine True Index of Entire Program of World Reconstruction—Silver

Below is printed a portion of Dr. Abba Hillel Silver's statement to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday, February 15. He began with a brief historical background of the Zionist movement. He traced how the "ideal of national restoration dates from the year of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple in the year 70 A. D., and from the beginning of the widespread dispersal of the Jewish people." He went on to tell how the Jews have clung to Palestine all through Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Christian, and Turkish domination, to this very day.

He spoke in detail of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate. He pointed out that the provisions of the mandate clearly meant that Palestine was to be built up as a Jewish national state.

He told of the achievements of Jewish pioneering in the twenty years between the two World Wars.

The administration of Palestine has unfortunately not always been conducted on a plane corresponding to the high intentions of the framers of the Balfour Declaration, nor did it reflect the good will and unflagging sympathy of the English people whose historic friendship the Jewish people will never forget. Local British officials, though of high integrity, have shown little understanding of the processes involved in the building of the Jewish homeland, and there are always great difficulties associated with the upbuilding of a new homeland. They have not grasped the implications of the organic relationship between the Jewish people outside of Palestine, to whom the Balfour Declaration was issued, and the land which they administered. The rebuilding of the Jewish homeland implies a dynamic outlook. The outlook of British officials has been in the main static, based on the tacit assumption that Palestine alone and not the integration of large numbers of immigrants with an evolving Jewish homeland was their concern.

They have, therefore, tended to look upon the local difficulties associated with the upbuilding of the Jewish homeland as unnecessary disturbances of the status quo, instead of a natural part of the task assigned to them. No corrective to this attitude was applied by the home government in London. No consistent attempt was made to bring home to the Arabs of Palestine the fact that the Balfour Declaration was an interallied policy, and later, that the mandate was international law, and the first evidence of recalcitrance on their part—namely, the riots of May 1921—was rewarded by a temporary suspension of Jewish immigration.

Concession led to concession. The White Paper issued in 1922 declared that—

"the terms of the Balfour Declaration do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish national home, but that such a home should be established in Palestine."

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WRHS



This was the beginning of reinterpretation. It introduced an element of ambiguity into what had been quite clear till then.

The Palestine contemplated in the mandate had consisted of Transjordan and cis-Jordan. In the year 1922, Transjordan—three times the area of cis-Jordan—was closed to Jewish immigration.

In subsequent years, Palestine's British officials took the view that they were not primarily concerned with the facilitation of the creation of a Jewish homeland, but with the administration of the country in its existing condition.

This view has dominated the policies and actions of the Palestine administration ever since. The national rights of the Jewish people in relation to Palestine which had been internationally acknowledged and which alone gave legal basis for the mandatory presence there at all were progressively and consistently sacrificed.

Following the disturbances of 1936, a Palestine Royal Commission was sent to Palestine to investigate. Its report proposed to partition the country, to create an Arab and a Jewish state, and an area reserved for British administration.

A technical commission was then set up to work out the details of a partition plan. It finally declared that the partition plan was unworkable.

Following discussions in London in 1939, to which representatives of Arabs and Jews were invited and which brought no positive results, the British Government of the late Mr. Chamberlain prepared the White Paper of May 17, 1939. The House of Commons reluctantly consented to it during a tense period of international complications, only after the Government insisted on acceptance as a vote of confidence. The White Paper was formally disapproved by the Permanent Mandates Commission. It was never submitted for approval to the Council of the League of Nations, although article 27 of the mandate clearly states that—

"the consent of the Council of the League of Nations is required for any modifications of the terms of the mandate."

It was thus denied legal validity. However, despite all this, it was put into effect.

Terms of White Paper

Under the terms of this White Paper, Jewish immigration was limited to 10,000 a year for the next 5 years. A bonus immigration of an additional 25,000 was allowed in consideration of the plight of Jewish refugees. However, after March

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SILVER

(Continued from page 260)

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