



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Radio Jerusalem address, 1945.

Thurs. Dec. 6.

I feel deeply privileged to bring the greetings of the Jews of America to the Jewish people of Eretz-Israel. It is always a sacred privilege for any Jew to visit the Holy Land where one can hear the echoing footsteps of the ages and where the past closes in upon one with such mystic power. It is an especial privilege to visit Eretz-Israel at a time such as this which tries men's souls and which reveals whatever there is of promise, character and greatness in the life of a people.

This is my fourth visit to Eretz-Israel. I ~~have~~ visited it in 1920 soon after the first world war, and again in 1933 after the rise of Hitler. I was here in 1937 after the riots and now I am here in 1945 at the close of the second world war and on the morning after the terror at Givat Hayim, Shfayim and Rishpon. In fact I arrived on the very day which marked the fifth anniversary of the sinking of the "Patria".

Through these visits, spread over a period of a quarter of a century I have been able to observe the progress of an amazing enterprise, one of the most heroic enterprises in the history of our people and one of the most challenging adventures of the human spirit in modern times. I have seen the steady growth and unfoldment of this land and the vision, the undaunted social imaginative-ness, as well as the sacrificial loyalty of the men and women who have been building it. I have seen it all against the background of the numberless heart-breaking obstacles which were put in their way and the successive attempts which were made, either through outright violence or political manouevring or bureaucratic interference to impede, check and disrupt the work of their building. It makes one proud of the high faith and tenacity of purpose which have enabled these builders of Zion to overcome all these obstacles. Clearly there is here the solid durable spiritual stuff out of which great nations and cultures are fashioned.

And now on my fourth visit to Eretz-Israel I find the country poised eagerly for its greatest period of growth and expansion. The war is over and the accumulated energies, plans and resources which, because of the demands of the war, could not be directed into constructive channels, are now waiting for their release. Everywhere one senses an eagerness and a great straining to go forward. Hundreds of thousands of Jews from the ravaged lands of Europe and from the places of their people's slaughter and martyrdom are prayerfully waiting to come here and to bring with them their hopes, their dreams, their skills and their grateful devotion. American

Jewry, too, is prepared to help in all ways, through public funds and through private investments, in the rapid development of this country. This is true also of Jewries in other parts of the world. A considerable number of Jews from the United States, especially from among the young men who are now being demobilised, wish to come to settle here.

But all this potential progress and the great good it holds in store for all the inhabitants of this country and for all the neighbouring countries whose impoverished economies stand to benefit enormously from such a development, is being held in check and endangered by another of those periodic attempts to stifle the Jewish National Home. Mr. Bevin is resolved to continue the policy of liquidation so notably advanced by Malcolm MacDonald, and he has resorted to the well-known technique of another Commission of Enquiry. The United States, it is hoped, will now be a party to this final act of liquidation.

However, knowing the sentiments of the American people which have been expressed in hundreds of ways in recent years, knowing the implications of the pro-Zionist resolutions of both the major political parties which were included in their party platforms last year, aware of the oft-expressed support of the Jewish State given by American organised labour, and knowing intimately the attitude of the Congress of the United States, I feel confident that our country will not now be a party to such an act of national betrayal. President Truman has not changed his mind on the subject of the Jewish Commonwealth to which his party stands committed. He has changed his mind on the desirability of action in Congress at this time on the Taft-Wagner resolution which he approved of a few weeks ago. He believes - and we differ with him on it - that such action would prejudice the findings of the joint Anglo-American Commission of Enquiry to which he acceded after Prime Minister Attlee rejected his request that 100,000 displaced Jews of Europe be permitted immediately to enter Palestine.

The postponement of favourable action in the Congress of the United States on the Palestine resolution, if such postponement actually takes place, will be the second of the evil consequences which flow from this proposal of a Commission of Enquiry. The first of course is the prolongation of the White Paper policy with all its ~~illegal anti-Jewish~~ restrictive measures, both as regards immigration and land acquisition. It dooms our unfortunate people in Europe, already broken and ravaged by years of war and unspeakable carnage,

to prolonged suffering, and it upholds in effect ~~Nuremberg~~ racial laws as applied to the acquisition of land in the National Home of the Jewish people.

I also know the sentiments of the five million Jews in America. Never have they been so united as they are today in their demand for the immediate abrogation of the White Paper and for the fulfilment in letter and spirit of the Balfour Declaration and the terms of the Mandate. I have never known the Jews of America to be so aroused, so indignant and so determined. The mass demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of Jews in all the large and small cities of our country during the last few weeks were unprecedented not only as regards their size but also as regards their remarkable spontaneity and their deep earnestness.

The war years brought the Jews of America much closer to the problems of the Jews of Europe and to Eretz-Israel. They have become more sharply aware of their responsibility and of the role of leadership which destiny has imposed upon them following the destruction of so many great and old centres of Jewish life in Europe. The appalling tragedy of their brothers in Europe shocked them to their very depths and the great hour did not find them a small people. They poured out their resources to help their homeless and suffering fellow Jews. They tried to save as many of them as they could. If they accomplished so little in this direction of rescue it is due not to their indifference or to any lack of responsibility and fraternal feeling, but to the spiritual callousness of a world wherein all considerations of humanity suffered a universal breakdown and blackout. It was due perhaps also to their political immaturity as a group and to their inexperience in utilising their maximum strength to achieve the necessary objectives. But the Jews of America are learning.

Certainly the war years brought American Jews much closer to Eretz-Israel. The fact that so many of our menaced brothers were able to find sanctuary here and the fact that the Yishuv welcomed them and helped them in so brotherly a fashion endeared Eretz-Israel to the hearts of our people as never before. Likewise also the magnificent war effort of the Yishuv; and the story of its fighting men and of the Jewish Brigade brought a glow of pride to our hearts. Your heroic struggle to force open the doors which are shut against the remnants of our people and to carry on in the face of so many

deterrents have evoked the boundless admiration of American Jewry which is determined to stand shoulder to shoulder with you.

American Jewry is overwhelmingly Zionist. The Roper poll which was taken a few weeks ago showed that eight out of nine American Jews approve the re-establishment of Palestine as a Jewish State. We have, of course, our minority dissidents, our assimilationists and our quislings, but their number is relatively small, though their capacity for mischief and for confusing the minds of people is not to be under-estimated. The distinction which Mr. Bevin and others seek to make between Jews and Zionists is utterly unreal as far as American Jewry is concerned. There are among us, of course, non-Zionists and anti-Zionists, but not nearly as many as there were pro-Nazis in our country during the war - or in England for that matter.

500,000 American Jews fought in the war which has just ended. They fought bravely as proud citizens of a free and gracious land which they love. They fought against the Nazi-Fascist menace to civilisation. They fought for the traditional American conception of the inalienable rights of all men to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. They fought for the right of all peoples, great and small, to freedom. They also fought for the right of the Jewish people to freedom in its historic homeland, a right which is based on the historic connections of the people with the land and which was recognised and approved by the nations of the earth at the close of the first world war. The Jews, moreover, having shared so largely and participated so fully in this war are resolved that the Jewish people shall not be betrayed, that its sacrifices shall not be unrequited and that its millions of dead shall not go unremembered.

America has large and growing interests in the Middle East, none of which need be unwelcome ^{to the peoples here} for America has no imperial or territorial ambitions here or elsewhere. America may be interested in assisting the peoples of the Middle East to reach higher levels of economic and social development and well-being. It would be a mistake however to believe that such assistance can be had at the expense of the Jewish National Home. The American people is inclined to look upon a Jewish Palestine as a friendly outpost of American ideas and standards in this part of the world, because of the close ^{reference} contact ^{and} of the Jews of America with the Jews of Palestine.

Nor, in the long run, will America be drawn into any political arrangement which is aimed at circumventing a third power in this part of the world. There may be some people here and there who

entertain such hopes. There are undoubtedly those who are urging the need for such circumvention as an argument for appeasing those who are opposed to the Jewish National Home. It is my belief that American foreign policy in the long run will not be tied as a tail to the kite of any such project of power politics. America is not anti-British ~~an~~ or anti-Soviet. It is not pro-British or pro-Soviet. Its basic interests do not conflict with those of Russia or Great Britain in any part of the world and there are no irriconcilable differences between them. America ardently wants an international order which will ensure world peace and the well-being and peaceful progress of all peoples. It will throw all of its strength behind the United Nations Organisation. It will support the rights of all peoples to a free and democratic way of life. It will not consent to sacrificing the national rights of the Jewish people as part of a competitive scheme of imperial power politics.

I am rejoiced that having come to Palestine in such a difficult time I found among our people here ~~not~~ a spirit of despondency but one of high resolution, confidence and challenge. This is the spirit which wins through - the Maccabean spirit. I shall return to America and shall report on ~~which~~ ^{what} I have seen here. I shall summon American Jewry to fuller mobilisation in the defence of the Jewish Commonwealth. *State*

Jerusalem,
6.12.1945.

America and the Yishuv

Evaluating the Present Situation

By DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

President, Zionist Organization of America

The New Palestine 12-31-45

(English text of an address delivered in Hebrew by Dr. Silver and broadcast over Radio Jerusalem as a message from American Jewry to the Jewish people of Palestine.)

I FEEL DEEPLY privileged to bring the greetings of the Jews of America to the Jewish people of Eretz-Israel. It is always a sacred privilege for any Jew to visit the Holy Land where one can hear the echoing footsteps of the ages and where the past closes in upon one with such mystic power. It is an especial privilege to visit Eretz-Israel at a time such as this which tries men's souls and which reveals whatever there is of promise, character and greatness in the life of a people.

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Dr. Abba Hillel Silver talks with Jewish settlers at Givath Chayim, scene of the recent British attack. Dr. Silver attended sessions of the Executive of the Jewish Agency.

Dr. Silver's Message

While on his recent historic trip to Eretz Israel, Dr. Silver broadcast in Hebrew to the Yishuv an address in which he summoned American Jewry to "fuller mobilization in the defense of the Jewish State." His observations, gained from first-hand contact with the Yishuv, constitute a message dictated by the urgency of the hour to which we gladly yield this editorial space.

(Continued from Page 1)

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Sentiment of American People

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Closer Awareness of Responsibility

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AMERICAN JEWISH
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Jewish Palestine as Friendly Outpost

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