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Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Chicago address, 1946.

EXCERPTS FROM THE ADDRESS OF DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER
TO BE DELIVERED IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN, THURSDAY EVENING,
MARCH 21, 1946.

We believed that with the end of the war swift and decisive action would be taken by the victorious powers to salvage the remnants of our broken people and to remove the obstacles to rescue and salvation which, they claimed, had been unavoidable because of the exigencies of war. The Prime Minister of Great Britain had assured our leaders that as soon as the war was won, he would move to undo the mischief of the White Paper which he abhorred and to implement the rights of the Jewish people in their National Home. The late President Roosevelt had announced in March of 1944 that "the American Government had never given its approval to the White Paper of 1939" and in October of that year he pledged his support to bring about "the establishment of Palestine as a free and democratic Jewish Common wealth." We were, however, cruelly deceived. There has been neither boldness, nor vision, nor generosity -- nor even simple honesty -- in the attitudes of the governments concerned.

Prime Minister Attlee led his Government into one of the most shattering reversals in history. His party had eloquently championed the cause of Zionism for years.

In spite of its resolutions and commitments, Mr. Attlee turned down President Truman's humanitarian request in August, 1945 to admit immediately 100,000 displaced Jews in Palestine.

In lieu of acceding to President Truman's request, the shabby substitute of an Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry was offered by the British Government -- a patent device for delay and for the circumvention of clear and imperative obligations. It was clear to everyone that this Committee would only ascertain facts which were already ascertained and would hear views already widely heard and would bring in recommendations already pre-determined. Mr. Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, in announcing the appointment of the Committee, and in his subsequent

press conference, clearly revealed its true intent and purpose. The superfluous investigation of the refugee problem and of Palestine was but a cover-up and an occasion for the liquidation of Zionism.

In the meantime a bitter winter is taking its toll of our refugees in the camps of Central Europe. Myriads of them are degenerating physically and spiritually while the doors of Palestine remain closed to all but 1500 a month, Palestine finds itself under new defense regulations which amount to a regime of terror.

President Truman, I am afraid, in spite of his sincere intentions to be helpful, has unfortunately proved otherwise. He made a most commendable request of Attlee for 100,000 certificates and he thereby quite unintentionally narrowed the political solution for which the Jewish people was pressing to a question of refugee aid. But even on this request he weakened and acceded to the delaying device of a Committee of Inquiry.

President Truman helped to draft the Palestine plank which was adopted by the Democratic Party in Chicago in 1944: "We favor the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization, and such a policy as to result in the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth." He approved the Taft-Wagner Resolution before it was re-introduced last November. But he soon changed his mind and opposed Congressional action.

The Palestine Resolution which was adopted overwhelmingly by the Congress of the United States last December reflects the true sentiment of the elected representatives of the American people. The Resolution does not partake of the character of law. But unmistakably it is a forceful enunciation of the opinion of the greatest legislative body on earth, and it should therefore not be lightly regarded or brushed aside either by the President of the United States, by the State Department, or by the American members on the Committee of Inquiry.

The Arab peoples are all to receive their freedom and independence, and none begrudges it to them, though few of them died for freedom and none of them

perished in gas chambers. They have all been welcomed into the United Nations Organization. Even Transjordan is to be admitted, though its status as an independent state under the Palestine Mandate is far from clear. But not the Jewish people! Not the Jewish people whose sons fought on all the battlefronts of the world for the cause of freedom and whose war casualties far exceeded those of Great Britain and the United States combined. The Jewish people, though recognized as a nation and guaranteed a national home, must not be included among the United Nations. It must have no voice in the Assembly of the nations, and it must remain forever content to feed on the crumbs which fall from the tables of other peoples.

The strength and hope of our movement lie not alone in the fundamental justice of our cause but in the compulsion of an inescapable reality. That holds true of the Jewish refugee problem. It holds equally true of the indurate problem of Jewish national homelessness. It feeds anti-Semitism everywhere and everywhere anti-Semitism is the war-provoking weapon in the hands of reactionary or power-seeking political parties and governments.

Our strength and our hope also lie in the good-will and sympathy of the democratic peoples of the world, even where their governments for a time pursue policies in defiance of their true wishes. Scientific polls of American public opinion have shown how wide-spread is the sympathy for our cause among the American people.