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Zionist leader hails Palestine resistance, 1946.

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A STATEMENT

BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF THE AMERICAN ZIONIST EMERGENCY COUNCIL
and
PRESIDENT OF THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

I am proud of the men who a few days ago scuttled both British ships in Haifa Harbor which were being used to transport Jewish refugees forcibly to Cyprus. The descendants of the men of the Boston Tea Party will applaud them too, as well as all Americans who cherish the tradition of strong resistance to lawlessness and tyranny.

Palestine Jews who for years were forced to watch their kith and kin foully done to death in Hitler's Europe were told that nothing could be done by way of opening the gates of Palestine for them because the war was on. In bitterness they restrained their anger and resentment. Nay more, forty thousand of them volunteered to fight on the side of Great Britain, and they fought valiantly and well. It is now more than a year since the end of the war but the lawless policy of exclusion and discrimination still persists. Hundreds and thousands of the pitiable survivors of the Nazi gas chambers still languish in detention camps in Germany. Many more are fleeing from pogrom-ridden Poland.

The conscience of mankind, speaking through fair-minded people all over the world, has appealed for their admittance into Palestine. The President of the United States a year ago pleaded with Prime Minister Attlee to admit one hundred thousand of them. The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry unanimously recommended last May that 100,000 certificates be authorized immediately for the admission of these refugees into Palestine. British statesmen including the leaders of the present British Labor Government (before they came into office, of course) denounced this inhuman British policy.

But all to no avail: At this very moment, war-weary, life-afflicted refugees trying to reach the haven of Palestine, which fifty-two nations proclaimed after the last war to be the Jewish National Home, are being driven off by British guns, tear gas and fire hose. The Jews of Palestine, driven to desperation by British callousness and breach of trust, are bravely resisting, as free men should. British propaganda would have the American people believe that these patriots are terrorists, chauvenists and fanatics. On the contrary, they are the most peace-loving, hard-working and self-sacrificing people in the world. All they ask is the right to continue unmolested to build the Jewish National Home, whose pioneers they are, and whose right to build was attested by all the nations of the world including Great Britain and the United States.

To deny the right to Jews to come to Palestine is to revoke the right of the Jewish people to complete the building of its National Home. No one has given Great Britain the authority to revoke this right. Palestine is not a part of the British Empire. The sole justification for Great Britain remaining in Palestine is the obligation which it voluntarily assumed to facilitate Jewish immigration into that country, so that the Jewish National Home might be established there.

Any act of Great Britain which is calculated to restrict or retard the development of the Jewish National Home is both unlawful and immoral. Those who resist such acts of usurpation and tyranny are patriots, not terrorists. They are the Minute Men of 1946!

An astounding canard is being foisted on the American public by British propaganda. Great Britain, it is urged, is altruistically engaged in Palestine, at great cost to itself, to maintain law and order in that strife-torn country. It is trying hard to hold an even balance of justice between Jews and Arabs. This is the latest version of that time-honored legend that Great Britain is carrying the White Man's Burden in the backward regions of the world.

Britain is in Palestine to maintain the British Empire. It is filling up Palestine with armored divisions not to protect Jews against Arabs or Arabs against Jews, but to defend the British Empire against Russia. At the moment Great Britain is sacrificing Jewish rights in Palestine in another desperate Munich manoeuvre to serve its imperial interests by lining up the Arab world on its side against the Soviet Union. But such appeasement tactics, at the cost of law, justice and honor, will prove as harmful to the British Empire in the case of Palestine as it proved in the case of Czechoslovakia. The Arab world will not be kept loyal by the liquidation of the Jewish National Home.

Recently a proposal was put forward by the British and tentatively accepted by the American Deputy Cabinet Committee to divide Palestine into four zones and to confine the Jewish zone to some 1400 square miles of that little country. This area would represent about 3% of that Palestine which was originally proclaimed as the Jewish National Home by the Balfour Declaration. Transjordan, originally part of the Palestine mandate, was carved out of Palestine and set up as an independent Arab state by the unilateral action of Great Britain. It is now proposed further to constrict the Jewish National Home to some 15% of what remains. Even in this futuristic geographic capsule the Jewish people would not enjoy self-government nor control its own immigration. Furthermore this little ghetto in Palestine would be set up only after the United States had agreed to offer a bribe of \$300,000,000 to the Arabs in and out of Palestine.

Fortunately our government which was by way of approving these outrageous proposals, finally, as result of public indignation, repudiated them.

But Great Britain may yet attempt to impose its scheme upon a terrorized and stricken country. All its present acts of violence and cruelty are calculated to cower and subdue the Jews of Palestine into acquiescence.

There have been reports in the public press lately that the Jewish Agency has proposed the partition of Palestine into two states -- one Arab and one Jewish. The only Zionist body competent to revise the basic Zionist program is the Congress of the World Zionist Organization. This Congress has not met since 1939. Between sessions only the Actions Committee has authority to act for the movement. This body has not yet met to discuss this matter and has not authorized any such proposals as are reported in the press.

President Truman was elected on a platform which declared: "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." The Congress of the United States overwhelmingly approved the same objective eighteen months ago.

What has President Truman, his administration and the State Department done to press home this commitment of the Democratic Party and the expressed will of the American people?

I am persuaded that if they had put a tenth of the energy and determination behind this American policy which they put behind the three and three-quarter billion dollar loan to Great Britain, of which the majority of the American people did not approve, the Palestine problem would by now be in a fair way of being solved.

I see where Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson called the charges which were made a few days ago by Bartley C. Crum that officials in the State Department have consistently frustrated American policy on Palestine as false. Unfortunately Mr. Crum's charges are all to true, -- if by American policy is meant the off-repeated public statements of Presidents of the United States and the official resolutions of the Congress of the United States. I have personally had occasion to register a similar protest with Mr. Acheson and Loy Henderson, Chief of the Middle East Division, last May. Prior to that time the American Zionist Emergency Council presented to Secretary of State Byrnes a lengthy and detailed memorandum on this same subject.

There has been a long record of amazing and bewildering incongruities between what the President of the United States says and what the State Department does. We refuse to accept the alternative that the President of the United States and the State Department have a tacit understanding to give the Jews of the United States the run around!...

What we have said above in criticism of the actions of the British Government should not be interpreted as anti-British. We are not anti-British. We all have the highest regard and admiration for the people of Great Britain, for the high concepts and standards of democracy and law which they have achieved, and for the courage and bravery of their fighting men. But the best among them, I am sure, would be the first to acknowledge that their governments have not always practiced these principles in their international relations, and more especially in relation to the subject peoples within their empire. This unfortunately is true of all empires. But men who love freedom and justice and who, like us, are fighting for the right of an ancient and honorable people, which has suffered so much, to find peace at last in its historic home, cannot help but record that their present government is pursuing a woefully wrong-headed and dangerously blundering policy in regard to Palestine of which they themselves, loyal to their traditions, cannot approve.

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(Photo by Wide World)

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(Photo by Wide World)

Zionist Leader Hails Palestine Resistance

Dr. Abba Silver Says Fair-Minded People Deplore British Policy

(The following article by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver was written for the Boston Traveler while Dr. Silver was visiting in Plymouth. It is first statement on the current Palestine crisis and is copyrighted 1946 by the Boston Traveler.)

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Executive chairman of the American Zionist emergency council and president of the Zionist Organization of America.

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