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Zionist Organization of America, 1947.

By act. Silver
July 1947
n.Y.

TO THE DELEGATES OF THE 50TH CONVENTION OF THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

FELLOW ZIONISTS:

We have registered a significant milestone in the history of the Zionist movement in the United States. This is our Jubilee Convention celebrating a half century of labor and progress in the achievement of the historic purpose of our people to rebuild its national life in the Land of Israel.

Our beginnings were very humble. A relatively small number of American Jews attended the first conference held in New York City in 1898 which organized the Federation of American Zionists, under the presidency of Professor Richard Gottheil. The impassioned plea of Dr. Herzl had reached the shores of the United States and it had stirred the hearts and minds of a small group of men who caught the prophecy and the promise of his words. These men were soon denounced and bitterly attacked by those Jews who staked out a monopoly on American patriotism and who claimed to be the final authorities on what was practical and on what were the directives of Jewish history. Thus, Dr. Isaac M. Wise, addressing his Rabbinical colleagues at a convention held about this time spoke with hauteur of the "politician," Dr. Herzl, of the "new messianic movement over the ocean," and of some petty politicians who were being appointed in the United States as delegates to the Basle Congress. He regarded the Zionist movement as a "thoughtless Utopia .. a momentary inebriation or morbid minds and a prostitution of Israel's holy cause to a madman's dance of

unsound politicians." He was confident that it was all "an unpleasant episode of our history."

But far from being an "unpleasant episode," the upbuilding of the Jewish State in Palestine has become the major problem in Jewish life today and one of the great world problems upon which at the moment are centered the thought and conscience of the United Nations. "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." On second thought, however, it appears that the real builders of our people's destiny throughout the ages never rejected that cornerstone. It was always at the very foundation of our people's program of survival and redemption. Fifty years later finds American Zionism not composed of a small band of leaders and followers, but a vast army. American Jewry is today overwhelmingly Zionist. It is the organized opposition to Zionism which is today a sad and bedraggled little group, venomous and visionless snipers and sappers.

Life rather than the labors of men have brought this change about. But without the labors of men, without the inspiration of great leaders and the loyalty of their following, the shattering experiences of Jewish life in the two world wars and in the dark years which intervened would have resulted in utter spiritual demoralization and chaos instead of the fighting will to live and to make secure a great national future which the purposeful and hope-nurturing movement of national rebirth

inspired in the hearts of our people. Thus, organized American Zionism has a right to claim a share of the credit for a great task well done.

The Zionist movement in the United States has not only made its monumental contributions to the upbuilding of Palestine, but it has influenced decisively the development of Jewish life and of Judaism in this country. It has given definite direction to the unfoldment of American Jewish life. Whatever is constructive and creative in the spiritual life of American Jewry and in its forms of communal organization, whatever is positive and forward-looking can be traced in a large measure to the tremendous affirmations of basic Zionism. For Zionism is not merely a political program for the re-establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine. It is a philosophy of Jewish history, valid for Jewish communities throughout the world, guiding them to a sound, dignified and self-respecting existence in harmonious adjustment to the life about them.

The first world war confronted the Zionist movement with its first major crisis and American Zionism was summoned to take over what "virtually involved a trusteeship for the world movement and for the Zionist institutions in Palestine." American Zionism met the challenge and matched the hour. The second world war again summoned American Zionism to assume the gravest responsibilities for the future of our movement. Here again, I believe, we were not found wanting either in political

action or in material support.

Outside of the Yishuv, America today is the most important center of Jewish life and of Zionist activity. The destruction of European Jewry, the growth of the American Jewish community and the role of the United States in the world today has brought this about. As our movement enters a great hour of decision, it can count upon the unswerving faithfulness, the sacrificial loyalty, the courage and discipline of a well-organized, well-informed and mature Zionist movement in the United States, re-inforced by the overwhelming pro-Zionist sympathies of American Jewry.

Fellow delegates: A full report of the activities of your organization during the past year has been prepared and made available to you in printed form. I hope that you will take the time to read it. You will get a good picture, I believe, of what your organization, through its numerous departments, accomplished during the past year, and to what uses the funds which you made available to it were put. I think, by and large, it is a satisfactory record though, by no means a completely satisfying one. I hope that we shall never be completely satisfied. Much more could have been done if we had at our disposal more funds and more manpower. Your Administrative Committee, your Executive Committee and your Inner Committee met regularly throughout the year and capably directed and supervised the work of the professional staff and defined plans and programs for the better functioning of our

organization and our propaganda.

We registered a gratifying increase in our membership, though we did not reach our goal which we set. The income of our Expansion Fund also exceeded by a substantial margin last year's income. But here, too, we did not attain the goal which we set at the last convention. It is possible that the income during the next four months may bring you nearer to that goal. Resistance was encountered to the raising of the quotas to the Expansion Fund. Here and there some Zionists took it upon themselves to discount the Fund, to question it or to push it aside for other funds whose priority has not at all been acknowledged by our organization. The Expansion Fund was created by the Zionist Organization of America when it was realized that the income from membership dues was altogether inadequate to meet even a minimum program of activities in the United States. Our organization is frequently challenged and oft-times quite correctly by good Zionists: "hy don't you do this? and why don't you do that? "hy don't you expand this activity and why don't you subsidize this worthy project? Without indicating ways of financing these desirable activities, such criticism must inevitably remain unavailing. Our organization is faced with the alternative either of raising annually an adequate Expansion Fund, or of raising its membership dues. Proposals will be made at this convention to meet this situation. I hope that the delegates will give earnest consideration to this

basic fiscal problem of the organization, upon a proper solution of which depends its proper functioning.

You may recall that at the last convention, I spoke of the need of expanding our work in the field of Chalutzit. American Zionism cannot rest satisfied with making only material contributions to the reconstitution of the Jewish National Home, nor with participating in political activity. We can and must supply also manpower. There are splendid young men and women in our movement who are eager to go to Palestine and to give of their talents and their labor to the great cause. Many, many more can be inspired to do so.

During the year, we organized a Chalutzit Commission and we have appropriated a sum of money for its activities. The Plugat Aliyah, representing the young men and women among the General Zionists of America who are preparing themselves for life in Palestine. They are drawn from the ranks of Masada, Young Judea and Jujior Hadassah. The Plugat Aliyah now has about 150 members and you will be pleased to learn that they have recently acquired a new Hachshara farm near Poughkeepsie, N.Y. which has available facilities for training in agriculture and mechanics. If our funds would permit, I would recommend for the coming year the engaging of a permanent executive director who would devote himself exclusively to the task of expanding the Chalutz movement among the General Zionists in the United States.

Considerable proress was made during the year in Zicnist youth work.

There has been an increase in the membership of the youth organizations which are sponsored by our Youth Commission and also in their programs and educational activities. Your organization appropriates a very substantial sum of money annually to Youth education and the districts and regions locally contribute an even larger sum. Likewise, the Hadassah matches the contribution of the Zionist Organization of America. There is a general feeling that much more can and should be done in this important field and that the problem is not altogether a fiscal one. A great deal of thought has gone into a restudy of the whole subject and some helpful plans may be looked for.

You will be pleased to learn that the Zionist Organization of America will again this year award four new scholarships to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. It will be recalled that there are presently three young Americans studying at the Hebrew University on such scholarships.

Considerable thought was devoted at the time of the 22nd World Zicnist Congress last December to the program and work of General Zionism. One of the gratifying results of the Congress was the emergence of the World Conference of General Zionists as a more strongly knit and better oriented confederation within the Zionist movement. As a result of its decisions a central office of the World

Confederation of General Zionists was established in Tel Aviv, a European office in Paris, and an American office in New York. The Confederation elected ^{the} former President of the ZOA, Dr. Israel Goldstein, as its chairman. The World Conference voted to establish a General Zionist Fund for constructive work in Palestine similar to funds raised by other parties within the Zionist movement. The Zionist Congress took official recognition of the establishment of this General Zionist Fund. The ZOA appropriated the sum of \$25,000 to the organization budget of the World Confederation. The ZOA also initiated the allocation of a half million dollars by the United Palestine Appeal for the General Zionist Fund, and thereby enabled the Confederation to start a series of projects in Palestine, among them a General Zionist kibbutz in the Negev, another colony near Ra'anana, a new agricultural training center, a housing center for hundreds of new immigrants, and a special department for new immigrants which renders many forms of assistance to them as they arrive in the country.

Your national executive also approved of a plan to establish a colony in Palestine to commemorate the 50th anniversary of our organization upon 12,500 acres of land to be redeemed in the next two years through the Jewish National Fund.

During the year, your organization issued a pamphlet on the program of General Zionism, by Dr. Israel Goldstein, in order to acquaint our membership with the program and activities of General Zionism. From this pamphlet I should like

to quote the following paragraph: "Since parties are inevitable in a free functioning, democratically constituted body politic, General Zionists everywhere ought to see to it that in Palestine and on the way to Palestine General Zionists have the same opportunity as others to prepare for Palestine and to find self-fulfillment in Palestine. With all respect for the social idealism of the socialist Mapai and for the religious loyalty of the Orthodox Mizrachi, General Zionism everywhere would not like to see the Yishuv dominated by the one or by the other. We believe that a strong center party would be a wholesome balance in the Yishuv. We believe that in addition to a strong working class, which also includes General Zionists, Palestine economy needs a strong middle-class and should encourage private industry, for the economic absorptive capacity of the country will depend chiefly upon industrial expansion.

"At the same time we believe in one Labor Federation (Histadruth) with which labor groups with different ideologies maintaining their separate identities should, however, be affiliated. At one of the sessions of the Confederation of General Zionists, at Basle, a proposal to establish a separate labor federation for General Zionist workers was overwhelmingly defeated. We believe in a unified educational system for Palestine. We believe that the national interests should be the paramount interests in Palestine, that the national funds and the national institutions should

be paramount not only in name but in fact."

Time does not permit me to comment upon the work of all departments of our organization during the year. I should like only to refer to the fine work which was done by the department of Publicity and Public Relations. No opportunity was lost to tell the story of Palestine and to interpret the news about Palestine properly and effectively. The "New Palestine News Reporter," which was published regularly twice a month during the year, was so favorably received by our members that your Administrative Council approved its conversion into a weekly. The "New Palestine," which was issued six times during the year has maintained a high standard of literary excellence and has been a fine vehicle for our movement.

Our Speakers' Bureau did a most creditable job in spreading the Zionist message among Zionists and non-Zionists, Jews and non-Jews in this country. Under its auspices, over 500 speakers addressed more than 3500 meetings during the year. Program guides and material designed to assist district program chairmen in the preparation of their meetings were provided. Numerous pamphlets were published. Three important books were likewise issued: the Palestine Yearbook, the History of the Zionist Movement, by Dr. Israel Cohen, and a fine text-book for the study of the Hebrew language by adults, "Hebrew -- Self-Taught." The e is now in preparation a comprehensive history of Zionism in the United States.

The Committee on Unity was busily at work during the year. Its activities are directed principally to the non-Zionist and anti-Zionist elements within American Jewry. It has been our agency of defense against hostile propaganda, principally that organized by the bitter-end anti-Zionists. Discussions are now progressing looking towards expanding the Committee on Unity into a Joint Committee of all existing Zionist organizations in the United States, for the task of counteracting hostile propaganda is not exclusively the function of the Zionist Organization of America.

Your organization, as such, and its tens of thousands of members throughout the country cooperated energetically this year, as in previous years, in the United Jewish Appeal which is endeavoring to raise the large sum of 170 million dollars in 1947. The United Palestine Appeal receives its entire income from this campaign. In 1946 it received over 32 million dollars. Zionists readily understand how much all of our work of construction and upbuilding, of land purchase and colonization, of education and immigration in Palestine depends upon the successful outcome of the UJA campaign. The 1947 campaign has not yet reached its goal. Many communities have not yet held their campaigns. Others have as yet failed to reach their quotas. I strongly urge upon every member of the ZOA to give of his time, energy and his substance most generously to this great campaign to aid our stricken ~~xxxx~~ brethren

in Europe and the Yishuv in Palestine.

There are many men and women whom I should like to single out for a special word of praise and commendation for work well done, but I am afraid, that the list would be too long. I do want, however, to express my profound gratitude to the officers of the Executive and of the Administrative Committees who have so loyally cooperated with me during the year. I was forced to lean very heavily upon them, for other Zionist duties which I had assumed in connection with the American Zionist Emergency Council and with the Jewish Agency for Palestine made great demands upon my time and energy.

Twice since the last convention, I was out of the country to attend Zionist conference abroad. Without the support of Dr. Emanuel Neumann, who took over during my absence and who at all times through the year remained close to the operations of the organization, giving to it of his great wisdom, political understanding and administrative skill, it would have been most difficult for me to carry on. He was a tower of strength to our organization, as well as to the entire Zionist cause.

Your chairman of the National Administrative Council, Mr. Daniel Frisch, served the organization most energetically, traveling far and wide in behalf of our Expansion Fund and Membership campaign, and participating in the councils of our movement both here and abroad.

Our Treasurer, Mr. Abraham Goodman, our Associate Treasurer, Mr. Mark Sugarman, and Mr. Milton Pollack, Chairman of our Finance Committee, performed their duties in a most commendable manner and saw to it that our organization, even though it was expanding its activities and increasing its expenditures, should not go into the red.

I should like to thank Rabbi Irving Miller, who acted as chairman of the Inner Committee and looked after the day by day work of the organization after Dr. Neumann relinquished that post to devote himself to other urgent Zionist activities; Mr. Joseph Goldberg, chairman of our Membership Campaign; Mr. Dewey D. Stone, chairman of our Expansion Fund; Mr. Herman Weisman, chairman of the Youth Commission; Dr. Moshe Davis and Rabbi Max Vorspan, co-chairmen of the Hebrew Arts Committee; Dr. Harry J. Levine, chairman of the Jewish National Fund; and Louis J. Schwefel, chairman of the Chalutzit Commission.

As I retire from the office of the Presidency of the ZOA, I wish to thank particularly the members of the professional staff for their unfailing loyalty and for the exceptional quality of their service. I am personally greatly indebted to them for their unfailing courtesy and for their readiness to do far more than should be required of a public servant. To their fine abilities they added a full measure of consecration. I want to thank Dr. Sidney Marks, our Executive Director,

under whose over-all direction our organization has progressed during recent years; Mr. Ernest E. Barbarash, director of our Publicity and Public Relations Department and editor of the "New Palestine News Reporter"; Dr. S. Bernstein, editor of Dos Yiddishe Volk and director of our Palestine Bureau; Dr. Ludwig Lewisohn, editor of the New Palestine; Mr. Carl Alpert, director of the Educational Department; Mr. Manuel Posy, director of the Expansion Fund; Rabbi Jerome Unger, director of the Committee on Unity for Palestine; Mr. Herschel Auerbach, technical administrator and director of our Veterans Bureau; and Mr. Henry S. Stern, chief auditor.

Fellow delegates: Since our last convention, a World Zionist Congress was held and the issue of Palestine has been referred to the United Nations.

The World Zionist Congress was held in Basle, Switzerland in December, following ^{by} about two months our convention which was held in Atlantic City. The ZOA played an important role at the Congress. Your delegation to the Congress worked for the acceptance by the Congress of the political position which was adopted, I believe unanimously, by the convention in Atlantic City. We took no position that had not been previously approved by our convention, and all the important issues which were discussed at the Congress had been thoroughly discussed and acted upon by the Political Committee of our convention and by the convention plenum.

Let me recall to you the political resolution which was adopted by our convention last year. "The annual convention of the ZOA re-affirms the historic claims and aspirations and the legally established rights of the Jewish people to Palestine. These rights which have been formally embodied in solemn international covenants apply to the whole of mandated Palestine, undivided and undiminished, as the territory in which the Jewish people shall re-establish its national existence as a free and equal member of the family of nations...Only the early establishment of a free Jewish State can guarantee free entry of Jews into the homeland, full opportunity for colonization and economic development, security against oppression and the attainment by the Jewish people of national freedom on their ancestral soil... The convention directs the officers of the ZOA and requests the delegates to the forthcoming World Zionist Congress to pursue a firm policy for the fulfillment of the legal rights of the Jewish people to Palestine and the early re-establishment of the Jewish State."

This is the position which the American delegation advocated and championed at the Basle Congress.

This, substantially, is also the resolution which was adopted by the World Zionist Congress: "The 22nd Zionist Congress re-affirms the following political demands repeatedly voiced by the organs of the Zionist Organization: that Palestine

be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the democratic world; that the gates of Palestine be opened to Jewish immigration; that the Jewish Agency be vested with the control of immigration into Palestine and with necessary authority for the upbuilding of the country."

Both the convention of the ZOA and the World Zionist Congress refused to adopt partition as the Zionist program. To this day no competent Zionist authority has adopted it. The Executive of the Jewish Agency, meeting in Jerusalem in March of this year, adopted the following resolution: "a) When appearing before the United Nations and its member states, the Executive and its representatives will present the full political program of the Zionist Movement as formulated by the last Zionist Congress; (b) Representatives of the Jewish Agency will insist upon full discharge of the Mandate so long as British authority remains in Palestine wherein it has no other legal basis than the Mandate; (c) Representatives of the Jewish Agency will be empowered to examine the possibility of other solutions which will safeguard the rights of the Jewish people to uninterrupted immigration and wide settlement and assure the creation of a Jewish State -- without committing the Zionist movement to an advance acceptance."

There is no new departure here from the position adopted by the ZOA or by the World Zionist Congress. You may recall that in my message to the convention last

year in Atlantic City, I stated: "When proposals will be made to us by Governments which we will find truly reasonable and which will meet our fundamental needs and satisfy our national aspirations and our sense of justice, the whole movement will be prepared, I am sure, to give them every serious consideration. But such proposals have definitely not been made to us by anyone. So far they represent the wishful thinking of certain Zionists who have begun to act, in relation to the Zionists who disagree with them, as if partition were actually in the bag. Sound and just proposals are bound to be made to us sooner or later, if we do not lose our nerve, and if we are not misled by artful political manipulators who outsmart themselves.

"Until such time there is nothing else for us to do but to carry on as energetically and determinedly as heretofore, insisting upon our historic and legal rights to Palestine, our rights under the Mandate. There are no other legal or political realities in the situation, at present. There are no partition proposals before the Zionist movement. It is along the line of our historic claims and legal rights to the whole of Palestine that we must continue our struggle -- and unfortunately the whole of Palestine has now come to mean one-third of Palestine, for we have already been victimized by catastrophic partition in 1922 when Transjordan was torn away."

This is the position which we took at the World Zionist Congress. Before the Political Committee of the United Nations, I and the other spokesmen of the Jewish

Agency presented the full Zionist program and demands. I trust that this sound and logical position will be maintained by us at the hearings before the Special Committee of Inquiry of the United Nations, which is now in Palestine.

We also took action at our convention last year on the then moot question as to whether we should attend the London-Arab-Jewish Round Table conference which Mr. Bevin had convoked. The convention adopted the following resolution: "The convention notes the failure of the London Conference on Palestine to achieve a solution of the Palestine problem. The course of the Conference to date, and its adjournment for two and a half months without the slightest change in the status of Jewish immigration into Palestine confirms the view that it prerepresents a further dilatory device following a long series of delaying tactics invented by the British Government to deflect public criticism. The wisdom of Jewish participation in the conference is thus open to question. The convention is confident that representatives of the Jewish Agency for Palestine will continue to decline an invitation to this or any conference unless there is adequate assurance that the purpose of the discussion will be the implementation of the legally established rights of the Jewish people, the furtherance of immediate immigration and the ~~and~~ early establishment of the Jewish state."

The 22nd World Zionist Congress adopted a similar resolution: "The

Congress is resolved that in the existing circumstances, the Zionist movement cannot participate in the London Conference. If a change should take place in the situation, the General Council of the Zionist Organization shall consider the matter and decide whether or not to participate in the Conference."

Thus, the position which we took at the convention was likewise adopted by the Congress, and the wisdom of the position was vindicated by the failure of the informal negotiations which the representatives of the Jewish Agency carried on soon after the Congress with the British Government during the period when the British Government was also carrying on formal negotiations with the representatives of the Arabs. Many felt that our negotiations were carried out in violation of the spirit of the Congress resolution. Be that as it may, the utter failure of these negotiations indicated that the position which we took was completely justified. Partition was discussed during these negotiations, but the British Government gave no indication that it was prepared to accept it regardless of how reasonable and practical our representatives regarded it and how much of a sacrifice of our rights it involved. The eloquent proponents of partition in our midst played their trump cards in London and lost. They came back chastened. But their drooping spirits have since been revived and they are again impatiently tugging at the leash, eager to rush forward with partition proposals, unwilling to wait and see what proposals will be made to us.

On the subject of resistance, your convention last year adopted the following resolution: "The ZOA recognizes that the Yishuv through its appropriate organs must be the decisive factor in determining the extent of its resistance to the illegal policies of the British Government and the forms which such resistance may take, and it resolves that in so far as the responsible elements of the Yishuv embark upon policies of non-cooperation or resistance they shall receive the wholehearted support of the Zionist movement, of the whole Jewish people and of freedom-loving people everywhere. You will note that the resolution states that "the appropriate organs" of the Yishuv must decide on all questions related to resistance and that we shall support the "responsible elements of the Yishuv" when they embark on policies of non-cooperation or resistance. Our organization never recognized the right of dissident groups to carry on resistant activities on their own in defiance of the control and discipline of the appropriate organs of the Yishuv. We recognized, however, the fact that these dissident groups do in fact exist. We saw the dangers of civil strife developing between Jews and Jews in Palestine as a result of possible conflicts between them and the Haganah to the great comfort and delight of the Mandatory regime, which is the prime disturber of the peace of Palestine, and which is primarily responsible for the bitterness which exists and which expresses itself at times in acts of desperation which we all deplore. While condemning the acts of these dissident groups, we have urged that a way should be found to coordinate the activities of all

elements in Palestine who are determined to resist the iniquitous regime of the White Paper.

The World Zionist Congress adopted a similar position: "The Congress declares that the persistent violation of the rights of the Jewish people has placed the Zionist movement and the Yishuv under the necessity and moral compulsion to resist unceasingly and with utmost vigor the present policy of the Mandatory which being based on the White Paper is devoid of all legal or moral validity. The Zionist movement will continue to extend to the Yishuv every possible support in its determined struggle to protect the vital interest of the Jewish people and its inalienable rights including the right to immigration, settlement and self-defense. The Congress is confident that in this struggle the Jewish people has the sympathy of all friends of freedom and lovers of justice throughout the world. While upholding the right of the Yishuv to resist the policies of the present oppressive regime in Palestine, the Congress condemns murder and the shedding of innocent blood as a means of political warfare. The terrorist campaign to which certain dissident groups in Palestine have resorted in defiance of Jewish national authority serves to distort the true character of the Yishuv in the eyes of the world and to defeat rather than promote its legitimate struggle. The Congress pledges its full support of the Zionist Movement to the Yishuv in its efforts against terrorism. It calls upon

the members of the dissident organizations to desist from further bloodshed and to submit to the national discipline of the organized Yishuv and the Zionist movement."

Thus, on the three principle issues, the World Zionist Congress and the Convention of American Zionists were substantially at one. Those who favored partition, who insisted upon going to the London Conference unconditionally and who were opposed to all forms of resistance were naturally disappointed with the results of the Congress. They were bitter and unsparing in their criticism and they heaped mountains of abuse upon the delegates of the ZOA to the Congress for the role which they played in faithfully carrying out the instructions which they had received from the Convention of the Zionist Organization of America.

I believe now, as I believed then, that in spite of the personal embroilments, party strife and the difficulties resulting from the fact that it was the first Congress after a lapse of seven years during which time Jewish life was shaken to its very foundations, the World Zionist Congress acted wisely and responsibly and that it gave directives to our work which it would be well for us to continue to follow most scrupulously.

I am proud of the role which the American Zionist Organization played at Basle and I sincerely hope that American Zionists will continue to exercise independence of judgment and continue to assume a large measure of responsibility for the political conduct of our movement. Ours is the largest Jewish community in the world today, as

well informed and mature as any Jewish community in the world, and the United States is the most important center for the political activities of our movement.

"e have much to give to our movement besides money. Palestine has a right to expect of us active and eager participation in planning political/and direction.

Fellow delegates: Our case is not ^W sub judice in the United Nations. A new Committee of Inquiry, this time an international one, is at work, to ascertain the facts about Palestine. Within two months it will make its report to the Assembly of the United Nations. One advantage to us in the referral of the Palestine matter to an international body is that now the whole world and not only Great Britain will have the right to express itself on our claims which after all were originally defined by the whole world, in an international document -- the Palestine Mandate. With Great Britain we had come to the end of the road, and at the end of the road there was a stone wall.

At the Special Session of the United Nations on Palestine which was held on April 28-May 15, we scored a few tactical gains. They are not to be confused with ultimate and substantial gains. The status of the Jewish Agency was recognized, though a determined effort was made, in pursuance of a long established policy on the part of the Palestine Mandatory, to reduce the status of the Jewish Agency and to elbow it out of the picture whenever possible. You are undoubtedly acquainted

from press reports with the long debates and the protracted maneuverings which finally resulted in the instruction which was given by the Assembly of the United Nations to the First Committee (Political and Security) to grant the Jewish Agency a hearing. The Jewish Agency was the only body to speak for the Jewish people at this Special Assembly. Since that time the Jewish Agency has been granted the right of a permanent liaison representative with the Committee of Inquiry.

Another tactical gain was the defeat of the efforts of the Arab bloc to place the subject of the immediate independence of Palestine on the Agenda of the Special Sessions of the United Nations, and later on to embody it in the Terms of Reference for the Committee of Inquiry. This was followed by another defeat -- the effort which was made to dissociate the problem of the Jewish refugees in the DP camps from the Palestine problem, and to direct the Committee of Inquiry to limit its investigation to Palestine exclusively.

A positive and substantial gain for our movement was the declaration of the spokesman for the Soviet Union, Andrei Gromyko, which disclosed for the first time the official attitude of the Soviet Government to Zionism. In a real sense it was a revolutionary statement. It acknowledged and endorsed the national aspirations of the Jewish people. "It is well known," he said, "that the aspirations of an important part of the Jewish people are bound up with the question of Palestine,

and with the future structure of that country. This interest is comprehensible and completely justified." He spoke movingly of the terrible sufferings of the Jewish people during the last war and of the frightful condition in which "the great mass of the Jewish people find themselves after the war." It is the duty of the United Nations to concern itself with this problem. "The experience of the past," he said, "particularly during the time of the second World War, has shown that not one state of Western Europe has been in a position to give proper help to the Jewish people and to defend its interests or even its existence." This fact explains the aspiration of the Jewish people for the creation of a state of their own. He expressed the thought that the creation of a single Arab-Jewish State with equal rights for the Jewish people and the Arab people might be a possible solution, but if their relations have deteriorated to a point where that was no longer realizable, the division of Palestine into two independent, separate states, one Jewish and one Arab, should be considered.

It was heartening to have this encouraging support for the basic contention of Zionism from a Great Power whose position up to that moment was very uncertain. You will pardon me if I refer to a statement of mine which I made before the 1945 convention of the ZOA when I assumed the office of Presidency:

"We must prepare the minds of the leaders of the nations of the world with knowledge and understanding, so that our case will be properly understood and our cause adequately supported. There is much work to be done in Washington and in London and also in other capitals of the world. I do not know why the Soviet Union was not invited on the Commission of Inquiry. Surely the Soviet Union is interested in the problem of the displaced Jews of Europe, and surely the problems of the Middle East cannot find their complete solution without the good will and helpful cooperation of the closest and most powerful neighbor. Our propaganda must now take on a global character."

At the convention of the American Jewish Conference held on February 18, 1946, I stated: "In this connection I should like to suggest that we should be on guard against those who would like to tie the Zionist movement to one or another of present-day rival ideologic groups, Soviet Socialism vs. Social Democracy. There are those who resent every approach made to win over the sympathy of the Soviet Government to our cause. They call it 'flirting,' and point the finger of derision at Zionists whenever some anti-Zionist statement or act emanates from Soviet or pro-Soviet sources. This is an amazing phenomenon in Jewish life which can only be attributed to a blind and bitter partisanship which carries over from an area which is not related to Jewish life to a specifically Jewish issue of gravest moment.

"We were not and are not discouraged in our efforts to win over Great Britain, even though we have been grievously disappointed time and again, and the latest developments are the most disappointing of all. We were not and are not discouraged in our efforts to win over the President of the United States and our State Department even though heretofore we have encountered considerable misunderstanding and resistance there. No one has criticized or derided us for carrying on intensive work with these governments. No one has criticized or derided us for trying to establish contacts with other governments in Europe, South and Central America and other parts of the world. Why, then should the Zionist movement regard itself as in any way inhibited from trying to win understanding and friendship for our movement from one of the greatest powers on earth?

"The Arabs are certainly not averse to carrying on their propaganda both in the direction of Great Britain and of the Soviet Union. My regret is not that we have tried, but that we have not tried hard enough, or soon enough. At the moment, the attitude of the Soviet Government -- insofar as the sparse evidence can indicate an attitude -- does not seem to be favorable to us. But there is nothing final about it. Some of us recall that up to a few months ago, even more definite evidences seemed to point to a favorable and a friendly attitude. The present attitude may or may not change again in the future. We may not succeed. But we

certainly owe it to ourselves to do everything in our power to see that that attitude does change, and in our favor."

We have made adequate preparations to present our case in a satisfactory manner to the Committee of Inquiry of the United Nations. I question, however, whether the Committee will unearth any new facts which were not revealed to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry a year and a half ago and to the numerous other committees of inquiry which have made of little Palestine and the Palestine problem the most thoroughly investigated terrain in the world. I doubt, too, whether any new formula for the solution of the problem will emerge from this Committee. Undoubtedly the Committee of Inquiry is approaching the problem in a most earnest and commendable spirit. Undoubtedly the United Nations, for the sake of solving this grave international problem and for the sake of its own prestige and the future effectiveness of UN will do its utmost to find a solution. But in the last analysis, the solution will depend upon the acquiescence of the three Great Powers, and more especially, of the United States.

The Assembly of the United Nations has only the power of recommendation. Great Britain, through its spokesman, Sir Alexander Cadogan, has already made secure for itself a way out by declaring that "The United Kingdom should not have the sole responsibility for enforcing a solution which is not accepted by both parties

and which we cannot reconcile with our conscience."

It may be assumed that the British Government will press for the acceptance of its Morrison-Grady proposals in the revised and perhaps even less acceptable form. Clearly there is no hope for a solution there. If the United States will continue to remain in Great Britain's corner as it did throughout the sessions of the Special Assembly of the United Nations, then whatever the recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry will be, they will be utterly doomed. It will not be very long before they, too, will be gathering dust on the shelves along-side of the report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, and all the other reports. In fact it is quite difficult to understand how a serious minded committee of inquiry can bring in any recommendations for a political solution of a political problem without first ascertaining the prospects of such recommendations being adopted by those powers who, in the last analysis, must assume the responsibility for implementing them.

Great Britain has indicated its position time and again unmistakably. It wishes to remain in control of the country for as long as possible and to confine the Jewish development in Palestine to as narrow limits as possible. It can find no fault in its administration of Palestine up to now. The fault is all with the Jewish Agency, the Arabs, the Jewish educational system and the higher social and cultural standards of the Jews. It is opposed to the establishment of a Jewish State

in the whole or in a part of Palestine. It is opposed to granting the Jewish people full control of immigration even in a limited area within a cantonized Palestine. The Soviet Government has indicated in broad outline what it is prepared to approve of. The Soviet influence in the United Nations is considerable, but not as extensive as that of the United States.

Where does the United States Government stand at the moment? No one knows.

At the Special Assembly of the United Nations, the U.S. delegation gave no indication whatsoever although many governments expected the United States, in view of its long record of declarations on the subject of the Jewish National Home, to give some lead to the deliberations and to indicate an attitude, as did the Soviet Union. The United States delegation contented itself with taking a position which technically may have been justified, namely: that the whole purpose of the Special Assembly was to appoint a Committee of Inquiry and that therefore it should not declare itself on the substance of the question. It vigorously opposed the granting of a hearing to the Jewish Agency on the same ground, although the Arab delegations in the Assembly took occasion, time and again, to argue their case substantively and to carry on a vigorous anti-Zionist propaganda. It was only under the pressure of public opinion that the United States delegation rather ungraciously yielded and agreed that the Jewish Agency should be allowed to appear

before the Political Committee.

Since the conclusion of the Special Session, our government has continued to remain rather tight-lipped. It has taken the position again on technical grounds, that inasmuch as the Committee of Inquiry is now at work it would be interpreted as an attempt to influence it if the U.S. Government were to make any declarations at this time. The government is not presently inclined to define in more specific terms the policy announced by President Truman on October 4 of last year, at which time he stated: "The Jewish Agency proposed a solution of the Palestine problem by means of the creation of a viable Jewish state in control of its own immigration and economic policies in an adequate area of Palestine instead of in the whole of Palestine. It proposed further the immediate issuance of certificates for 100 thousand Jewish immigrants. This proposal received widespread attention in the United States both in the press and in public forums. From a discussion which has ensued, it is my belief that a solution along these lines would command the support of public opinion in the United States. I cannot believe that the gap between the proposals which have been put forward is too great to be bridged by men of reason and good will. To such a solution our government could give its support."

We have been unable to receive any clarification or amplification as to how this gap is to be bridged nor any additional light on the further declaration in that statement that "should a workable solution for Palestine be devised, I would be willing to recommend to the Congress a plan for economic assistance for the development of that country."

Nor have we been able to receive any additional information on the reply which the President made to King Ibn Saud on October 28, 1946, in which he stated that "the Jewish National Home, however, has not as yet been fully developed" and "it is only natural that this government should favor at this time the entry into Palestine of considerable numbers of displaced Jews in Europe, not only that they may find shelter there, but also that they may contribute their talents and energies to the upbuilding of the Jewish National Home."

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It is only fair to apprise our government that there is fear in certain quarters that our government may wish to have these and other declarations and resolutions of the last twenty-five years brushed aside and ignored as embarrassing to it as it proceeds to develop its Middle East policy along the broad outlines of the so-called Truman Doctrine. We would be less than frank if we did not register the apprehension which exists among many in our ranks that our government, far from taking earnest leadership in the solution of this problem in full conformity with

with its commitments and with its traditional position, may now be cooperating in the evolution of a plan which will be, when it is finally sprung, surprisingly like unto the Morrison-Grady Plan which our government had previously rejected under pressure of public opinion. We have no way of knowing. The assurance which was given this week by Secretary of State Marshall, as reported in the press, to a group of members of Congress who called upon him that "there has been no change or departure from the traditional United States policy toward Palestine" is most gratifying and may help to dispel some of these fears and apprehensions. But we hope that before long a more specific and definitive statement will be forthcoming from our government. Time is fast running out. Within two months a report will be presented to the Assembly of the United Nations and the United States will have to take a position. We hope that our government will not confront us and the rest of the American people with an unwelcome fait accompli which will be at variance with the attitude which we have every right to expect ~~for~~ from our government on the basis of the record of more than a quarter of a century.

Our government is not unwilling to assume the role of leadership in the affairs of the world today. Its foreign policy touching many parts of the world is strong and affirmative. When it wishes to ^{it} speaks and acts clearly and forcibly.

We wish that our government would take the same clear and firm position on the subject of Palestine.

It is clear that for our movement the coming year will be a very critical one. It is clear that for the success of our movement the role of the American Government will be a decisive one. It is clear therefore that the Zionists of America must remain fully alerted and thoroughly mobilized. They must act with wisdom and with courage. They must rally support from every section of our population and from both political parties. Both of the great political parties of the United States stand fully committed to the Zionist program. The Republican Party is now in control of the Congress of the United States. The Democratic Party is in control of the Administration. The Zionists of America have the right to ask both political parties to make good on their pledges at this decisive hour. Zionism has always been regarded as part of the forward-looking progressive foreign policy of the American Government. Nothing has transpired in recent years to necessitate any change in this policy. We as American citizens have the right to turn to our government and to ask that it press for the implementation of this policy in the council of nations -- a policy which is non-partisan in character and thoroughly approved of by the American people. American Jewry will watch closely, hopefully and prayerfully the actions of our government in the next few months.

We face the future not without concern, certainly not with unrestrained optimism and yet not without a large measure of confidence. Our confidence derives from the essential justice and moral character of our cause, which the nations of the world a quarter of a century ago recognized and acknowledged, and which the nations of the world, we hope, will soon re-affirm.

Our confidence is also sustained by the continuing good will and sympathy of the American people and of many of the leaders of our Government, and foremost among them, the President of the United States. But the mainspring of our confidence is the indefeasible resolve of American Jewry and of the Jewries of the world that, regardless of cost and heedless of sacrifice, the millennial hope of our people for national restoration shall at this final stage not be defeated. The surest mainspring of our confidence is the superb and irrefragable resolution of the Yishuv in Palestine to continue to build the Jewish National Home in the face of all opposition, in the very teeth of repression, obstruction and administrative lawlessness. A people which in the six months of political unrest, severe tensions and governmental interference, could build twenty-four new colonies, some of them in the waterless wastes of the Negev, striking roots into barren, blistering sands; overcoming the hostility of nature and the enmity of men, and bring life into the very Valley of the shadow of death, is an unbeaten and an unbeatable people. Against the

immovable, granite facts of what these our pioneers have builded in Palestine -- the three hundred and more colonies and settlements, the villages, towns and cities, the trade, commerce and industry, the schools, colleges and hospitals, the manifold creations of heart and mind -- all the waves of opposition must break and spend themselves in helpless rage.

These are the sources of our confidence as we face another great crisis in the evolution of our historic movement which began 1900 years ago and which will reach its destined consummation under God when the Jewish State will be fully re-established.

