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Interview, La Prensa, 1947.

DR. ABRA HILLEL SILVER'S INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESS

November 21, 1947

QUESTION: As the representative of his cause, is Dr. Silver satisfied with the solution given to the Palestine question?

ANSWER: If the members of the United Nations approve the partition of Palestine at this session of the General Assembly, the Jewish people will emerge at long last once more as a nation among the family of nations. They will at last have the home of their own that had been promised to them in the inviolable international doctrines of the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate--a home where the victims of oppression and insecurity can finally find respite and where the Jewish people will have an opportunity to make its own specific contribution to civilization and to the welfare of mankind.

But the recognition of the Jewish State in Palestine will not only bring about equality for the Jewish people--it will achieve also the much needed finality to a troubled situation that could be a focal point of infection if it remained unsolved.

The plan to partition Palestine is admittedly a compromise. In 1922 Transjordan, which together with Palestine on the west side of the Jordan was originally designated as the territory of the Jewish national home, was lopped off. Now it is proposed for a second time to dissect that country and further to reduce the area of the Jewish State. But the partition proposal underlines two great principles-- the reaffirmation of the need and justice of a Jewish State and also of the right of our people to immigrate freely and settle freely in their portion of Palestine.

Aside from our satisfaction in knowing that the Jewish State is soon to be recognized, we are deeply heartened to notice that the nations of the world have met together with an unprecedented spirit of cooperation in setting up the framework of the partition plan. This atmosphere in which the subcommittee on partition worked cannot be minimized.

QUESTION: What does Dr. Silver think of the intervention of the Latin American delegations in the discussion of the problem before the United Nations?

ANSWER: It was no surprise to us that the Latin American countries showed a warm and sympathetic understanding of our problem in the United Nations deliberations on Palestine. We recall with gratitude the support of many leading South American statesmen in the years which followed the Balfour Declaration. We are particularly grateful for the energy with which our Latin American sympathizers took up our cause from the beginning of the Special Session of the General Assembly last spring. Through the summer months, the representatives of Guatemala, Uruguay and Peru, as members of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine spearheaded the work of that body. In recent weeks, in addition to a valuable statement by the Delegate from Panama, Dr. Juan Rivera Reyes as well as the fine exposition by the Peruvian representative, Dr. Alberto Ulloa, special reference must be made to the distinguished labors of the three Latin American representatives on the partition subcommittee - the delegates of Guatemala, Venezuela and Uruguay, the latter as rapporteurs - which finally resulted in the rare and encouraging spectacle of agreed proposals on the part of a group including both Russia and the United States.

The peoples of Latin America can take pride from the leading role that their representatives have played in the disposition of the Palestine question. For they have reemphasized the stature and importance of Latin America in world events.

QUESTION: Will there be any major difficulties in the execution of the partition plan in Palestine?

ANSWER: Of course there will be difficulties. We will have the problems of rehabilitating the newcomers who have suffered years of intolerable misery, of converting our national institutions into governmental institutions, expanding our economy, maintaining our security,--all the problems of statehood. But it must be remembered that we will not be building from a vacuum. The prospect of conducting the affairs of the Jewish State is not a new assignment for us. During the past half century we have laid secure foundations for the Jewish State. We have built cities and colonies in Palestine, irrigated the land, produced and marketed our products, educated our children, guarded the health of our people and defended our homes. And we have established democratic organs of community cooperation on the basis of which our future democratic government can build and grow.

Specifically, our future relationship with the proposed Arab state and the neighboring Arab countries will be a challenge. But we feel that in our day-to-day living we can cooperate successfully with the Arabs. The realities of working together--particularly under the proposed economic union--will go far in this respect. Above all when the essential prerequisite of equality is met by the creation of the Jewish and Arab states, the prospect for Jewish-Arab cooperation will be founded on a firm and enduring basis.

QUESTION: Which Jewish South American organizations cooperated with those of the United States in Zionist work before the UN?

ANSWER: The Jewish Agency for Palestine, the democratically selected representative of some 2,000,000 Jews throughout the world, has received support from organized Zionist bodies in Latin America which carried on the work of education. However, we were aided not only by Zionist and other Jewish organizations in North and South America but also by large numbers of non-Jews who are deeply concerned that after

all that they have endured, justice should at last be done to the Jewish people. The problem of Palestine is not a narrow, sectarian matter, but one that affects peoples of all faiths. The people of South America--Jewish and non-Jewish alike--have taken this enlightened view since 1922 when they joined in establishing the Jewish national home policy as a principle of international law.



Hispanoamérica en la lucha pro el Hogar Nacional Judío

El Dr. Abba Hillel Silver hace declaraciones a "La Prensa". — Eficaz cooperación de delegaciones hispanoamericanas en las Naciones Unidas

—Los pueblos latinoamericanos pueden enorgullecerse del papel preeminente que han desempeñado sus representantes ante las Naciones Unidas en lo relativo a la cuestión de Palestina —nos dice el Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, Presidente de la sección americana de la Agencia Judía pro Palestina, en entrevista que le hacemos en esta ciudad.

El Dr. Silver es de la opinión que con la influencia que tan eficaz y noblemente han ejercido los delegados hispanoamericanos a propósito de esta causa, "han vuelto a poner de manifiesto la importancia y el peso de su criterio en los acontecimientos mundiales".

Para el distinguido sionista (es Presidente del American Zionist Emergency Council) tal actitud hispanoamericana no ha sido una sorpresa.

—Recordamos agradecidos —declara— el apoyo de muchos estadistas sudamericanos de prominencia durante los años posteriores a la declaración de Balfour. Recordamos particularmente el interés manifestado por los delegados hispanoamericanos en la cuestión de Palestina desde el principio de la sesión extraordinaria de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas la primavera pasada. Mas durante, durante el verano pasado, los representantes de Guatemala, Uruguay y Perú en la Comisión Especial para Palestina fueron los más activos en los labores de dicho cuerpo.

Preguntamos al Dr. Silver si está satisfecho con la solución que se le ha dado al problema de la restauración del hogar nacional judío, y responde:

—Si los miembros de las Naciones Unidas aprueban la partición de Palestina en esta sesión de la Asamblea General, el pueblo judío surgirá por fin una vez más como nación entre la familia internacional. Tendrá también por fin el hogar propio que le fué prometido en los documentos internacionales de la declaración Balfour y el mandato de la Liga de las Naciones. Allí ese pueblo y las víctimas de la opresión podrán finalmente hallar sosiego y contribuir directamente a la civilización y el bienestar de la humanidad.

Añade nuestro entrevistado que el plan de partición es en realidad un compromiso. En 1922 fué separada Transjordania, la que conjuntamente con Palestina, situada al oeste del Jordán, fué originariamente designada como territorio del hogar nacional judío. Ahora se propone por segunda vez dividir ese país y reducir aún más el área del Estado judío. Pero la propuesta de partición subraya dos grandes principios: la reafirmación de la necesidad y justicia

de un estado judío y el derecho del pueblo judío a emigrar libremente y establecerse libremente en su porción de Palestina.

—¿Qué dificultad importante vislumbra Ud. para la ejecución del plan de partición, Dr. Silver?

—Habrà, desde luego, dificultades. Tendremos que resolver los problemas de rehabilitar a los recién llegados, convertir nuestras instituciones nacionales en instituciones gubernamentales, desarrollar nuestra economía, mantener nuestra seguridad, etc., etc. Debe tenerse presente, no obstante, que nos estaremos reconstruyendo desde los puros cimientos. Por lo demás, la tarea de conducir las actividades del Estado judío no es nueva para nosotros. Por espacio de medio siglo hemos estado asentando los fundamentos para ello, hemos levantado en Palestina ciudades y colonias, retado la tierra, producido y comercializado nuestros productos, educado a nuestros niños, cuidado de la salud de nuestro pueblo y defendido nuestros hogares. Y hemos establecido órganos democráticos de cooperación comunitaria sobre cuyas bases puede construirse y crecer nuestro futuro gobierno democrático.

Concluye diciéndonos el Dr. Silver que en la obra de la Agencia Judía pro Palestina cooperan organismos de todas partes del mundo, judíos y no judíos, y que por lo que a Hispano América concierne se trata de una cooperación al truísta y elevada que data desde hace muchos años.

—En los Estados Unidos, a esas voces hispanoamericanas y del resto del mundo que se levantan en nuestra defensa y por nuestro hogar nacional, se únen influencias tan autorizadas y poderosas como las del Sr. Sumner Welles, quien recientemente hizo una hermosa exposición de nuestro caso en uno de sus artículos para el "New York Herald-Tribune"— manifiesta.