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Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1947.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT, DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER, TO THE
FIFTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF
AMERICAN RABBIS IN MONTREAL, CANADA, JUNE 24, 1947

To the Central Conference of American Rabbis,

My dear Colleagues:

Fifty years ago, on July 6, 1897, Dr. Isaac M. Wise, President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, opened its eighth annual convention in this city of Montreal with the words: "The Rabbi and the congregation worshipping in this sanctuary invited us to meet here and here we are in the name of God and Israel and for the sake of truth, peace and righteousness."

I can find no more appropriate words with which to open the fiftieth annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis which again convenes in this beautiful and historic city of Montreal at the gracious invitation of the same congregation, Emanuel, and its present distinguished Rabbi. Fifty years ago, the delegates attending the convention were warmly welcomed not alone by the spokesmen of the Temple and the community, but by the Governor of Quebec, its Cabinet and the Mayor of the city. Today the Central Conference of American Rabbis is again privileged to enjoy that cordial hospitality which men have come to associate with the name of Canada and we are very grateful. Dr. Isaac M. Wise proudly pointed out, at that time, that this was the first convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis which met outside the United States. He was happy that it was held in the Dominion of Canada under the flag of Great Britain. "It testifies before the civilized world," he declared, "before this and all future generations that in the year 1897, religious liberty and the freedom of speech is existent and respected under the flag of Great Britain as well as in the United States, to Jew and gentile, to native and foreign alike." He was proud of the privilege to express his fraternal sentiments towards the Dominion of Canada.

And so are we, fifty years later. Canada's proud record as a land of freedom and human progress remains bright and untarnished in spite of the sporadic outbursts of intolerance and bigotry which small reactionary groups instigate in every democracy seeking to undermine it.

Since the Conference first met here, the Jewish community of Canada under its benign laws and institutions has prospered and increased ten fold. And it has been a proud and loyal Jewish community. It has builded many fine religious, educational and charitable edifices and institutions. It has manifested a deep interest in the life and fortunes of world Jewry. It has been generous in its contributions to the relief and reconstruction of European Jewry and Palestine. It is well organized to defend Jewish life and the fair name of Israel. A high destiny under God awaits this splendid community and we invoke God's blessings upon it. We salute the people and government of the Dominion of Canada and we pray for their peace, prosperity and well being.

Our Conference has, thanks to a kind Providence, greatly increased since we last met here. Twenty-nine members attended the Montreal convention fifty years ago, out of a total of one hundred and thirty. Our membership today is five hundred and fifty-two, and responding to the roll call this year are . Of those who attended the Montreal Convention two members, we are happy to record, are living and are in attendance at this convention, Dr. David Philipson and Dr. Samuel Hirschberg. Dr. Leo M. Franklin was a member of the Conference fifty years ago, but did not attend the Montreal convention.

Among the small band of Rabbis who attended the Conference a half ^{ing} century ago were outstanding men, and the subjects which interested them and which they discussed were vital subjects and their approach to them was scholarly, reverent and courageous. They considered at great length the functions of the Rabbi as teacher and as public man. They probed the Theology of the old Prayer Book and the Messianic Idea in Judaism. They earnestly discussed the need for

publishing and disseminating more books of Jewish scholarship and books on Jewish ethics and religion. They felt deeply the need for a comprehensive Jewish encyclopedia. And of course they discussed Zionism, which in 1897 had become a very live issue as a result of the convoking of the first Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland. Dr. Wise was inclined to ignore this entire movement. It was an idiosyncrasy of the later immigrants, he thought, who, coming from lands of persecution, had imported it into the new world. He regarded it as ^{an} "unpleasant episode" of our history.

Fifty years later all these subjects and their cognates are still vital and relevant and they still mightily concern the Rabbinate. The true role of the Rabbi in the modern Jewish community continues to be a subject of lively discussion and of sharp differences of opinion. Jewish theology, old and new, and messianism, in one form or another, are still challenging themes and they will be as long as Judaism survives. The need for Jewish scholarship and for the dissemination of Jewish learning is as keenly felt today as it was then. And Zionism, far from proving a passing and "unpleasant episode" is today, after an amazing career of half a century in and out of Palestine, on the agenda of the United Nations and the thought and conscience of the nations of the world are deeply concerned with it.

In fact these subjects are the continuing themes and employment of our profession -- what is the nature of our ministry; what is the theology of our faith; what are the mandates of the tradition of Jewish learning and what is the status of our people in the world. Each age must face up to these problems and must make the proper adjustments in relation to its particular needs and experiences, and no age ever makes the perfect adjustment. Our own generation of Rabbis, through the tragic years of war and world disaster, has had to concern itself primarily not with the problems of theology and scholarship or the ideal

pastorate, but with the status of our people in a world sinking into fierce sectionalism, hate, intolerance and war. Its best energies were spent on the urgent problems of relief, defense and reconstruction, on the healing of the wounds of our people suffered in the most calamitous period in all our history in which it faced actual physical annihilation. Though the war is over and though the organized forces of Nazism and Fascism whose foremost victims were the sons and daughters of Israel are destroyed, many of these tasks with which our generation of Rabbis was confronted are far from done. But it is clear that some of the other mandates of our profession which were partially neglected through these years must again assert their claim upon ^{us}. A re-direction of emphasis is now indicated. In the post-war era in which we now find ourselves so beset with grave spiritual crises, wherein men hunger for spiritual security, and for freedom from the fear of universal catastrophe to which mankind seems to be hurtled by its own vast but unmanageable powers, the Rabbi is needed today as much in his capacity as teacher, spiritual guide, theologian and inspired scholar as in his capacity as tribune, champion, and defender of rights. There are encouraging signs about us pointing to a growing awareness of the need for a religious revival, for restoring centrality to synagogue and school, for the expansion in the programs of our seminaries and theologic schools, for increased youth and adult Jewish education and for more vital Jewish literature. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations is facing the tasks of the new day with fine vision. It is expanding its religious activities in a commendable way. There is however much, much more to be done. Among our Rabbinical seminaries, the Hebrew Union College faces its new day under the leadership of a new President who, we are confident, will continue and advance the high mission of this oldest Rabbinic Seminary in the United States.

1) The Central Conference of American Rabbis will wish to send its warmest greetings to Dr. Nelson Glueck as he assumes the Presidency of the Hebrew Union College. Youthful graduate of the College, he is steeped in its traditions.

He is devoted to Jewish scholarship and has made significant contributions to it. He is motivated by the highest spiritual ideals of his faith, and in the administration of his high and responsible office he will be guided by them. The coming generation of students and graduates of the Hebrew Union College will have the inspiration of a fine, enkindling personality to lead them to service and consecration.

2) The Central Conference of American Rabbis will wish to record its sentiments on the occasion of the retirement of Dr. Julian Morgenstern from the Presidency of the College. For four decades Dr. Morgenstern, also an alumnus of the College, was identified with the Hebrew Union College as instructor and professor and as President since 1922. Many of us who are attending this convention were his pupils or were ordained by him. We are all deeply indebted to him, as is the whole of American Israel. On the occasion of the testimonial tendered to him in Cincinnati last month, I sent him, in your name, the following message:

"I join your host of friends and admirers throughout the country in extending to you my tribute on the occasion of your retirement from the Presidency of the Hebrew Union College. You have honored this historic institution through years of distinguished service. You have ordained many Rabbis who are carrying on the noble traditions of liberal Judaism ^{with} which you inspired them. You have enriched Jewish scholarship. Always you have held high the great ideals of prophetic Judaism and related them to what was finest in American life and thought. Personally, as a friend and former pupil, and officially, in the name of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, I salute you as you pass from one field of service which has been abundantly blessed to another where I pray you may enjoy many years of productive labor in our common cause."

You will recall that our last convention, considerable thought was given to the subject of our chaplains. The Emergency Placement Committee was discontinued and its remaining duties were turned over to the Committee on Chaplains. This

Committee has been considering, among other things, the future of CANRA as an affiliate of the National Jewish Welfare Board. Other Rabbinic bodies have likewise been considering this problem. Resolutions on the subject were adopted by the Rabbinic Assembly of America and by the Association of Jewish Chaplains. This convention will receive a report from our Committee on Chaplains on this subject for consideration and action.

The secretary of the Committee on Chaplains, Dr. Louis I. Egelson, has requested me to bring to the attention of the Conference a serious problem in relation to the procurement of chaplains for the future. He writes:

"From forty to fifty full-time chaplains are needed now for the Army and Navy. If universal military training is voted by Congress, then our problem of procurement will continue as long as universal military training will be in operation.

"The members of this year's graduating classes of the various seminaries who were approached with reference to enlistment as chaplains have not reacted favorably. We all recognize that the glamour of war is not present as the incentive. Had the War Department changed its regulations last year so that the graduating classes of 1946 could have been approached for the chaplaincy, some of those men would have volunteered and the difficulty with the classes 1947/would not have been so great.

"Something has to be done about this matter because we cannot lay ourselves open to the charge that we are not providing for the spiritual life of our men in the Armed Forces. Our Committee on Chaplains has suggested that possibly the seminaries may be approached and urged to make a condition with the men who are being enrolled in the seminaries to serve a few years in the chaplaincy on graduation before accepting a pulpit."

3) I suggest that the Conference give very serious thought to this problem at this convention and that some appropriate action be taken which will

insure proper provision for the spiritual needs of our men in the Armed Forces and ^{which will} help to maintain the high level of service which our Conference rendered to our men in service and to our country during the war.

Your Commission on Justice and Peace was very active during the year. It held a successful Institute on Judaism, Management and Labor in the City of Chicago on April 20-21, in cooperation with the Chicago Federation of Reform Synagogues. The Institute was well attended both by Rabbis and laymen and on its program were many industrialists, labor leaders and representatives of the public. The Institute evoked much favorable comment, and was praised as a significant contribution to the consideration of this great problem of our day.

The question of engaging a permanent executive secretary for the Commission on Justice and Peace has engaged the attention of the Conference for some time. The work of the Commission has greatly expanded in recent years and, for effective functioning, it now requires the services of a full time executive who will devote himself entirely to the work of the Commission. At the last convention, it was resolved "that the Executive Board be instructed to explore further the possibility of engaging a permanent secretary for the Commission on Justice and Peace, and if they find it possible to do so, to proceed to engage a permanent secretary." The subject was explored during the year and conversations were held with the representatives of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Both the Union and the Conference have approved the formation of a Joint Commission on Social Justice to consist of an equal number of laymen and Rabbis. This secretary would be engaged by the Joint Commission and both the Conference and the Union would share the cost. It is estimated that the cost to the Conference, covering the salary of the secretary and office expense, would amount to eight or ten thousand dollars.

4) I concur in the judgment of the Conference, as expressed at previous conventions, that it would be highly desirable to set up such an office, and I urge

that the Conference approve this expenditure and authorize its Executive Committee to take the necessary steps to complete arrangements.

Among the resolutions which the Committee on Justice and Peace will present to the Conference is one calling for the passage by ^{the} Congress of the United States of the Emergency Displaced Persons Admission Act, known as the Stratton Bill. This Bill provides for the immigration into the United States of four hundred thousand displaced persons of all faiths over a period of four years without regard to existing immigration quotas.

5) I strongly urge that the Central Conference of American Rabbis petition the Congress of the United States to pass this legislation. It would be a major contribution to the solution of one of the most tragic human problems of post-war Europe. Favorable action by the United States would inspire other countries to open their doors to these homeless men, women and children for whom Europe can no longer provide a home. There is room for them in the United States, and there rests a moral obligation upon the richest and most powerful country on earth to take the initiative in this, as in other great international problems, to normalize our war-ravaged world and give peace at last and hope to its myriads of uprooted and dispossessed refugees.

The Conference members who attended the last convention in Chicago will recall the sense of shock which was experienced by all the delegates when the news was broadcast on the Convention Sabbath day, June 29, that members of the Executive of the Jewish Agency had on that day been arrested by the British authorities along with thousands of other Jews in what was clearly the inauguration of a campaign of brutal repression designed to break the spirit of the Yishuv resistance, and to compel it to accept the illegal and iniquitous regime of the White Paper.

The Conference expressed its grief and horror at what it characterized as "unprecedented and unjust Gestapo acts" in a resolution which was to be

delivered in person by a committee of the Conference to the President of the United States. The resolution in part read:

"In view of the important role in the titanic struggle played by Jews of all lands and of which the Jews of Palestine are a part, we had a right to expect that simple justice would have been meted out to our people everywhere, but, instead of justice, Jewry has had thrust upon it the infamous White Paper, oppressive and tyrannical measures in Palestine, continuous aggressive and provocative acts against Palestinian Jewry, the breaking of sacred promises and now the supreme act of betrayal, the arrest of the Executive of the Jewish Agency and thousands of others.

"We, the members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, are resolved to resist this act of flagrant injustice with all the moral power at our command. We hereby petition the President of our country to use his good offices to procure the immediate release of the members of the Executive Agency and of all other victims of this terroristic procedure, and the prompt implementation of that recommendation of the Anglo-American Inquiry Commission's report which calls for the unconditional admission of one hundred thousand Jews into Palestine."

The arrested members of the Jewish Agency remained incarcerated for one hundred days before they were released. The mass arrests, searches and deportations continued. The hundred thousand refugees for whose admission the President of the United States has appealed time and again in the last two years are still languishing in the DP camps of Europe. Shiploads of weary refugees, on reaching the shores of the Jewish Nat'l Home who have been through all the hells of Europe are forcibly trans-shipped/to new detention camps in Cyprus. The Mandatory Government failed in its sinister purpose to break the spirit of the Yishuv but its campaign to enforce the White Paper policy at all costs is still going on.

An army of more than a hundred thousand troops is employed to enforce

this policy which the League of Nations as well as Great Britain's own leading statesmen have condemned. A section of the Yishuv has reacted to these cruel and provocative acts by measures of desperation and violence which the authoritative spokesmen of Palestine Jewry and of the Jewish Agency have deplored. The indisputable fact however remains that the chief disturber of the peace of Palestine is the Mandatory Government itself which is cynically disregarding its obligations under the Mandate which alone justify its presence in Palestine.

The Palestine political situation has gravely deteriorated since we last met. You will recall that the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry which were made public on April 20, 1946, were rejected out of hand by the British Government, although it had promised the Committee to implement them. It declined to implement any or all parts of the report until the American Government had indicated to what extent it was prepared to "share the resultant military and financial responsibilities" and until the Haganah had been disarmed, thus reducing Palestine Jewry to utter political helplessness and physical defenselessness. Neither of these conditions was made to the Committee of Inquiry at the time of its appointment. The disarmament of the Haganah was considered by the Committee and rejected.

You will also recall that subsequently, on July 10th of last year, the Morrison-Grady Plan was evolved by a joint Anglo-American Committee of so-called experts. This report was so violently in contrast to the findings of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry that it was characterized by its chairman, Judge Hutcheson, as "a complete sell-out", and it was so repugnant to the traditional American policy on Palestine that our Government rejected it. The plan would have restricted Jewish settlement to one out of four zones into which the country was to be divided -- to an area of about 1400 square miles -- about four percent of the original Palestine envisaged by the Balfour Declaration.

In this zone the Jewish people would be granted a limited autonomy but no full control of immigration. Great Britain would remain in complete charge of the administration of the country as a whole, of law and security, foreign affairs, custom union and taxation. It would also be granted the areas of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the surrounding territories as a British zone. The Negev, which represents about forty-five percent of the area of Palestine, would become a British reservation, ultimately to be added either to the Jewish or the Arab province, with oil rights to be retained by Great Britain in perpetuity. The United States was to pay the sum of hundred ~~three~~ million dollars to the neighboring Arab states as a sort of bribe to permit the Jews to establish this little ghetto in what was to have been in its entirety the Jewish National Home.

Though rejected by the United States, by Jews as well as by Arabs, Great Britain has not given up this plan. At the informal talks which were held in London in January and February of this year by Great Britain with representatives of the Jewish Agency, Mr. Bevin again pushed forward this Morrison-Grady plan in a revised and even less acceptable form.

On October 4 of last year, the President of the United States again appealed to Prime Minister Attlee for the immediate admission of a substantial number of Jewish refugees into Palestine. He stated that in view of the fact that winter will come before the Conference (the London Conference) can be resumed, "I believe and urge that substantial immigration into Palestine cannot wait a solution to the Palestine problem and that it should begin at once. Preparations for this movement have already been made by this government and it is ready to lend its immediate assistance." This further appeal of the President was rejected. In fact it aroused the ire of Foreign Minister Bevin who attacked the President in the House of Commons charging that the President's appeal had "spoiled" his Palestine negotiations and that it was motivated by considerations of local elections in the United States. President Truman rejected Bevin's charges

as "unfortunate and misleading." He maintained that "America's interest in Palestine is of long and continuing standing. It is a deep and abiding interest shared by our people without regard to political affiliation."

Great Britain having failed to impose Mr. Bevin's formula for the solution of the Palestine problem either on Palestine or on the United States, resolved to refer the matter to the United Nations, and on April 2 of this year, it requested that an extraordinary session of the Assembly of the United Nations be called together to consider the problem and to make recommendations concerning the future government of Palestine. This special Assembly was held, as you know, on April 25 - May 15 of this year. The details, I am sure, are fresh in your minds. As a result of the deliberations, a Committee of Eleven was appointed to investigate all questions and issues relevant to the problem of Palestine and to submit a report to the General Assembly not later than September 1.

Two considerations present themselves in view of the new developments, regardless of what the proposals of this Committee will be. No one can foretell how long the discussions at the Assembly will take, nor what will finally happen to its recommendations; for it should be remembered that the Assembly has only the power of recommendation. Great Britain has already indicated that it will not be bound by its recommendations, that, as Sir Alex Cadogan ~~stated~~ stated: "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." In the meantime our refugees will continue to linger ^{on} in the DP camps in their homelessness and misery indefinitely, and judging by every report which has reached us, their morale is seriously undermined, and hopelessness and frustration are slowly contributing to their spiritual disintegration.

A second consideration which presents itself is the decisive role which the United States will play in this situation. It is very clear to every thoughtful observer that the Committee of Inquiry will work in a vacuum and can

bring in no practical solutions unless it knows beforehand whether the Great powers, and particularly the United States, which everyone realizes holds the key position, are prepared to accept it. It is clear that there will be no new facts unearthed by this Committee which were not already revealed to the former Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry and to the numerous committees which preceded it, and also that no new formulas for the future government of the country not already discussed in one or another of these reports is likely to be forthcoming.

To save the Committee of Inquiry from the fate of spending itself in futile abstractions, and the Assembly in September, from arguing itself into a humiliating impasse, it is essential that the Government of the United States should give some direction and leadership not in order to exert pressure or to bias the findings of the Committee, but to assist the Committee to handle its problem realistically.

6) I therefore recommend that the Central Conference of American Rabbis should appeal to the Government of the United States to exert itself anew in behalf of an interim arrangement which would make it possible for a substantial number of these refugees to go to Palestine at once pending the final recommendations of the Assembly of the United Nations. The Central Conference of American Rabbis should also appeal to the Government of the United States to assume leadership and to exercise the moral prestige which it possesses in the solution of this grave international problem and in conformity with the traditional American policy oft restated by the Congress of the United States as well as by the chief executives of the Government, take steps to insure that the basic rights of the Jewish people, historically grounded and internationally guaranteed to it by the Palestine Mandate, shall not be violated in any permanent settlement which will be made of the Palestine issue.

It is less than two years since the close of the second world war and men are already talking apprehensively about the prospects of a third world war.

The air is charged with belligerency and, on the highest levels, leaders of countries which recently were allies in a struggle against a common enemy, are indulging in violent charges and recriminations, proclaiming new international doctrines which have the smell of gun-powder about them and which arouse saber-rattling all over the world. The fatal, relentless march towards chaos, so reminiscent of events after the first world war, seems to have begun again. The slogans and techniques are all the same, the propaganda is the same, the forces behind the desperate maneuvers are the same. What is not the same is the atomic factor which raises the destructive potential of a war today to levels of frightfulness and annihilation undreamed of by the last generation.

There was a time when one powerful nation whose material and military resources exceeded those of any other nation could, by its own authority, maintain international stability for a considerable period. Great Britain filled that role for nearly a hundred years up to the first world war. But her position was greatly weakened as a result of the war. Out of the vast political, social and economic upheavals which followed, no single power, not even the United States, emerged strong enough to assume this role. The era of world leadership by a single great power was definitely at an end. To fill this vacuum which is dangerous to any international stability, however imperfect, there was put forward the idea of an association of nations, a world confederation of states, which should assume the responsibility for a peacefully functioning world community. Our own country, in an overpowering isolationist reaction, set its face against this solution, even though its Chief Executive was its foremost advocate. We could not ourselves maintain political equilibrium in the world. But we would not assume a share of responsibility in an international organization to maintain it. We refused to join the League of Nations or the Permanent Court of International Justice. As a result, through all the calamitous years between the two world wars, our government, though deeply concerned and devoted

to the cause of world peace, though it urged limitation of armament and actually convoked a conference to effect it in 1921, ^{WM} ~~we were~~ forced to witness the progressive deterioration of international relations, a headlong armament race and the tragic descent along the road of Fascism and Nazism to the second world war.

Our failure to stand by the League of Nations proved one of the costliest mistakes of history. We are in danger of repeating the same mistake in the case of the United Nations. To be sure we did not refuse to join the United Nations. On the contrary we were most helpful in bringing it into being and we have been a warm friend of it ever since. But our enthusiasm for it seems to be of a sentimental kind. We have not really made any radical new orientation in our international thought and conduct which membership in such a world organization makes mandatory. Nor has any other great power. We are not proceeding on the firm conviction that the United States, as the strongest power in the world today, must refrain from unilateral action and must throw its full weight behind the United Nations in order to build it up, to give it that prestige which will promptly enable it to fulfil the grave tasks assigned to it. The United States is still pressing for its major political policies outside the framework of the United Nations.

The so-called Truman doctrine was an unpremeditated, ^{but} ~~withal~~, a dangerous assault upon the status and authority of the United Nations. The whole philosophy underlying the United Nations is that no single nation possesses the right to set itself up as the sole judge of what is good for the world, and the sole defender of freedom or democracy. It aims to substitute collective judgment and action for unilateral judgment and action, however high-minded and nobly motivated. No nation belonging to the United Nations has the right to assume sole responsibility for the peace or the freedom of the world. That is the exclusive function of the United Nations. Thus it is not for the United States to

define where the frontiers of democracy lie and to pledge American resources to defend them. Not only is the United States actually unable to defend them -- we simply have not the resources for such a gigantic task, nor would our people sanction such global military undertakings, nor are they persuaded that Greece, Turkey, Iran and Hungary are really outposts of democracy -- but it is contrary to the very spirit of the United Nations that America should charge itself with such a responsibility. The thought underlying the Charter of the United Nations is to unite the strength of all nations, to maintain international peace and security, "to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of the threats to the peace." It is the prerogative of the General Assembly of the United Nations to discuss any question relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, and it is its privilege to call the attention of the Security Council to situations which are likely to endanger them. The Security Council has conferred upon it by the United Nations the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, and definite procedures are defined in the Charter of the United Nations for the settlement of disputes and for action which may be taken with respect to threats to the peace, breakers of the peace or acts of aggression. In order to enable the Security Council to implement its decisions it is agreed that all members of the United Nations shall make available to it on its call armed forces, assistance and facilities, and that agreements governing the numbers and types of forces and all other military considerations shall be negotiated as soon as possible.

Definitely, the United Nations Charter does not envisage a world divided into two blocs -- as the Truman doctrine seems to envisage it -- nor does it contemplate the entrusting of the defense of world freedom and democracy to one single state, nor does it assign to any single state the duty to determine when and where the peace of the world is being endangered.

Any act by the United States which by-passes the United Nations undermines the authority of this international organization. And such acts cumulatively will soon destroy it. The collapse of the United Nations will be the signal for the third, the atomic world war.

The assistance which was extended by our government to Greece and Turkey was ~~not~~^{not} principally motivated by considerations of relief or concern with democracy. Turkey is a dictatorship and Greece is a puppet monarchical state, kept alive by British interests. We rushed into that part of the world when the British were no longer able to meet their financial and military commitments there. To justify our headlong plunge into an area where we had no vital interests, and into commitments whose limitations no one was prepared to define, we improvised a new doctrine, to wit, that it is the sacred duty and manifest destiny of America to confine communism and to save democracy. Suddenly the American people were informed that the Eastern Mediterranean had become democracy's swimming pool and that our very survival depended upon it. What had been a British life-line had in some mysterious way become our life-line, and we were, from here on, to guard it with our millions and our man power. We have already dispatched military missions to that area. To what end? To contain communism? That was Hitler's program, you will recall, his slogan and his battle cry. By means of it he established the bloodiest dictatorship of all time and finally plunged the world into the second world war. In this war, strangely enough, communist Russia was found to be fighting not against the democracies but with them. ~~It~~^{Russia} helped to save the democracies as well as itself. It was only after victory that the iron curtain was discovered....

In a blind effort to organize the world against communist Russia -- a job which Mr. Churchill deftly turned over to the United States, -- our government may come to seek the alliance and may in turn come to pour out its millions in support of reactionary and anti-democratic governments all over the world. It

has already made peace with the Fascist Peron regime in Argentina. It was forced to reverse its former policy at the behest of a policy of organizing a hemispheric defense against the putative Soviet menace. Some American leaders are now urging that Germany and Japan should be cast in the role of defenders of Western Civilization. There is talk of a separate peace with these late enemies of ours, thus repeating the tragic mistake which we made in 1919. There is a loud clamoring of compulsory military training. America is in danger of becoming the last stronghold and hope of all forms of political and social reaction in the world, which is contrary to the genius of our democratic traditions and to the wishes of the American people.

We cannot destroy communism by war. War spreads communism. We cannot contain it by building a Chinese wall around it, to be manned ^{the} by mercenaries of reaction financed by American dollars. We can help to rebuild the health and economy of the world, and in so doing, strengthen all peoples in the ways of freedom; for no people willingly resorts to dictatorship. The new Marshall plan for the reconstruction of Europe may indicate a welcome move away from the ill-conceived Truman doctrine to a sound economic and political realism. Mr. Marshall announced that the role of the United States "should consist of friendly aid in the drafting of a European program and of later support of such a program so far as it may be practical to do so."

"It is already evident that, before the United States government can proceed much further in its efforts to alleviate the situation and help start the European world on its way to recovery, there must be some agreement among the countries of Europe as to the requirements of the situation and the part those countries themselves will take in order to give proper effect to whatever action might be undertaken by this government. It would be neither fitting nor efficacious for this government to undertake to draw up unilaterally a program designed to place Europe on its feet economically. This is the business of the Europeans. The initiative, I think, must come from Europe."

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This is excellent doctrine. It will be as excellent in practice if the plan will not again by-pass the United Nations, and if the machinery of their international organization will be fully used in its execution.

We must live in the same world with the Soviet Union. It is possible with patience and good will to work out a modus vivendi. It will take many years before all causes of friction are removed. Certainly the stronger the United Nations organization is permitted to become the more likelihood will there be for satisfactory adjustments and the smaller the danger of an irrevocable break which would destroy our world.

A call to fight communist expansion beyond the borders of the United States is also a call for a crusade against communist activities within the borders of the United States. This inevitably leads to a Red Witch Hunt, such as we experienced in our country at the close of the first world war. Americans will recall with shame the persecution of radicals, socialists and pacifists, the wholesale raids and deportations, the mob attacks and riots, the unseating of duly elected members of Congress and of State Legislatures -- and the Sacco-Vanzetti legal murder.

On February 28, President Truman wrote to ex-Governor Earle of Pennsylvania: "People are very much wrought up about the communist 'bugaboo', but I am of the opinion that the country is perfectly safe as far as communism is concerned -- we have too many sane people. Our government is made for the welfare of the people, and I don't believe there will come a time when any one will really want to overthrow it."

And yet, four weeks later, President Truman issued an executive order that communists and communist sympathizers should be screened out of their jobs with the government because they constitute a threat to our government and to the democratic processes of our government.

History has taught us that when a country gets launched on an anti-Communist campaign it quickly passes over to an anti-liberal and anti-democratic campaign and ends up in a violent anti-semitic campaign.

All this is not to suggest that the Soviet Government is without blame, or that it has no responsibility for the tensions which exist in the world today. Far from it. The fault is not all with the United States or with Great Britain. In many ways the Soviet Union has failed to cooperate in the pacification of the world. Like some other major powers, it has used its military strength to bring about, through undemocratic processes, in some of the countries of Eastern Europe, forms of government acceptable to it. It has refused to cooperate with some of the very important instrumentalities which were set up by the United Nations. It has been unreasonable in the exercise of the veto power. Whether motivated by considerations of security or otherwise, it has not been free of expansionism.

But the answer lies not in dividing the world into two battle camps. The answer still remains a United Nations organization strong enough to impose on its authority/all parties to a dispute. The energy, the vast appropriations and the military might which are now being invested in preparation for a possible future war should be poured into the immediate strengthening of the world organization.

The Vatican which is certainly the traditional ideologic foe of communism has recently warned the world against the menace "involved in the growing tensions between the United States and Russia," and in the unbridled and unprincipled propaganda which feeds it. It urged Russia and the United States to set aside their ideological differences and seek a political understanding as a means to achieve peace. The editorial in the Vatican newspaper correctly states that "the struggle between the Western powers and Russia is not for the triumph of one of the two contrasting ideologies, democracy and communism. It is for practical reasons." On material questions there is always the possibility of a

compromise "unless this possibility is precluded by a will to wage war at all costs."

Capitalism, socialism and communism and their variations and permutations are here to stay for a very long time and they must learn to live together if human disaster is to be averted. There must be room in the One World which must be built for all these politico-economic forms and for others which will follow them, but they must all find their place within the framework of a peaceful world order. False steps which are taken in the early days of a world reconstruction process such as we live in have a fatal affect on all subsequent developments. It is not yet too late to avert disaster.

7) The Central Conference of American Rabbis, speaking in the name of the oldest spiritual religion of mankind, and the first to proclaim the doctrine of the One God and the One World, the first to call for an organized international community under the sovereignty of God's moral laws, and for disarmament and peace appeals to the mind and conscience of all governments and peoples of the earth, to strengthen in every way the United Nations organization, to eschew any act which would undermine its authority, to avoid any new division of mankind into competitive and conflicting blocs of rival ideologies, and, in the language of the Charter of the United Nations which echoes the immortal teachings of our Bible, "to further tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbors." I recommend that our deep concern and our profound convictions should be transmitted to the Government of the United States as well as to the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Before I conclude my message I must perform the sad duty of recording the names of five members of our fellowship who passed away during the past year: Dr. Joseph Blatt, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Dr. Max C. Currick, of Erie, Pa., who was President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1937-39; Dr. Isaac Landman, of Brooklyn, N.Y., who was President-elect of the Synagogue Council of

America; Rabbi Harry S. Margolis, of St. Paul, Minnesota, who was for many years Treasurer of the Conference; and Rabbi Aaron L. Weinstein, of Jamaica, Long Island.

Memorial tributes to Dr. Landman and Rabbi Margolis appear in the 1946 Yearbook of our Conference. Appropriate memorial tributes to the life and labor of Rabbis Blatt, Currick and Weinstein will appear in the 1947 Yearbook.

We cherish the memory of these, our colleagues. Each in his own way and within the sphere of his life's influence served faithfully his God and his people and each will be remembered by grateful hearts and unforgetting friends.

As I conclude my term of office as President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, I wish to express to you my profound appreciation for the high honor which you bestowed upon me and for the privilege which was mine to serve you. I am conscious of the fact that I was not fully adequate to all the responsibilities of the office, more especially because of the exacting demands of time and energy which other important Jewish causes made upon me during these two years. But I trust that I have not altogether failed you, and I hope that I will have the opportunity in my future capacity as a rank-and-file member of the Conference to compensate for my deficiencies in office. I pray that our Heavenly Father may bless this fine fellowship throughout all the on-coming years.

Respectfully submitted,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER, President