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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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Who has the right to decide?, 1947.



# Who Has the Right to Decide?

The disorders in Palestine sharply point up the fact that the just solution has not yet been applied. These disorders are the direct responsibility of the British Mandatory Government which has violated its trust and has proved faithless to its obligations.

Under the terms of the Mandate, which Great Britain voluntarily assumed and which 52 nations approved—including the United States—she pledged herself to place the country under such conditions as would secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home and to facilitate Jewish immigration and encourage close settlement by Jews on the land. Great Britain has broken these pledges which alone warrant her being in Palestine in the first place; for Palestine, be it remembered, is not a British colony or possession.

## BETRAYAL, TYRANNY, INJUSTICE

Jewish immigration into Palestine was illegally reduced to a miserable trickle, and at a time when millions of men and women were trying desperately to escape from certain doom in Hitler's gas chambers. Eighteen months after the victorious war over the Nazis, the doors of Palestine are still practically shut against the hundreds of thousands of the survivors who are today languishing in detention camps or are living under appalling conditions of want and insecurity in other parts of Europe. The free zone for Jewish colonization in Palestine has been restricted from the original 30,000 square miles, which was the Palestine of the Balfour Declaration, to less than 500 square miles.

Is it any wonder that a peaceful folk of pioneers and builders, who came to Palestine with a dream and a hope to rebuild waste places and unhappy lives, have been driven into a bitter army of resistance? What has made these

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(Excerpts of Address at Chicago Conference)

folk fighting mad is exactly what makes all decent folk fighting mad; broken promises, ruthless tyranny and brutal actions of injustice.

If the Jewish people had been permitted during the last 25 years to carry on its work of building in Palestine, if Jewish immigration and freedom of colonization had not been illegally curbed, there would be a Jewish majority in Palestine today and a Jewish State, instead of riots, hate and a running sore.

The promise that was made after the first World War to Arab peoples to grant them independence has been fully discharged. Five Arab states are now members of the United Nations. The promise made to the Jewish people has not only not been kept, but every effort has been made and is being made to deny it or to ignore it.

The British Government is meeting in London with the representatives of the Arab states to discuss the future of Palestine. What business have these Arab states to discuss the future of Palestine? Who gave them the right to do so? The Palestine Mandate gives them no such say in the affairs of Palestine. The Jewish Agency, representing the Jews of the world, is a recognized public body under the Mandate, and through it the Jews of the world were invited to cooperate with the Mandatory in upbuilding the Jewish National Home. But what has Saudi Arabia or Iraq or Egypt to do with Palestine, any more than Palestine has a right to interfere in their internal affairs?

## ARAB WAR RECORD

When the representatives of the British Government face the Arab spokesmen at the London Conference, I trust that they will remind them of the role which they played during

this last war. The representatives of Iraq should be reminded of their revolt against the United Nations in 1941 on the side of the Nazis, which had to be put down by force of arms. The representatives of Egypt should be reminded that Great Britain had to use force in 1942 to compel the Egyptian court to appoint a government from which some measure of loyalty to the British cause might be expected, and that British tanks had to surround the palace of the king and force the palace gates in order to bring about a change of government more favorable to the Allied cause. The representatives of Saudi Arabia, Syria and Lebanon should be reminded that they did not declare war on Germany until February 1945, when Allied victory became absolutely certain and when they rushed in to declare war on Germany at the eleventh hour, only in order to secure seats in the United Nations Organization, which permitted only those nations who had declared war on the Axis prior to March 1945 to become members. The spokesmen for the British Government might also remind these Arab representatives of the dirty work of treason, espionage and pro-Nazi military activities which were carried on all through the war by their foremost spokesman, the ex-Mufti of Palestine.

## BANKRUPT APPEASEMENT POLICY

It is clear that these representatives of the neighboring Arab states cannot determine the future of the Jewish National Home which has been internationally guaranteed. It would be tragic if a futile and wrong-headed pro-Arab policy of appeasement, which has proved bankrupt time and again, would commit the British Government at this time either to a continuation of its present policy in Palestine or to a permanent solution which would violate the basic Jewish rights and the moral conscience of the world.