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Militant Zionism, 1947.

March 2, 1947

To the Editor of
The Cleveland Press

Sir:

I read with interest the article from the pen of Wallace R. Deuel which appeared in your Paper on Saturday headlined "Militant U. S. Jews Behind Back-to-Palestine Movement." The writer states that there is a basic cleavage among Zionists between moderates and militants, and that the outstanding militant leaders are now American Jews, and chief among them is Rabbi Silver, and that furthermore, I and other militant leaders have "mapped out strategy to use Zionist Jewish influence in the United States to induce the American Government to make the British Government turn over Palestine to the Jews." He furthermore states that there is no disagreement among Zionists on the goal which they seek to achieve -- the setting up of a Jewish state in Palestine. That is correct. The difference, in his judgment, is in the matter of methods. The moderates believe that the Zionist movement "should take it slow and easy" and the militants say that "even if there were all the time in the world, slow, peaceable and legal methods would never succeed."

Mr. Deuel is clearly in error if he believes that the outstanding "militant" leaders are American Jews. The outstanding "militant" leaders are today in Palestine, and they and their followers are giving a splendid account of themselves in defense of the basic Jewish rights which have been internationally guaranteed by 52 nations including the United States, and which Great Britain has grossly and shamelessly violated.

The Jews of Palestine were quite content to carry on their primary work of colonization and upbuilding slowly, peaceably and legally. They were not pressing for the immediate establishment of a Jewish state. They were quite content to see the country develop according to the commitments undertaken by Great Britain under the mandate "to facilitate Jewish immigration into the country

and the close settlement of the Jews on the soil."

But through successive arbitrary decrees of the mandatory, Jewish immigration and colonization were illegally restricted until today no more than 1500 Jews monthly are permitted to enter the country "legally," and the right of the Jews to colonize is restricted to five percent of the area of that small country.

The "militant" Zionists ask for nothing more than the faithful observance of the letter and the spirit of the mandate under which Great Britain governs the country, and are very impatient when they witness hundreds of thousands of their people still languishing in the detention camps of Europe. If that is extremism and militancy, then I and the millions who believe as I do must plead guilty.

The unrest in Palestine which we all deprecate is due entirely to Great Britain's unwarranted and unjustified policy which keeps the doors of Palestine closed and turns thousands of men and women who have been through the hells of Europe away from the shores of the country which has been proclaimed as the Jewish National Home. Let the doors of Palestine be opened and the so-called terror to which desperate people have been driven will disappear.

What is most misleading and reprehensible in Mr. Deuel's article is the reference to the fact that Zionists are endeavoring ~~to use~~ in some hurtful manner, ^{to use} political pressure upon our Government to influence Great Britain to live up to its obligations. What pressures, in Mr. Deuel's judgment, should free citizens in a Democracy exert to influence their government? By the terms of the Anglo-American Convention of 1924, our Government is a party to the Balfour Declaration and to the Palestine mandate. The Congress of the United States twice overwhelmingly voted for the Jewish National Home. In December, 1945, the Congress resolved "that the United States shall use its good offices with the mandatory power to the end that Palestine shall be opened for free entry of Jews into that country to the maximum of its agricultural and economic potentialities, and that there shall be full opportunity for colonization and

and development so that they may freely proceed with the upbuilding of Palestine as the Jewish National Home and, in association with all elements of the population, establish Palestine as a democratic commonwealth in which all men regardless of race or creed shall have equal rights."

Is it reprehensible if the Jewish citizens of the United States now call upon their Government to implement this resolution of Congress which was endorsed by both parties?

In 1944, both the Republican and the Democratic parties included planks in their party platforms favoring ^aJewish commonwealth in Palestine. The Democratic platform read: "We favor the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization, and such a policy as to result in the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth."

The Republican platform called for the same thing, concluding its plank with the following statement: "We condemn the failure of the President to insist that the mandatory of Palestine carry out the provisions of the Balfour Declaration and of the mandate while he pretends to support them."

The Zionist movement in the United States has had supporters in both political parties. It is non-partisan. Republican and Democratic presidents alike have endorsed the movement, and so have Republican and Democratic governors of 40 states of our Union.

Are the Jewish citizens of the United States to be condemned if when the subject of Palestine is being discussed internationally, and vital decisions are being reached, they turn to their Government and appeal to it to fulfill these pledges which have had such overwhelming endorsement on the part of the American people?

I must reject categorically and with contempt the assertion of Mr. Deuel that "Zionists claim that they swung the vote which made possible the election of Senator Robert A. Taft, for example, and that it was primarily Rabbi Silver who won these deciding votes." Zionists have never made such claims, and I did

not have any part in the campaign to re-elect Senator Taft. Senator Taft has been a good friend of the Zionist cause. So have Senator Brewster, of Maine, Senator Vandenberg of Michigan, and many other Republican senators who certainly did not depend upon the so-called Jewish vote to elect them. Also many Democratic senators from states where the Jewish population is negligibly small have rallied heartily to the support of our movement.

A few days ago, President Truman replied to Mr. Bevin's charges that he had wrecked a possible Palestine settlement by requesting the admission of 100,000 Jews to Palestine and that partisan and local politics were influencing America's attitude towards the Palestine question. The White House statement called these charges most unfortunate and misleading and concluded by declaring: "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 their political affiliation."

I trust that people will not be misled by unauthenticated rumors and innuendos to which unfortunately Mr. Deuel has given currency.

Sincerely yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER