



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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Series V: Writings, 1909-1963, undated.

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The rebirth of Israel, 1948.

May 14, 1948

STATEMENT BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

ON PROCLAMATION OF JEWISH STATE

The decision has been taken. The Jewish people have kept their appointment with history. The Jewish State, the dream of twenty centuries of homeless wandering, is today a reality.

Summoned into existence by the urgent need of the Jewish people, the Jewish State has been fashioned by that people's creativeness, built by its labor and sacrifice, defended and made secure by its blood.

It was logical that the expiration of the Mandate in Palestine would be followed by the fulfillment of the Mandate's high purpose, the transformation of the Jewish National Homeland into a sovereign Jewish State. It was equitable that the two peoples living in Palestine should each be afforded the opportunity to achieve independence and self-determination. Logic and equity dictated the decision of the United Nations.

But it remained for the Jews themselves to implement that decision. When the United Nations, put to a critical test of its efficacy and authority, faltered and capitulated to the counsel of convenience and the intimidation of lawlessness, the Jews were abandoned to their own fate. It was for them -- and them alone -- to decide their future. History has taught that freedom is never bestowed. It must be won. It has been won.

We Jews who live in America have been fated to witness the darkest and the brightest moments in Jewish history. But a few years ago, we were helpless spectators of an unrestrained madness which brought agony and death to our people. An enfeebled world, its conscience blunted by compromise, was seized with paralysis and permitted Hitler to destroy 6,000,000 Jews -- one-third of our people. Our pleas and protests were in vain. Nothing was left to us but to hope that there might arise from this frightfulness a new Jewish people, secure in the exercise of its own national will, safe on its own national soil.

Today, we may give thanks that we have been spared to witness the realization of that hope. In the expression of our gratitude, we must be conscious that we stand but at the beginning. There is much to be done -- much that we must do.

The Jewish State must translate Jewish precept into action. The prophetic teachings must come alive in a progressive democracy whose example will shine throughout the world.

The people that has been a minority everywhere in the world for twenty centuries, that has suffered the disabilities of minority status, now has an opportunity to demonstrate that discrimination is a scourge that must and can be stamped out. The Arab minority in the Jewish State will be granted complete equality of opportunity.

It was in ancient Israel that the sages preached the Golden Rule. The Jewish State must practice it. It will be a good neighbor. It will work with the surrounding Arab States to advance the interests of all. Granted peace, it will strive earnestly to secure it.

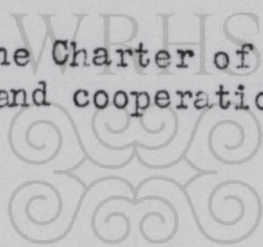
The people that has reclaimed a barren land and has made the desert bloom like a rose will build a state which will seek abundance for all its people. It will not create monopolistic wealth by artificial restrictions on capacity and productivity. It will raise the standards of all its people.

The people that has been the victim of every aggression and the target of every tyrant will make itself secure. It will need weapons to defend itself. But its strongest weapon will be that which achieved its triumph in the hours of its creation, its undefeated spirit, the love of its land and the will to die, if needs be, in its own defense.

The people of the Book, restored to its native land, will build a state that will be the instrument of its cultural renaissance. On its own soil once again, Jewish culture will rise anew. Here, as in ancient days, the Jewish people will be free to make its fullest contribution to civilization.

Emerging into statehood as a consequence of enlightened action by the world community, the Jewish people will seek to strengthen that community. In its relations with other states, the Jewish State will be guided always by the interests of the United Nations. It will seek admission to that body and in its deliberations it will record its judgment as a free and independent state, orientated always to the United Nations and to the United Nations alone.

With fidelity to the Charter of the United Nations, the Jewish State will strive for world peace and cooperation.



48-12 May 15,
1948

THE REBIRTH OF ISRAEL

By Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

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