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First anniversary of Israel, 1949.

RADIO ADDRESS
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY
OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The Jews of the world will celebrate this coming Wednesday, May 4th, the first anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel. In this they will be joined, I am sure, by non-Jewish friends everywhere who, throughout the long struggle to reestablish the Jewish State, gave it their sympathetic understanding and loyal support.

I had the honor to announce the establishment of the State of Israel to the Political Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations on the day that it was proclaimed in Israel. After reading the proclamation, I stated: "The Jewish State, in setting out upon its career, is conscious of the many grave problems foreseen or unanticipated, which confront it. It prayerfully appeals, therefore, to all freedom-loving peoples and, especially, to those who gave their fullest endorsement to the establishment of the Jewish State a few months ago, to give a full measure of their support and of their strengthening to this newest republic established by this, the most ancient of people. The Jewish State will strive to be worthy of the confidence which has been placed in it by the nations of the world, and will endeavor to realize, as far as it is humanly possible, those prophetic ideas of justice, brotherhood, peace and democracy which were first proclaimed by the people of Israel in that very land."

The establishment of the State of Israel last May was for the Jewish people an historic act of incomparable grandeur, the majestic climax of a profound millennial drama. The hope of the centuries was finally realized. The faith which sustained them through the long, weary years was proudly vindicated. The people that had so often been consigned to death had risen from its immemorial crucifixion and had returned to sovereign national life. Quite naturally there was great rejoicing in their hearts. And when, within a few short minutes after the proclamation of the establishment of the State, the government of the United States granted that State de facto recognition,

an act which was before long to be the forerunner of similar acts of recognition on the part of more than fifty states, the hearts of American Jews were filled with pride and gratitude to their beloved country because of this historic and decisive act of support. The oldest and strongest republic on earth had reached out a helping hand to the youngest republic, ~~established by one of the most ancient of peoples.~~

The year which has elapsed since that memorable day was never wanting in the sustaining hopefulness of that great political achievement, but it was also not without its hard struggles and bitter fighting for the new State of Israel. Palestine was almost immediately invaded by the armies of five neighboring Arab states. Severe fighting ensued. Tel Aviv and other centers were bombed. The Jewish quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem was destroyed. The New City of Jerusalem was besieged and almost starved into surrender. It did not surrender. Numerous Jewish settlements were attacked. Many lives were lost. The United Nations was powerless to restrain the invaders who had resolved by violence to alter the decision of that international body which was reached in November of 1947, ~~to solve the Palestine problem.~~ The successive truces ordered by the Security Council of the United Nations did not halt the fighting. It was on the battlefield that the final decision had to be reached, and it was reached. The fighting Jewish forces, though poorly equipped and hampered in every way by the Mandatory regime prior to its termination from organizing and equipping themselves in anticipation of the inevitable military struggle ~~which was to ensue,~~ nevertheless fought with a valor, a skill, and a resoluteness which decisively discomfited and defeated all the invading armies. So that today, on the eve of the first anniversary, an armistice has been established between Israel and all of the neighboring Arab states with the exception of Syria ^{on whose battlefield} ~~where~~ a cease-fire order is in effect. There is no more fighting in Palestine. Final peace negotiations are at this very moment being carried on at a peace conference in Lausanne, Switzerland, between the representatives of the government of Israel and the neighboring Arab states. An old

adage has again been proven right: Freedom is never given. It is always won, and the price is often very high. The Israeli paid a very high price in blood and war casualties for the privilege of becoming free and independent.

But the Israeli spent their first year, not merely in defensive fighting for freedom and survival. They set up the machinery of a new state, the complete apparatus of self-government. They held their first general election for a constituent assembly. They elected their President, appointed their ministers, and got their government and their services functioning smoothly and without friction. The Israeli published to the world the draft of the constitution of ~~the~~ ^{their} new state. It is a model of the most advanced democratic conceptions of government, grounded in the classic spiritual teachings of economic justice, brotherhood, and equality of the ancient prophets of Israel. The dignity of man and his unalienable rights are proclaimed. No discrimination whatsoever between Jew and non-Jew in Israel, between races, creeds and the sexes is tolerated in the basic law of this secular, non-theocratic state. The Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the United States and the exalted doctrines of human freedom of our Declaration of Independence are in essence faithfully reflected in the constitution of the new State of Israel.

Second only to the historic political achievement of the past year has been the amazing social achievement in terms of the rescuing of tens of thousands of homeless refugees and of bringing them into the country and giving them a new life and a new hope. Since last May nearly 200,000 Jews have come into Israel - the war-ravaged, the camp-wearied, the men, women and children who had walked for years the broken highways of hopeless wandering across the face of Europe. They finally found sanctuary among their own people in their own land. They are pouring into the country at this very moment at the rate of a thousand a day. I know of no comparable saga in all the history of the migrations of peoples where so many ~~would so~~ ^{sought to} desperately ~~seek~~ the shelter of so little a country in so short a time. Israel is rapidly emptying the

D.P. Camps of Europe and solving a problem which all the powerful nations of the world with their vast ~~empty~~ territories could not solve.

This most welcome, large-scale Jewish immigration into Israel has, however, imposed most severe economic burdens upon the young state. The cost involved in the transportation, reception, housing and resettlement of these immigrants runs into the hundreds of millions of dollars a year. The young republic is exerting itself to the utmost to meet this situation. The Israeli are heavily taxing themselves and are submitting to severe austerity measures to meet the situation. Jews throughout the world have been assisting generously to help transport and care for ~~the~~ ^{these} new immigrants, but much greater assistance is needed, and everyone hopes that it will be forthcoming. Of all the problems which confront the new state on this, its first anniversary, none is as severe and as urgent as this problem of immigration.

There are other problems which confront the new state. No permanent peace has as yet been signed. The boundaries of the country have not yet been fixed. The final status of Jerusalem still remains to be determined. The State of Israel is in favor of guarantees to safeguard the holy places which are sacred to the three great religions of mankind, and ~~a guarantee~~ ^{the} of free access to them. The United Nations ^{in the} ~~November 47 decision~~ ^{has favored} internationalization of the city. But the difficulties involved in implementing such an arrangement, especially as regards adequate military force, are becoming increasingly evident. The United Nations failed to provide for the protection of the City against siege, attack and bombardment last year following its decision to internationalize it. Perhaps the solution lies in international supervision of the immunity of the sacred places. The President of the State of Israel, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, speaking the other day for the State of Israel, pledged: "To insure full security for religious institutions in the exercise of their functions, to grant the supervision of the holy places by those who hold them sacred, and to encourage and accept the fullest international safeguards and controls for their immunity and protection."

The problem of the Arab refugees who left their homes in Israel during the period of the war is a serious social problem which has given great concern to the State of Israel as well as to the Arab peoples and to the members of the United Nations. The State of Israel has indicated time and again its readiness to cooperate in any practical scheme for the permanent solution of this problem. The suggestion for the resettlement of most of these refugees with proper assistance in neighboring Arab countries prepared for their reception, through a voluntary scheme of population transfer, has been gaining favor in responsible circles. Ex-President Hoover has been an advocate of some such plan for some time. "There was a time," wrote Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt recently, "when perhaps the best solution would have been for these people to return to Israel. However, now with the great influx of Jewish immigration from Cyprus and central Europe, the Arabs probably will be better off if the funds already in hand are used to resettle them in some of the Arab countries where there are vacant lands that need people to work them."

The gravity and urgency of the problem is not being overlooked by the leaders in the State of Israel who have always advocated ^a ~~the~~ policy of close cooperation with all the peoples of the Near East for mutual benefit.

The State of Israel has not yet been admitted into the United Nations although the Security Council on March 4th approved Israel's application for membership in the United Nations. We hope that this admission will take place in the near future.

When I first addressed the Political Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on May 8, 1947, and presented the Zionist case in behalf of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, I said: "The Jewish people belongs in this society of nations. Surely, the Jewish people is no less deserving than other peoples whose national freedom and independence have been established and whose representatives are now seated here. The Jewish people were your Allies in the war and joined their sacrifices to yours to achieve a common victory. The representatives of the Jewish people of Palestine should

sit in your midst - the representatives of a people and a land which gave to mankind spiritual and ethical values, inspiring human personalities, and sacred texts which are your treasured possessions. We hope that that people, now rebuilding again its national life in its ancient homeland, will be welcomed before long by you to this noble fellowship of the United Nations."

Now that Israel has achieved its independence and ^{now that} its sovereignty has been acknowledged by nearly all the countries of the world, it is only fitting and proper that its admission into the United Nations should no longer be delayed.

And so, ^{heartily} we salute the State of Israel on the occasion of the first anniversary of its existence. ^{We wish it well. We pray for its peace and prosperity} Although it is beset with many grave problems, it will, we are confident, solve them by the exercise of the same skill, determination, and devotion which enabled it to come through the war dangers of the past year, and which sustained it during the many discouraging years of struggle which preceded the establishment of the State. ^{Peace be upon Israel!}

1949

ADDRESS OF
DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER
CHAIRMAN OF AMERICAN ZIONIST EMERGENCY COUNCIL
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY
OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

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in May 1948

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And so, we salute the State of Israel on the occasion of the ~~first~~ *second* anniversary of its existence. Although it is beset with many grave problems, it will, we are confident, solve them by the exercise of the same skill, determination, and devotion which enabled it to come through the war dangers of the past year and which sustained it during the many discouraging years of struggle which preceded the establishment of the State.

