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Zionist Organization of America on the American scene, 1950.



THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA ON  
THE AMERICAN SCENE

Delivered Sunday July 2, 1950  
Hotel Stevens, Chicago, Illinois  
Before the ZOA Convention

By Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

I have been asked to speak on "The ZOA On The American Scene". I am frank to confess that I have nothing new to say on the subject. I have spoken on this subject in extenso at least a half dozen times in the last two years before regional and national Zionist gatherings. Many others have spoken and written on the same subject. At our last convention in May 1949 the Rifkind Commission presented a carefully prepared report on "The Future Program and Contributions Of The World Zionist Organization" which contained also comprehensive recommendations for the future activities of the Zionist Movement in the United States. I am persuaded that what needs to be said on the subject has already been said. However, what needs to be done has unfortunately not been done.

The confusion in our ranks of which everybody is fond of talking and writing is due not so much to a lack of clarity as to objectives or ideology, but to a lack of dynamics of action on our part aggravated by the failure of the government of Israel to define and make secure for the movement, as the instrument of the Jewish people, its specific responsibilities in the field of fund-raising, immigration and settlement.

There can be no powerful Zionist Organization nationally or internationally unless it is endowed with power, unless it is assigned a large and vital area and corresponding authority to carry through what has been called the second phase of the Zionist program which began with the establishment of the State, namely, the in-gathering of the Jews of the Diaspora, who desire to settle in Israel.

The strength of the Zionist movement and organization will in the last analysis correspond to the size and importance of the tasks which are specifically assigned to them. The assignee in each instance, directly or indirectly, is the government of Israel. When the functions and authority and the administrative



scope in the fields of fund-raising, resettlement and upbuilding are narrowed and erased, the vitality of the movement and the strength of its organization are correspondingly cut down.

Perhaps they should be reduced. Perhaps our movement should reconcile itself to a sure and speedy liquidation. If that be so, then we should not lament the decline in our organization's strength nor clamor for the re-vitalization of the movement. You cannot eat the pie and have it too. Those who steadily push for the absorption of all real authority and control by the government; those who in practice treat the Zionist Organization as just one among a number of Jewish bodies of equal or perhaps of greater importance instead of regarding it as the representative body of the Jewish people which created the State of Israel, and must now complete the implementation of the full Zionist program, but who at the same time utter pietistic phrases about the need for a strong Zionist movement, are either deluding themselves or are guilty of double talk. I am afraid that what some of them actually have in mind is the desirability of continuing the Zionist Organization solely for the purpose of having some scolding address, or a convenient whipping boy for the resentment and blame of whatever goes wrong.

I am not persuaded that the confusion in our ranks is all that it is made out to be. Fairly substantial agreement has emerged among Zionists following the first exciting and confusing year of victory touching the future aims and tasks of our movement. There was a time when we had to caution even our own Zionists against their delusions followed by their exaltation. Many believed that the Zionist victory was now complete and final. That the political struggle was definitely over and that the full Zionist program had now been accomplished. However, most of them were soon sobered. For some time now there has been substantial agreement touching the partial character of what has been achieved. It is now recognized, to quote the words of the Rifkind Report, that "the establishment and international recognition of the State of Israel ~~constitutes~~  
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The Report of the Commission on Zionist Congress Problems, which was set up by the American Section of the Jewish Agency, which represents all Zionist parties in our country, states the same conclusion in other words. "The establishment of the sovereign, internationally-recognized State of Israel constitutes a momentous stage towards the realization of the Zionist goal".

There has also emerged substantial agreement as to the need of maintaining a strong Zionist organization to carry the movement through its next stages to the ultimate fulfillment of all of its aims.

The Rifkind Report defines the future aims and functions as follows:

1. To safeguard the integrity and independence of the State of Israel as a free and democratic commonwealth by means consistent with the laws of the several countries whereof Zionists are nationals or inhabitants; to this end, the Zionist movement will render moral and material assistance to the people of Israel, will promote the speedy migration to Israel of Jews desirous of settling therein, will further their adequate preparation, economic absorption and cultural integration and will cooperate in lifting the standard of life in Israel.
2. To assist in the organization of all Jewry for the above-stated purposes by means of local and general institutions in conformity with local law.
3. To strengthen Jewish sentiment and consciousness as a people and promote its cultural creativity.

The Report of the American Section of the Jewish Agency practically restates these identical aims in the following words:

- (a) to extend to the State of Israel the full support necessary to ensure its economic development and political security;
- (b) to further the speedy in-gathering into the State of Israel of all



Jews who wish to go and live there, and to prepare them for integration into the State;

(c) to represent the interests and views of the Jewish people in all matters connected with its participation in the upbuilding of Israel;

(d) to foster Jewish continuity and strengthen Jewish spiritual creativeness.

Substantial agreement also emerged as to the relationship between the Zionist Movement and the government of Israel. There have been those who either for partisan or selfish reasons have done their best to roil the waters, excite suspicion, and inflame passions over this issue, but the record is quite clear.

It was fully realized by all right thinking people that in order to accomplish their common purposes, there must be in all matters, again to quote the Rifkind Report "cordial consultations, friendly cooperation, and intelligent coordination with the authorities of Israel". No responsible Zionist leader ever advocated the support of "Hafradah --"separation" between the government and the movement, between Israel and the Diaspora, which some party hacks have mischievously made it out to be. At the meeting of the Actions Committee in September 1948, it was decided upon the insistence of the American Zionists that Ministers of the State of Israel should not at the same time be members of the Executive of the World Zionist Organization, and that no funds of the World Zionist Organization should be contributed to the government of Israel. This action was ~~misinterpreted~~ dictated not by any desire to build a wall of separation between the government and the Zionist movement - or to bar the closest cooperation between them, but to regularize the formal, juridical relationship between two parties, one a sovereign and independent state, and the other a international movement. In the absence of such a clear cut, legal separation, our movement might easily be subjected in some countries to the charge of being a tool of a foreign government and its member agents of the foreign government, and guilty



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I am afraid that it was the desire of certain government forces to take over all the immediate functions, operations and controls which belong to the World Zionist Organization -- and I do not at all question the sincerity of their motives -- which was mainly responsible for the tensions which ensued, and which finally culminated in the action which was taken at the recent meeting of the Actions Committee for the coordination of a Joint Development Authority, which to all intents and purposes places the entire field of immigration and settlement under the control of the government, while retaining a none too impressive facade of partnership by allowing equal representation to the Agency. I am not at all sure that this new arrangement will not at some time or another gravely embarrass our movement in our country or elsewhere, and will not give rise to deplorable situations which we sought to obviate in September 1948.

The new arrangement was arrived at at the recent meeting of the Actions Committee is surely not the one that was envisaged by the American Section of the Jewish Agency when a few months ago, after many meetings, and in full knowledge of all the facts including the problems created by mass immigration and the so-called Hafradah, it proposed that a Charter should be given to the World Zionist Organization by the government of Israel. This Charter should provide that:



1. The WZO shall be recognized by the State as the instrument of the Jewish people throughout the world for accomplishment of the tasks set forth in this Charter, and no other public organization shall be permitted to operate in Israel without the prior joint consent of the Executive of the WZO and the Government of Israel.
2. The functions of the WZO in Israel shall include:
  - (a) Organization and administration of immigration.
  - (b) Maintenance of the immigrants in the initial stages of their absorption into the rural and urban economy of Israel and cooperation with the Government in colonization and development schemes aimed at the permanent integration of the immigrants into the economy of the land.

It is of interest to recall that the idea of a Charter defining the rights and authority of the World Zionist Organization was first suggested by Prime Minister Ben Gurion himself. That was before the decision was taken to eliminate all Ministers of the Government from the Executive of the Jewish Agency.

It is clear that with the diminution of the status of the World Zionist Organization, the status also of the Zionist movement in the United States and of the Zionist Organization of America has automatically diminished. It is becoming increasingly less significant and less relevant, and American Jews are quick to realize and to react accordingly. They are beginning to walk away from an organization which has no serious role to play in fund-raising for Israel, since the government of Israel has clearly indicated its preference for non-Zionist control over fund-raising in the United States. This, of course, was the meaning of the struggle two years ago which due to the intervention of the government we lost, resulting in a material hurt to the funds and an irreparable hurt to the Zionist Organization of America. I ask now those American Zionists, who threw themselves



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has now been partially retrieved. Some Zionist parties like the Poale Zion, through spokesmen, urged the immediate liquidation of the American Zionist Emergency Council. The controversy which raged around the funds at the close of '48, and the consequent dis-crediting, however unintentional, of the American Zionist leaders by the Israeli government has still further weakened our political standing in Washington, so that a decline in the political fortune of Israel promptly set in. The pro-Arab forces in the State Department again gained the upper hand. For a long time we were ~~typical~~ stymied in the matter of the refusal of our government to sell arms to the state of Israel while the Arab states were being amply supplied by Great Britain. We have recovered some ground since as a result of the growing awareness on the part of American Zionists and the government of Israel of the need for unflinching political mobilization, vigilance and action to hold and defend what has been won. We are still not out of the woods by any means. Notwithstanding the joint statement of three powers which was issued on May 25, the state of Israel has, as yet, received no reply to its formal request made last February to the government of the United States for permission to purchase arms in this country. The flow of arms to the Arab states from Great Britain -- jet planes, bombers, tanks -- is continuing unimpeded and these arms are intended not for domestic security purposes or to defend the region against the Soviets, but to attack Israel at the first favorable moment. The responsible political and military leaders have time and again alerted us to this prospect. The Arabs have every intention to resume hostilities. So that on one pretext or another they have refused until now to make peace. Quite definitely, therefore, the small, young and menaced state of Israel stands in need of a strong Zionist organization in the United States -- and also elsewhere -- but especially in the United States to support it politically in the eventuality of aggression and threats of war.



I am persuaded that the events of the next few years will also demonstrate that the infant state of Israel requires a strong ZOA, especially in the United States, to ensure continued economic support. The UJA funds are following a course of diminishing returns. Less is being contributed to our Welfare Funds, and of the less more is being drained off for local needs. This process is destined to reach catastrophic proportions in the wake of the continuing and un-diminishing immigration needs of Israel unless the Zionists of America are mobilized to halt it.

The non-Zionists, who were not unfriendly to Israel, and who for a time were inspired by the glorious events which transpired, to give generously and to grant priority to the needs of Israel, are now being easily persuaded to scale down their giving to what is called a "normal" level, and to give priority to their local community needs. Only loyal and disciplined Zionists, whose allegiance to the movement is not of yesterday, who understand all that is involved in the building of a state, and who are deeply disturbed by the mounting economic crisis in Israel, can be marshalled to arrest this trend. Unfortunately it is in this very area of fund-raising that the authority of American Zionists has been severely damaged and their morale badly shaken.

Thus every political and economic consideration calls for a strengthening of Zionism and of the Zionist Organization not for the sake of Zionists, but for the sake of Israel, and I repeat again, the solution lies in the main in the hands of the government of Israel.

What I said about the advisability for the government of Israel to voluntarily curb its propensities for centralization and incorporation in order to allow for a necessary measure of freedom and authority to the World Zionist Organization to carry on effectively applies with equal force to the World Zionist Organization in its relation to its constituent parts. Thus the Zionists of the United States should be allowed to carry on their work on the American



scene with a minimum of intervention from the World Organization, but subject, of course, to the basic policy decisions of the Congress. The Jewish Agency should as a rule not undertake to do any work on the American scene either in the economic or political field, or in fund raising, which the American Zionist groups themselves organized territorially or united more formally can do. There should be no duplication of effort. There should be no division of authority. The Zionist community of the United States, like the World Zionist Organization, itself, requires clearly defined, comprehensive and inviolate areas of functions and responsibilities in order to give it significance, vitality and prestige in the American Jewish community.

At our last convention in New York a year ago, I urged upon the delegates three things. One, maximum political mobilization. The strengthening of the American Zionist Council, and the continued political education of American public opinion to counteract continuing anti-Zionist propaganda in the United States on the part of Arabs, Jews and non-Jews. This work must go on, and for a long time to come.

Two, I urged private investment. I appealed for a program of action which would make every Zionist in the United States an investor in some Palestinian economic project. I urged the expansion of the work of the Israel Corporation. The Convention endorsed this program. Unfortunately, for reasons best known to itself, the coup de grace was given to the Israel Corporation, and its demise in no way profited the Palestine Economic Corporation or any other Corporation. Surely we cannot blame the government of Israel for our failure to do a large, constructive job in this field. Our failure is due to what I called earlier a "lack of the dynamics of action" on our part. This field of private investment still remains one of the two principal purposes by which the ZOA can justify its existence.



Three, I urged an extensive program for the mobilization of manpower to assist in the upbuilding of Israel -- a realistic program of American Chalutzith, embracing not only agriculture but all skills and all trades and professions which would supply by categories such numbers as Israel would need at any given time. A program which would find the men, if need be train them, assist in their transportation and facilitate their integration in the economic life of Israel.

It was clear to me that what we needed to do was not to lecture to the American Jews about their bounden duty to emigrate forthwith to Israel, or to frighten them with the foreboding that their position in America was not secure. Such tactics will simply not work. They may on the other hand crease such resentment and bitterness which would seriously affect all pro-Israel activities in the United States. It is a wiser course by far to create opportunities, to offer guidance and encouragement, to inform and enlighten and stimulate interest among our people, particularly the young, to go to Israel and to participate for a few years or permanently in the glorious enterprise of building the state. The appeal should be to idealism, pride and to the pioneering spirit.

Little or nothing has been done by us in this field. Here again the failure cannot be charged up to the action of the government of Israel.

Unwilling or unable to undertake the hard work in these essential fields, much time was spent in writing articles on the need for Jewish education and for democratization of the American Jewish community. Important subjects indeed, but such as accomplish very little to meet the two urgent needs of Israel at this moment -- capital and manpower.

It is furthest from my mind to deprecate the important projects of education and democracy in the American Jewish community, but I am aware that there are other important organizations in American Jewish life which are charged primarily with these important matters, Many of our Zionists belong to them. Many of our Zionists are at work in them. The Zionist Organization as such has a vital



interest in these projects, but its interest in them must for the time being be secondary to the primary and compelling interests which concern Israel. Were we strong enough and adequately equipped in staff and finances to do all these things, so much the better. But we are not. As long as we are not, and for such time as the pressing tasks of state building to which we have set our hand, are upon us - and desperate economic crises persist in Israel - our primary concern as a Zionist Agency must be with the economic support and the marshalling of manpower for Israel, and, of course, with political action whenever necessary. This is the specific thought, not at all the exclusive province of the Zionist movement. We exclude nothing that is Jewish. We stress only in this critical hour priorities. First things first!

Accordingly, I share with you the hope that the next year will be one of action. Not one of grandiose pronouncements and plans - or of meticulously worded definitions of what we are, ~~and why~~ - or of newly tailored philosophies for Jewish survival. But of action. Action which is inspired by loyalty, which is guided by sound judgment, and which flows out of the great commitments which we undertake in the sight of the world and of history, when we declared to the nations of the world "give us the chance and we will build a fine, strong and noble Jewish state, which will be a boon to Israel and a blessing to mankind". The chance has been given to us. Let us therefore go about our tasks of building energetically, sacrificially, with eager hearts and willing hands.

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ADDRESS BY DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER  
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However, what needs to be done has unfortunately not been done!

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The new arrangement was arrived at at the recent meeting of the Actions Committee is surely not the one that was envisaged by the American Section of the Jewish Agency when a few months ago, after many meetings, and in full knowledge of all the facts including the problems created by mass immigration and the so-called Hafradah, it proposed that a Charter should be given to the World Zionist Organization by the government of Israel. The Charter should provide that:

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It is clear that with the diminution of the status of the World Zionist Organization, the status also of the Zionist movement in the United States and of the Zionist Organization of America has automatically diminished. It is becoming increasingly less significant and less relevant, and American Jews are quick to realize and to react accordingly. They are beginning to walk away from an organization which has no serious role to play in fund-raising for Israel, since the government of Israel has clearly indicated its preference for non-Zionist control over fund-raising in the United States. This, of course, was the meaning of the struggle two years ago which, due to the intervention of the government, we lost, resulting in a material hurt to the funds and an irreparable hurt to the Zionist Organization of America. I ask now those American Zionists, who threw themselves so eagerly into the crusade of two years ago to curtail the influence of the Zionist Organization of America in the fund-raising structure, and to dis-credit ZOA leaders and leadership, what gains accrued to the Zionist movement in the United States as a result of their crusade in the United States, or to the funds, or to Israel.

American Jews are beginning to walk away from an organization which only peripherally touches the essential tasks of today and of tomorrow -- immigration and settlement. They are losing interest in an organization which is prohibited from raising funds even for its own party activities in Israel - which other Zionist parties are free to do - having been beguiled into accepting in lieu of independent, life-nourishing activities the honor of having two colonies, built in Israel, out of the common funds collected by the Jewish Agency and earmarked as ZOA colonies.

We are in danger of becoming a typical American lodge, restricted to the customary routines of American lodges and fraternal organizations, instead of a great, creative national movement.

If ~~our~~ <sup>the Zionist</sup> organization has been reduced in status, authority and in freedom of action, the remedy lies not with us here, but with the government of Israel. The government of Israel should make up its mind whether it really wants a strong Zionist movement to carry on for a considerable time in the future. If it does, then it will have to curb its own quite natural propensities toward centralization.

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and incorporation and deliberately replenish the power and authority of the Zionist Organization and re-instate it as a supreme agency of the Jewish people to execute, in close cooperation with it, of course, the full program of "Kibbutz galuyot".

✓ I was pleased to hear the same opinion expressed at the recent Actions Committee meetings by some of those who so violently opposed me when I first uttered these convictions two years ago. Their words sounded to me like familiar echoes-but I am afraid rather belated echoes, and not quite genuine.

✓ I believe that it is to the advantage of Israel that a maximum of initiative, independence and authority be vested in the World Zionist Organization as long as such an organization is deemed necessary, and in my judgment it will be necessary for at least another generation, if we are in earnest about bringing into Israel another two or three million Jews and plan for their economic integration and render the state maximum political support in the crises which are certain to arise in the life of the New Republic. This is not a question of Zionists living outside of Israel, who are trying to dictate to the government of Israel - or to influence its sovereign decisions. This is a red herring which is often drawn across the path of this grave and inescapable issue. And in passing I should like to submit to you that it is not only poor taste and poor public relations, but also the work of supererogation to lecture world Jewry, and more especially American Jewry, to keep its hands off and not to meddle in the affairs of Israel at the very time when they are being desperately and continuously solicited for help and support.

✓ I have not observed anywhere any particular desire to meddle in the affairs of Israel, unless the survival of political parties in Zionism, which antedated the establishment of the State, each with its distinct program, and each maintaining affiliation with some political party in Israel, may be said to constitute meddling. If that is the case, then the political parties in Israel which constitute the State of Israel, should demand the liquidation of their party branches in the Diaspora. The ZOA has indicated time and again that it would welcome such action provided it is concerted and uniform for all.

✓ The question is not one of meddling at all, nor of seeking <sup>K</sup>udos or credit. The question is whether the World Zionist Organization, and, therefore, its constituent parts such as the American Zionist Organization will be assigned the major responsibility for completing the total Zionist program and will be granted an adequate measure of authority and freedom to accomplish it. The answer, I repeat does not lie with us or with the World Zionist Organization or with the Congress, but with the government of Israel.

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✓ *Zionist*  
The Congress of 1950 - if it meets in 1950 - will be very unlike all the Congresses which preceded it. The former Congresses were, in a sense, the Parliament of the Jewish State in the making. Fortunately for us in 1950, there already exists a Jewish State which has its own Parliament. Thus the 1950 Congress will not legislate for the State of Israel. It can only plan economic and political support for that State and further immigration and the mobilization of World Jewry for these tasks. But all such plans and decisions will naturally be subject to the approval of the Government of Israel. It will not be the Congress which will determine the scope and form of our movement, but the government of Israel. Unless the government of Israel is prepared to allow the Congress, that is the World Zionist Organization, wide latitude and authority, freedom and independence to carry on a precisely defined program of action, it were wiser not to convoke any Congress at all; for the Zionist movement might very well emerge from such a Congress even more shaken and diminished than it is at present. It is for the government of Israel carefully to balance the gains which might accrue to it from total centralization and control against the losses which are bound to result from the depletion of its original sources of strength.

✓ The events of the last *few* years have, of course, demonstrated how much the infant state of Israel needs a strong Zionist organization in the United States and perhaps elsewhere for vital political support. Unwisely we began to demobilize politically soon after the establishment of the State. We were then told by Israeli political authorities that the government of Israel would from now on look after its own political interest in Washington. Flushed with victory, ~~not entirely of their own making~~, they become over confident. Over-confidence led to the first major defeat of the Israel government in the Assembly of the United Nations on the question of the internationalization of Jerusalem, a defeat which has now been partially retrieved. Some Zionist parties like the Poale Zion, through spokesmen, urged the immediate liquidation of the American Zionist Emergency Council. The controversy which raged around the funds at the close of '48, and the consequent discrediting, however unintentional, of the American Zionist leaders by the Israel government ~~has~~ still further weakened our political standing in Washington, ~~so that a decline in the political fortune of Israel promptly set in.~~ The pro-Arab forces in the State Department again gained the upper hand. For a long time we were stymied in the matter of the refusal of our government to sell arms to the state of Israel while the Arab states were being amply supplied by Great Britain. We have recovered some ground since as a result of the growing awareness on the part of American Zionists and the government of Israel of the need for unflagging political mobilization, vigilance and action to hold and defend

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① Still left over from the first round

what has been won. ~~We are~~ still not out of the woods by any means. Notwithstanding the joint statement of Three Powers which was issued on May 25, the state of Israel has, as yet, received no reply to its formal request made last February to the government of the United States for permission to purchase arms in this country. The flow of arms to the Arab states from Great Britain - jet planes, bombers, tanks -- is continuing unchecked and these arms are intended not for domestic security purposes or to defend the region against the Soviets, but to attack Israel at the first favorable moment. The responsible political and military leaders have time and again alerted us to this prospect. The Arabs have every intention to resume hostilities. So that on one pretext or another they have refused until now to make peace. Quite definitely, therefore, the small, young and menaced state of Israel stands in need of a strong Zionist organization in the United States -- and also elsewhere - but especially in the United States to support it politically in the eventuality of aggression and threats of war.

I am persuaded that the events of the next few years will also demonstrate that the infant state of Israel requires a strong ZOA, especially in the United States, to ensure continued economic support. The UJA funds are following a course of diminishing returns. Less is being contributed to our Welfare Funds, and of the less more is being drained off for local needs. This process is destined to reach catastrophic proportions in the wake of the continuing and undiminishing immigration needs of Israel unless the Zionists of America are mobilized to halt it.

The non-Zionists, who were not unfriendly to Israel, and who for a time were inspired by the glorious events which transpired, to give generously and to grant priority to the needs of Israel, are now being easily persuaded to scale down their giving to what is called a "normal" level, and to give priority to their local community needs. Only loyal and disciplined Zionists, whose allegiance to the movement is not of yesterday, who understand all that is involved in the building of a state, and who are deeply disturbed by the mounting economic crisis in Israel, can be marshalled to arrest this trend. Unfortunately it is in this very area of fund-raising that the authority of American Zionists has been severely damaged and their morale badly shaken.

Thus every political and economic consideration calls for a strengthening of Zionism and of the Zionist Organization not for the sake of Zionists, but for the sake of Israel, and I repeat again, the solution lies in the main in the hands of the government of Israel.

What I said about the advisability for the government of Israel to voluntarily curb its propensities for centralization and incorporation in order

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to allow for a necessary measure of freedom and authority to the World Zionist Organization to carry on effectively applies with equal force to the World Zionist Organization in its relation to its constituent parts. Thus the Zionists of the United States should be allowed to carry on their work on the American scene with a minimum of intervention from the World Organization, but subject, of course, to the basic policy decisions of the Congress. The Jewish Agency should as a rule not undertake to do any work on the American scene either in the economic or political field, or in fund-raising, which the American Zionist groups themselves, organized territorially or united more formally, can do. There should be no duplication of effort. There should be no division of authority. The Zionist community of the United States, like the World Zionist Organization, itself, requires clearly defined, comprehensive and inviolate areas of functions and responsibilities in order to give it significance, vitality and prestige in the American Jewish community.

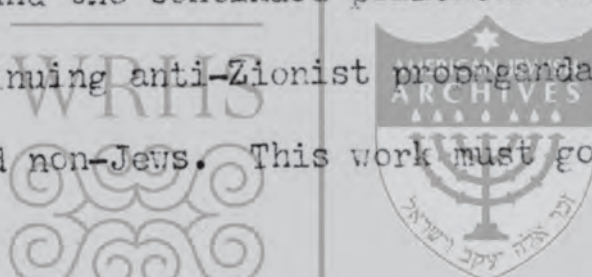
At our last convention in New York a year ago, I urged upon the delegates three things. One, maximum political mobilization. The strengthening of the American Zionist Council, and the continued political education of American public opinion to counteract continuing anti-Zionist propaganda in the United States on the part of Arabs, Jews and non-Jews. This work must go on, and for a long time to come.

Two, I urged private investment. I appealed for a program of action which would make every Zionist in the United States an investor in some Palestinian economic project. I urged the expansion of the work of the Israel Corporation. The Convention endorsed this program. Unfortunately, for reasons best known to itself, the coup de grace was given to the Israel Corporation, and its demise in no way profited the Palestine Economic Corporation or any other Corporation. Surely we cannot blame the government of Israel for our failure to do a large, constructive job in this field. Our failure is due to what I called earlier a "lack of the dynamics of action" on our part. This field of private investment still remains one of the two principal purposes by which the ZOA can justify its existence.

Three, I urged an extensive program for the mobilization of manpower to assist in the upbuilding of Israel -- a realistic program of ~~American~~ Chalutzith, embracing not only agriculture but all skills and all trades and professions which would supply by categories such numbers as Israel would need at any given time. A program which would find the men, if need be train them, assist in their transportation, and facilitate their integration in the economic life of Israel.

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3 Tasks  
(Chalutzith)





It was clear to me that what we needed to do was not to lecture to the American Jews about their bounden duty to emigrate forthwith to Israel, or to frighten them with the foreboding that their position in America was not secure. Such tactics will simply not work. They may on the other hand increase such resentment and bitterness which would seriously affect all pro-Israel activities in the United States. It is a wiser course by far to create opportunities, to offer guidance and encouragement, to inform and enlighten and stimulate interest among our people, particularly the young, to go to Israel and to participate for a few years or permanently in the glorious enterprise of building the state. The appeal should be to idealism, pride and to the pioneering spirit.

Little or nothing has been done by us in this field. Here again the failure cannot be charged up to the action of the government of Israel.

Unwilling or unable to undertake the hard work in these essential fields, much time was spent in writing articles on the need for Jewish education and for democratization of the American Jewish community. Important subjects indeed, but such as accomplish very little to meet the two urgent needs of Israel at this moment — capital and manpower.

It is furtherest from my mind to deprecate the important projects of education and democracy in the American Jewish community, but I am aware that there are other important organizations in American Jewish life which are charged primarily with these important matters. Many of our Zionists belong to them. Many of our Zionists are at work in them. The Zionist Organization as such has a vital interest in these projects, but its interest in them must for the time being be secondary to the primary and compelling interests which concern Israel. Were we strong enough and adequately equipped in staff and finances to do all these things, so much the better. But we are not. As long as we are not, and for such time as the pressing tasks of state building to which we have set our hand, are upon us — and desperate economic crises persist in Israel — our primary concern as a Zionist Agency must be with the economic support and the marshalling of manpower for Israel, and, of course, with political action whenever necessary. This is the specific thought, not at all the exclusive province of the Zionist movement. We exclude nothing that is Jewish. We stress only in this critical hour priorities. First things first!

Accordingly, I share with you the hope that the next year will be one of action. Not one of grandiose pronouncements and plans — or of meticulously worded definitions of what we are and why — or of newly tailored philosophies for Jewish survival. But of action. Action which is inspired by loyalty, which is guided by sound judgment, and which flows out of the great commitments which we undertake in the sight of the world and of history. When we declared to the nations of the world "give us the chance and we will build a fine, strong and noble Jewish state, which will be a boon to Israel and a blessing to mankind". The chance has been given to us. Let us therefore go about our tasks of building energetically, sacrificially, with eager hearts and willing hands.

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