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Zionist Organization of America, 1955.

Zionist Organization of America
Convention
June 16, 1955
Washington, D.C.

(Final copy typed by ZOA is in
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As we move into the eighth year of the existence of the State of Israel, I find myself growing more and more confident about its future progress and stability. On all sides one sees evidences of mounting strength and of a capacity to confront and overcome formidable obstacles. The land is teeming with productive activity; industry and agriculture are expanding; new colonies, settlements and farms are springing up; vast tracts of waste lands are being reclaimed; vital irrigation projects are nearing completion; the building of homes is proceeding at a rapid pace. A sizeable shipping industry is developing. The trade gap between exports and imports has been materially narrowed. One gets the definite agreeable impression that here in Israel are people whose hearts are eager, whose minds are filled with daring and dauntless plans and projects and whose competent hands are busy executing them - people who know what they are about and will not be deterred. They know that the road ahead is a long road and a hard road, one not without its many difficult road-blocks and its dangerous pitfalls. They fully realize that economic self-sufficiency is not just around the corner, or could be had for the asking. They fully realize that salvation for our people was never just around the corner. It always came to us the hard way. Forty years in the wilderness before the Promised Land was reached and many more years in the Promised Land before the people could count its life its own! But the men and women in Israel today go about their work with such a resoluteness and such an intrepid and joyous confidence as to make one feel that they are people who are guided with strength and who are building for permanence.

I hope that we can watch their perseverance and their courage. So far we have, and this gives me an additional ground for confidence in the future progress and

stability of the State of Israel. The Jews of America and of other countries of the diaspora have not manifested any lessening of interest in the State of Israel or in their support of it in the years which have intervened since its establishment eight years ago. They have not grown weary or half-hearted. Many anticipated that a sharp reaction would follow the high-pitched enthusiasm and emotionalism which swept through the Jewish world at the time of the creation of the state. Many feared that the generous outpouring of funds during these early heroic years would be followed by a growing unconcern and sharp retrenchment. Some re-adjustment in mood was, of course, inevitable as life settled down to the more even and customary tenor of its ways. But it is gratifying to note that a steady glow has remained, a deep, abiding solicitude and loyalty to Israel and a corresponding generosity. I am inclined to believe that the rank and file of world Jewry will remain steadfast through the unnumbered years in their devotion to the State of Israel, seeking its welfare at all times, poised to defend its legitimate interests and undergirding it at all times with their support.

Jews of America are visiting Israel in increasing numbers each year. Many go there as tourists; they return as pilgrims. They come back with a new insight, a new awareness, a new pride, and a new consecration. What our arguments at home and much persuasion failed to accomplish, the pageant of reborn Israel which they saw unfolded before them with their own eyes - its drama, its courage, its dynamism, its achievements - seems to accomplish in a miraculously short time. Even those who had not been friendly to the Zionist movement return with a heightened respect for the movement and for the impractical visionaries who had labored and sacrificed for it through the dim and unrewarding years. They certainly return better Jews, with an increased respect for their people and an increased self-respect.

This through the years is likely to be one of the major contributions of Israel to the diaspora and not the least of the many important forms of stimulating reciprocity.

In increasing numbers, too, American Jewish students are going to Israel to advance their Jewish studies and their knowledge of the Hebrew language and literature, and generally to get closer to the culture of their people at the radiant center of its national life. Some remain for a longer time and some even permanently, attracted by the life in Israel and eager to share in the exciting opportunities of nation building. If proper preparatory work, of an administrative character, were done both here and in Israel for the organization, reception, and integration of these young people, not necessarily students but people of all walks of life, many more would be coming I am sure. ~~No grandiose plans, no ideological fan-fare, and no invectives or recriminations will accomplish what, quiet, modest detail and skillful organization work will accomplish, and alone can accomplish.~~ Chaluziot cannot have the same meaning and cannot employ the same techniques for all lands alike, irrespective of their economic, political, and social conditions. It becomes an unrealistic and unproductive slogan - like Kibbutz Galinoth. The ideal, inspiring as a hope, was hopeless as a reality.

American Jewry's major contribution, though by no means the sole contribution, to the young state in the foreseeable future will be financial support through public funds, the stimulation of its economic life through private investments in industrial projects and the defense of its political position in the vital American sector. The government of Israel should give every encouragement to the private investor. Private capital can be persuaded to come to Israel to help build the state. It will not be persuaded to come to Israel to help build socialism. The defense of Israel's political position in the United States and the unflagging educational

activity which is required to maintain a continuing climate of good will in order to counteract the extensive and growing hostile Arab propaganda which is now seeking collaborators among the reactionary and anti-semitic forces in America - will best be carried on by a strongly organized and constantly alerted Zionist organization. Such an organization cannot function properly if it is without authority and prestige, if it is constantly side-stepped and ignored by those who should jealously safeguard its position and work with it and through it.

American Zionist should not be evaluated on the basis of the one or two or more specifically ear-marked activities which it established in Israel. They do not represent a fraction of a fraction of the monumental and historic services which the Zionist movement of the United States rendered the state of Israel. Without its political activities, the marshalling of the forces of American Jewry and the vast educational program the State of Israel would not be in existence today. Without the vast sums raised by the Zionists under Zionist auspices for years, before the United Jewish Appeal and the Bond drives came under nominally non-Zionist leadership, many of the most vital institutions of Israel, and many of its important industrial and agricultural projects, now under the tutelage of all parties in Israel would not now be in existence. The key stone in the pro-Israel arch in the American Jewish community today continues to be the Zionist movement. If that keystone should ever fall, the arch will collapse.

The international situation in which Israel finds itself at the moment is from a near view more tense than it has been but from a large view more hopeful. The precariously-poised leaders of the neighboring Arab states have intensified their fire and brimstone verbal onslaught on Israel - the Egyptian Nasser, with his eye on Iraq - and the port of of the Arab League - taking the lead. The Gaza strip has become a favorite area of provocation and In not one such instance during the year have the Arab states given

the slightest indication that they are prepared to sit down with the representatives of Israel to discuss any problem of mutual interest which might conceivably convert the uneasy and intermittently violated armistice now in into a permanent peace. Israel has extended many invitations; they have been brusquely and imprudently declined. At Bandung the Arab bloc succeeded first in excluding Israel from the Conference and then in getting the representative of the governments of and Africa to pass a resolution unfavorable to Israel. Israel has not succeeded in its efforts to stop the shipment of arms to Iraq on the part of the government of the United States though a temporary halt has seemingly been called to such shipments to other neighboring Arab states. It has not succeeded in being included in any regional security pact, nor in concluding a mutual security pact with the United States.

It has been reported in the public press that such a pact is being considered, but only on the basis of certain major prior concessions by Israel with respect to the unresolved issues in the Arab-Israel conflict - concessions on boundaries on refugees, on compensation. I do not know how much merit there is to such reports. If true, they point to another wrong move not in intent and objective but in tactics.

Israel has made clear time and again her willingness to negotiate a settlement of all outstanding issues with the Arab states. Israel cannot be expected to offer concessions in advance of such negotiations. A mutual security pact between the United States and Israel should be viewed on its own merits as an instrumentality for strengthening American interests and the interests of the free world generally in that strategically vital area of the world, and for resting the military balance which recent policy in that region has in favor of the Arabs.

If both the United States and Israel regard a mutual security pact as in their best interests, such a pact should not be made conditional on Arab consent or on the willingness of the Arab State to conclude simultaneous defense arrangements with this country. If it is the policy of the United States to seek defense arrangements in the Middle East and if, as the State Department has declared, a defense pact with Israel would be "highly logical," then there is no valid reason for delaying such an arrangement. The _____ and outbreaks along Israel's borders represent the most cogent argument for and not against, speedy action to assure Israel's security.

Such an alliance, demonstrating that the United States regards Israel's security as vital to its own interests and is determined to assure it, will help to convince the Arabs that they have nothing to gain by persisting in their present attitude and that it would be more advantageous for them to accept those benefits which would flow from negotiated agreements with Israel on all outstanding issues.

Arab leaders should realize that their bargaining power is destined to grow less in the days to come. If there is any validity to the numerous political moves on the international checker-board where the East and West have been playing their game, then our world is finally moving in the direction of lessening tensions and an attenuation of the Cold War. If the approaching at-the-summit conference of the Big Powers in Geneva will succeed in reducing the dangers of an all-out war between the free world and the communist world, the need for wooing the Arab states to line up on one side or the other will be greatly decreased. Both Washington and Moscow may then come to view the _____ Arab merchandise at best of a dubious quality as of much less importance to them. The hitherto rather successful Arab game of playing both ends against the middle will then be off - definitely. As

East-West tensions lessen, the international position of Israel is bound to improve. Under pressure of this unrelieved tension our government has at times done things or refrained from doing things which the friends of Israel have viewed as unfavorable. These acts of omission or commission were not motivated by ill-will towards Israel, but by an over-all policy of national security. The friendship and good will of the President of the United States - and of our Secretary of State - towards Israel have been by them on numerous occasions. American economic aid to Israel has been continued. The Jordan Valley Authority project which will have inestimable value both to Israel and to Arab states has been energetically pushed by our government under the most capable direction of Mr. Eric Johnston, and final agreements may soon be reached. There is no doubt in my mind that President Eisenhower is entirely sincere when in his message to Congress requesting renewed assistance to friendly governments he declared: "The continuing tension between the Arab states and Israel handicaps the peoples of all Near East nations. We should continue to work with the government and peoples on both sides to improve their economic status and accelerate their progress toward lasting peace between them." When the over-all policy is overhauled, as I am sure it is bound to be, if present trends continue, less hesitant and less constrained attitudes and acts of cooperation may be looked for. America will not let Israel down.

In saying this, I am expressing a hope, not uttering a prophecy. No one can foretell with certainty what the future will hold in store for nations great and small and for the peace of our world. No state can today fully control its own political destiny or security in the world. That is why they are all seeking integration with powerful A small state like Israel is certainly not full master of its international position. But it is not helpless,

either. Any attempt to attack its sovereignty or security is bound to have serious international repercussions in which the great world systems of alliances might well become involved. The United Nations should be the major defense of the rights of small nations. At the moment, its authority and prestige are at low ebb. The Cold War has pushed it to the background. A salutary stock-taking of its effectiveness may take place next month at San Francisco where the U. N. was founded ten years ago. Out of it and out of the negotiations of the great powers next month in Geneva may emerge a new awareness of the need to strengthen and implement the authority of the U. N., and a new and sincere determination to do so. Israel and all smaller nations whose security may be endangered stand to profit from such a development.

Israel, too, will have more f in the world if it is economically stronger and therefore also militarily stronger. Israel, too, will be in a position to negotiate advantageously if it will negotiate from strength. Whatever we do to build up its economic life and to make it stable and self-sufficient directly contributes to its military and therefore to its political strength.

Of one thing Israel is completely master in its own . It is master of its own inner life, of its social and spiritual objectives, the human values, and the cultural and intellectual standards which it sets up; its ideals and its integrity. In Israel, the Jewish people is fashioning not only a Jewish state, but a Jewish society after native and traditional Jewish ethical and spiritual patterns which the denied us the opportunity to realize, an alien amidst alien environments. Success in the latter domain is as important for the Jewish people as in the former domain. Whatever contributes to the building of the good society as Judaism envisioned with and of Israel contributes to the glory and the vindication of Jewish life. Whatever detracts - whatever of partizanship, violence, intolerance, and corruption mars its life - is a abdication and an inglorious defeat for us all.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Documents of Our Times.

Abba Hillel Silver on

Israel's Seven Years.

Progress Towards Stability.

Accomplishments of

American Jewry.

Future Tasks.

—By DR. S. MARGOSHES—

(From the Address by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver at the 58th Annual ZOA Convention at Washington, D. C.)

As we move into the eighth year of the existence of the State of Israel, I find myself growing more and more confident about its future progress and stability. On all sides one sees evidence of mounting strength and of a capacity to confront and overcome formidable obstacles. The land is teeming with productive activity; industry and agriculture are expanding; new colonies, settlements and farms are springing up; vast tracts of waste lands are being reclaimed; vital irrigation projects are nearing completion; the building of homes is proceeding at a rapid pace. A sizable shipping industry is developing. The trade gap between exports and imports has been materially narrowed. One gets the definite and agreeable impression that here in Israel are people whose hearts are eager, whose minds are filled with daring plans and dauntless projects and whose competent hands are busy executing them—people who know what they are about and will not be deterred. They know that the road ahead is a long road and a hard road, one not without many difficult roadblocks and its dangerous pitfalls. They fully realize that economic self-sufficiency is not just around the corner, or could be had for the asking. They fully realize, too, that salvation for our people was never at any time in its history just around the corner. It always came to us the hard way. Forty years in the wilderness before the Promised land was reached and many more years in the Promised Land before the people could count its life its own! But the men and women in Israel today go about their work with such a resoluteness and such an intrepid and joyous confidence as to make one feel that they are guided with strength and are buliding for permanence.

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NEWS AND VIEWS

(Continued from page 1)

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One is pleased to note that Jews of America are visiting Israel in increasing numbers each year. Many go as tourists; but return as pilgrims. They come back with a new insight, a new pride, and a new consecration. What our arguments here at home and our persuasion failed to accomplish, the unfolding heroic pageant of reborn Israel which they see with their own eyes—its drama, its dynamism, its achievements—seems to accomplish with the suddenness and the thoroughness of a conversion. Even those who had not previously been friendly to the Zionist movement return with a heightened respect for the movement and for those impractical visionaries who had labored and sacrificed for

it through the dim and unrewarding years. Above all, they return better Jews, with an increased respect for their people and an increased personal self-respect. This is likely to be one of the major contributions which Israel is destined to make to the diaspora, and not the least of the many stimulating reciprocities which will develop in the future.

In increasing numbers, too, Jewish students are going to Israel to advance their studies, their knowledge of the Hebrew language and literature, and generally to get closer to the radiant center of their people's national life. Some remain there for a longer time and some even permanently, attracted by its life and eager to share in the exciting adventure of nation building. If proper preparatory work, of an administrative character, were done both here and in Israel for the organization, reception, and integration of these young people, not necessarily students but people of all walks of life, many more would be coming, I am sure. No grandiose plans, no ideological fanfare, and no invectives or recriminations are called for or will accomplish what quiet, modest, detail and skillful organizational work will accomplish, and alone can accomplish. Chalutziot is a noble concept but it cannot have the same meaning and cannot employ the same techniques for all countries alike, irrespective of their economic, political and social conditions. Else, it ends up by becoming a doctrinaire concept and an unrealistic and unproductive slogan—like Kibbutz Galuyot, which is also an ideal, inspiring as a hope, but hopeless if taken literally.

American Jewry's major contribution, though by no means its sole contribution, to the young State of Israel in the foreseeable future will be financial support through public funds, the stimulation of its economic life through private investments and the defense of its political position in the vital American sector.

Security Pact in Mutual Interest

by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

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American Jewry's major contribution, though by no means its sole contribution, to the young state of Israel in the foreseeable future will be financial support through public funds, the stimulation of its economic life through private investments and the defense of its political position in the vital American sector.

The government of Israel should give every encouragement to the private investor. Private capital can be persuaded to come to Israel to help build the Jewish state. It will not be persuaded to come to Israel to help build socialism. Socialism is not an historic Jewish ideal nor a specific Jewish responsibility. Social justice is; socialism and social justice are far from being synonymous.

The defense of Israel's political position in the United States and the unremitting educational activity which is required to maintain a continuing climate of good will among the American people

Security Pact in Mutual Interest

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propaganda which is now reaching out for collaborators among the reactionary and anti-Jewish forces in America will best be carried on by a strongly organized and constantly alert Zionist movement. Such a movement cannot function properly if it is not vested with authority and prestige, if it is constantly side-tracked and ignored by those who should jealously safeguard its central position and who should work with it and through it.

The keystone in the pro-Israel arch in the American Jewish community today continues to be the Zionist movement. If that keystone should ever fail, the arch will collapse.

The international situation in which Israel finds itself at the moment is from a near view more tense and disturbing than it has been for some time but from a larger view more hopeful. The precariously poised leaders of the neighboring Arab states have intensified their fire-and-brimstone verbal onslaught on Israel in recent months. The Egyptian Nasser is breathing war. The Gaza strip has become a favorite area of provocation and incitement. Not in one instance during the past year have the Arab states given the slightest indication that they are prepared to sit down with the representatives of Israel to discuss any problems of mutual interest which might conceivably govern the uneasy and oft violated armistice now in force into a permanent peace. Israel has extended many invitations for such conferences; they have been brusquely and impudently declined.

At Bandung the Arab bloc succeeded first in excluding Israel from the Conference and then in getting the representatives of the governments of Asia and Africa to adopt a resolution unfavorable to Israel. Israel has not succeeded in its efforts to stop the shipments of arms to Iraq on the part of the government of the U. S., though a temporary halt seemingly has been called to further shipments to other neighboring Arab states. Israel has not succeeded in being invited into any regional security pact, nor in concluding a mutual security pact with the United States.

It is reported that such a pact is being considered but only on the basis of certain major concessions which will have to be made by Israel with respect to the unresolved issues on the Arab-Israel conflict — concessions on boundaries, on corridors, on refugees, on reparations. If true, they point to another wrong move not in intent but in tactics which is in danger of being made.

Israel has made it clear time and again that it is willing to negotiate a settlement of all outstanding issues with the Arab states. Israel should not be expected to offer concessions in advance of such negotiations. A mutual security pact between the United States and Israel should be viewed on its own merits, as an instrumentality for strengthening American interests and the interests of the free world generally, in that strategically vital area of the world and for restoring the balance of power in the recent Western



DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

If the approaching conference of the Big Powers in Geneva will succeed in reducing tensions and the dangers of an all-out war between the free world and the communist world, the need for wooing the Arab states to line up on one side or the other will be greatly diminished. As East-West relationships are normalized, the international position of Israel is bound to improve.

Hitherto under pressure of an unreleased tension our government has at times done things or refrained from doing things which the friends of Israel viewed as unfavorable. That these acts of omission or commission were not motivated by ill-will towards Israel have been affirmed by spokesmen of our government. American economic aid to Israel has been continued. The Jordan Valley project has been energetically pushed by our government.

There is no doubt in my mind that President Eisenhower expressed his strong and sincere convictions when in his message to Congress requesting renewed economic assistance to friendly governments, he declared: "The continuing tension between the Arab states and Israel handicaps the peoples of all Near East nations. We should continue to work with the governments and peoples on both sides to improve their economic status and accelerate their progress toward lasting peace between them." America will not let Israel down.

The United Nations should in reality be the major defense of all small nations. At the moment its authority and prestige are at low ebb. A salutary stock-taking of its effectiveness may take place at San Francisco where the U. N. was founded ten years ago. Out of it and out of the negotiations of the great powers next month in Geneva may emerge a new awareness of the need to strengthen and implement the authority of the U. N. Israel and all small nations whose security may be endangered stand to profit from such a development.