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Autobiography/memoirs, Book 4, 1963?.

In January, 1951, Ambassador Eban asked me to come down to Washington. He laid before me the matter of a "grant-in-aid" by the American government and solicited my help in connection with the introduction of a bill in Congress. I saw Senator Taft in his office. I discussed with him American grant-in-aid for Israel. He said that he would be very happy to help, that he would be prepared to sponsor such a bill on a non-partisan basis. A week later I received a letter from Ambassador Eban in which he stated: "I was greatly heartened to hear the outcome of your visit here last week. I am convinced that this has taken us a very long stride forward and I ask you to accept this expression of warmest appreciation."

Early in February, I received the first draft of the bill and I suggested certain changes in it. The second draft was then submitted to me. On February 28th I spoke with Senator Taft by long distance. He informed me that he was meeting the next day with Senator Douglas to agree on the final wording. In June, Ambassador Eban telephoned me again requesting that I come to Washington again in connection with the Grant-in-aid Bill. I did. He requested me to see Senator Taft that morning. The Senator indicated that he would continue to press for his resolution as an authorization resolution when the President's Omnibus Bill for military and civilian aid came up before the Foreign Relations Committee.

Israel received ⁺grant-in-aid from the United States--fourteen million dollars in 1951, eighty-four million dollars in 1952 and varying amounts thereafter until 7.

In October, 1953, a crisis developed on the Israeli-Syrian border. It concerned the building of a supplementary canal, one mile long, to divert water from the Upper Jordan River in order to build a small hydro-electric plant at B'noth Já'a cov. The Upper Jordan is situated^{ed} entirely in Israel territory. The proposed canal involved some work in the demilitarized zone between the two countries, on land which also belongs to Israel. The Syrians objected on the ground that under the terms of the armistice agreement signed with Israel in 1949, no alteration was to be permitted in the demilitarized zones which would provide a military advantage to either side. The Syrians claimed that the erection by Israel of a dam, which could regulate the flow of the Jordan, would give Israel a clear military advantage. This objection had been over-ruled in 1951 by the head of the United Nations Israel-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission. The work of building continued. Late in September, 1952, the United Nations Security Council requested that the work be suspended to prevent any further outbreaks of violence. The head of the Mixed Armistice Commission, General Bennike, labeled the construction as a breach of the armistice and insisted that Israel should suspend operations until the Israeli and the Syrians could agree. The Israeli agreed to suspend operations while the Security Council studied the matter.

Whereupon the United States government announced that it would suspend all grant-in-aid to Israel until the canal issue was settled, on the ground that continued operation would be disruptive of the United Nations and

an encouragement to violate its orders. Economic sanctions were applied to Israel which had not yet been ordered by the United Nations--while such sanctions had for several years not been applied by the United States in the case of Egypt or any other Arab state which had time and again defied the Security Council.

Jewish representatives called on Secretary Dulles and expressed the feelings of the American Jewish community on the withholding of economic aid to Israel. I telephoned Secretary Dulles several times about the matter. On October 25th I telegraphed Mr. Dulles and expressed the hope that he would do all that he could to correct the unfortunate impression which had been created by the announcement of the withholding of financial aid which, in my judgment, was a mistake from every point of view.

On Monday evening, October 26th, Secretary Dulles telephoned me from Washington. He said that he had been misunderstood at an earlier press conference; that he would like to discuss the entire matter with me and invited me to lunch with him at the State Department on October 28th.

At this luncheon we discussed the issue of the grant-in-aid and all the other issues which were up before the Security Council relative to Israel. I went into the matter in great detail--the hydro-electric plant, the matter of Kibya, the attitude of the State Department generally towards Israel since the new administration came into office and the importance of closer cooperation and a friendlier attitude.

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Dulles reiterated his profound interest in the well being of Israel, and was critical of the Arab ^{leaders} who failed to assist their own people in refusing to use the millions which they were receiving from oil royalties.

At the close of our conversation, he called in the newspaper reporters and told them that he was grateful to me for having assisted materially in bringing about the resumption of the grant-in-aid to Israel.

President Eisenhower on that day announced the resumption of American economic aid to Israel and a few hours later, Secretary Dulles stated that twenty-six million dollars in financial assistance was ready to go forward for the first six months of the fiscal year that began last July first. Israel had responded to the request of the Security Council that the work on the project be suspended pending a United Nations examination of the question. . . .

In 1955, things were moving on the borders of Israel towards a complete break-down of the armistice agreements. Border flare-ups were frequent and fedayeen -- suicide squads, trained in Egypt -- were raiding Israeli towns and villages.

On August 26, 1955, Secretary Dulles issued a comprehensive statement in which he proposed measures for bringing about a genuine peace in the Middle East. Two days before, I received the following letter from him:



August 24, 1955

My dear Rabbi Silver:

I am planning to make a statement in New York on Friday at 5:30 p. m. dealing with the Israel Arab problem and suggesting possible bases for bringing about a genuine peace in the area. In this statement, I indicate that the President is prepared to recommend a substantial contribution to such a settlement, namely:

1. Subscription to an international loan to enable Israel to discharge its obligation to the refugees which in turn will help them to get resettled;
2. United States contribution to water projects which will develop more arable land which will aid in resettlement;
3. Good offices, if desired, to assist in making the frontier adjustments needed to convert the present armistice lines into permanent boundary lines;
4. United States participation in an international treaty guarantee, preferably sponsored by the United Nations, of the resultant boundary lines.

I feel that if this program were carried through, there would be no great difficulty in settling the remaining problems such as the question of transit through the Suez Canal, and determining the status of Jerusalem.

Probably the principal obstacle in the way of solution is the boundary matter, where the Egyptians seek a substantial part of the Negeb so as to have common boundaries with Jordan and Saudi Arabia, but where the Israelis also want continuous access to the port of Aqaba. I feel, however, that these conflicting claims can be reconciled, and indeed that some reconciliation is in the long run inevitable. This statement comes out of very long and careful thought given the matter.

by the President, myself and my associates, in the course of which we have also considered very carefully the views of Israel, as ably presented by their Ambassador here and also in Israel. I greatly hope that this move will open the way to the genuine peace in the area, which I know Israel wants and which I know is also the desire of the United States.

Knowing of your great interest in this matter, I am letting you know a bit in advance this background to our thinking and I hope that what we are doing will commend itself to you.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

/s/ John Foster Dulles

P.S. If, as I anticipate, you get this letter prior to my making my statement, please keep its contents confidential.

/s/ JFD

To this letter I replied on September 2, 1955:

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The next day I wrote the following letter to Secretary Dulles:

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September 2, 1955

My dear Mr. Dulles:

I saw your kind letter of August twenty-fourth addressed to me upon my return to Cleveland from Europe this morning. I had previously read your statement in the public press. I am very happy indeed that you issued that statement. It not only makes clear the deep and continued interest of our government in helping to break the deadlock which has persisted over a period of years in Israel-Arab relations and in easing the tensions which have unfortunately again this week erupted in most serious border incidents, but it also indicates that the American government is prepared to make positive contributions toward reaching a settlement.

I am quite sure that when it finally gets down to it and the two sides sit down to negotiate, the government of Israel will be prepared to discuss all the matters of outstanding issue to which your statement referred. But here's the rub! The representatives of the Arab governments have consistently refused to sit down and engage in such negotiations because they understand that by so doing they are tacitly acknowledging the political existence and sovereignty of the State of Israel. This, as you well know, is the very thing which they are unwilling to acknowledge, and this is the crux of the whole matter.

Until they are prepared to acknowledge this fact, they must under one excuse or another postpone the day of a peace conference and maintain as long as they can the present status of no peace-no war on the borders of Israel.

I know of only one political action which would finally bring the Arab states to their senses -- a clear statement on the part of our government that unless peace negotiations are undertaken forthwith, the American government will proceed to conclude a mutual security pact with Israel.

— Such a pact is on its own merits logical, as an instrumentality for strengthening American interests in the Near East. It should therefore not be made conditional on the willingness of Arab states to conclude simultaneous defense arrangements with our country. If it is the policy of the United States to seek defense arrangements in the Middle East and if, as a spokesman of the State Department declared a while ago, a defense pact with Israel would be "highly logical", then there is really no valid reason for delaying such an arrangement.

But apart from its own merits, the very announcement of such contemplated action on the part of our government would help to convince the Arabs that they have nothing to gain in persisting in their present attitude and that it would be more advantageous to all concerned to accept those benefits which would flow from negotiated agreements on all outstanding issues.

I am very eager to be helpful in urging reasonableness and a spirit of give-and-take on the part of those who may be influenced by my voice in Israel. Of one thing, however, I am quite certain--prior to negotiations, Israel will not make concessions with respect to the unresolved issues.

I will watch with keen interest the reaction of the Arab governments to your statement.

With warmest regards, and hoping that you will have a pleasant and restful vacation, of which I am sure you stand greatly in need, I remain

Most cordially yours,



ABBA HILLEL SILVER

As if in reply to Secretary Dulles' friendly proposals to bring about peace, the Egyptian government, on September 27, 1955, obtained huge shipments of arms planes, bombers and submarines from Czechoslovakia of such magnitude as to create a dangerous imbalance in the Near East, seriously threatening the security of Israel. There were, of course, repercussions to this in Israel and in the Jewish world. On November 9, President Eisenhower appealed to the Soviet Union to stop the arms race in the Middle East and declared that the United States would consider the request for arms which were needed for legitimate self-defense. On November 16th, Israel formally applied to

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the United States for arms to protect itself against the new threat which the shipment of arms from the Soviet bloc to Egypt created.

On November 15th, a mass meeting was held in Madison Square Garden, sponsored by the major Jewish organizations of the United States, to protest the communist arms shipments to Egypt. Prior to the rally I sent a telegram to President Eisenhower:

"My dear President:

"I have been profoundly disturbed by the recent events in the Near East which have aroused deep apprehension in Israel and among peace-loving people everywhere. I am to address on November 15th a mass rally at Madison Square Garden in New York City in which many civic, religious and labor organizations will participate to express their vital concern over the situation. I know that they would welcome a word from you as coming not only from the Chief Executive of our beloved country, but as the formal spokesman of international justice, freedom and peace in the world today. Personally, I would greatly appreciate such a message.

"With warmest regards and with all good wishes for your complete recovery and well being.

Abba Hillel Silver "

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To which The President replied:

"I am glad to comply with your request to send a message to the meeting which you are addressing this evening, as I know of your great concern about the recent developments in the Near East which disturb all of us. A threat to peace in the Near East is a threat to world peace. As I said the other day, while we continue willing to consider requests for arms needed for legitimate self-defense, we do not intend to contribute to an arms competition in the Near East. We will continue to be guided by the policies of the Tripartite Declaration of May 25, 1950. We believe this policy best promotes the interest and security of the peoples of the area.

"We believe the true and lasting security in the area must be based upon a just and reasonable settlement. It seems to me that current problems are capable of resolution by peaceful means. There is no reason why a settlement of these problems cannot be found, and when realized I would be prepared to recommend that the United States join in formal treaty engagements to prevent or thwart any effort by either side to alter by force the boundaries upon which Israel and its immediate neighbors agree.

"The need for a peaceful settlement becomes daily more imperative. The United States will play its full part in working towards such a settlement and will support firmly the United Nations in its efforts to prevent violence in the area. By firm friendship towards Israel and all other nations in the Near East we shall continue to contribute to the peace of the world.

Dwight D. Eisenhower "

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At the Madison Square Garden Meeting, I stated:

"In a way what has happened in recent weeks -- the opening of the Eastern Mediterranean to Soviet penetration -- is the result of our Government's mistaken Middle Eastern policy. We warned against it time and again but our objections were written off as coming from special pleaders. We did not see things, we were told, from the American point of view.

"But quite definitely we saw it from the American point of view, and the people who were responsible for the handling of the Near East interests of our Government in the State Department have been proven wrong clear



down the line. Egypt's invitation to the Soviet to provide it with arms, which involve ultimately technicians and communist propaganda, is the very seal and testament of their blundering policy.

"When our Government set out to arm the Near East as a bulwark against Sovietism, without first assuring itself that such weapons would not be used to precipitate war among the countries in the Near East -- without first making sure that they would not be used against Israel -- without insisting that Israel should be included in any military pact for the defense of that region of which it is a vital part, our State Department blundered and the degree of unrest which today prevails in that part of the world, and the general deterioration of the situation there, is the measure of that blunder

"Our Government could have pressed for peace and for the lifting of the blockade against Israel when Egypt courted our support in her efforts to free the Suez Canal Zone from British troops. It was a logical thing to have asked for, as part of a general pacification of that region but our State Department refused to do it. It gave Egypt its full measure of support unconditionally.

"When Iraq was being armed it was part of statesmanship to arm also Israel so as not to create a military imbalance in that part of the world, knowing full well that it was only the relative strength of Israel that was discouraging the Arabs' governments from carrying out their avowed intentions of attacking Israel. That, too, was not done. Our Government

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proceeded to encourage regional defense pacts in the Middle East with the understanding that Israel need not be included in such pacts.

" The same blindness which formerly afflicted the Mandatory Power in its dealings with the Arabs and the Jews of Palestine has now come to afflict the people in the State Department who deal directly with the Middle East. Woo the Arabs -- by-pass Israel -- and you will save the Middle East from Soviet penetration! The very opposite of course is happening.



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" Will a new policy now emerge? Secretary Dulles' commendable declaration of August 26 points in the direction of a new policy. Unfortunately, the proffered American help is made contingent upon a prior agreement between the Arabs and the Israelis. But the Arab governments have consistently refused to sit down and engage in any negotiations with the representatives of the State of Israel. Unless massive diplomatic pressures are brought to bear upon the Arabs to enter such negotiations, Mr. Dulles' desire to be helpful will be frustrated.

"Israel must immediately be helped to build up its military strength in the face of the mounting armaments of the Arab world and their increasing threats. Our country, which helped in the establishment of Israel and was the first to give it formal recognition, should make it possible for Israel to acquire the defensive arms which it needs. The great powers who are interested in preserving peace should forthwith agree upon such measures as will deter any aggression aimed at altering the Israeli-Arab frontiers by force.

"We must reassure the people of Israel that we are going to stand by them, that they will not lack in arms. "

I planned a visit to Israel in March, 1956. In view of the tense situation, I thought that a letter which I would bring from President Eisenhower to the President of Israel would be reassuring. Accordingly, I requested such a letter from the President. His letter to President Itzhak Ben-Zvi reads:

March 15, 1956

"My dear Mr. Ben Zvi:

"Through my friend, Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, who is about to visit Israel, I should like to take the opportunity to convey my personal greetings on the occasion of the celebration of Passover, your historic festival, and on the eve of the eighth anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel.

"I have followed with admiration the progress and development of your country. The American people wish your young state peace and prosperity.

"Permit me to assure you that the American Government, earnestly and in the friendliest of spirit, is exploring every avenue to bring about a satisfactory, peaceful solution of the problem which confronts Israel and its neighbors.

"We shall all need patience, mutual confidence and good-will to help us along the way.

Sincerely,

/s/ Dwight D. Eisenhower"

I presented it to President Ben-Zvi in his modest cabin at Sodom on the Dead Sea where he was spending the Passover holidays with the men in the potash works.

Prior to my return to the States, President Ben-Zvi gave me a letter to President Eisenhower:

Dear Mr. President,

I thank you for the warm personal greetings which you sent me through our good friend Dr. Silver on the occasion of the Passover Festival and on the eve of the eighth anniversary of the establishment of our State. I am deeply grateful for this expression of your friendship for Israel and your kind words of appreciation of its progress and development. The people who dwell in Zion and the whole House of Israel will always remember your historic role as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during the Second World War and the inspired efforts you made in succouring the surviving remnants of the Jewish people. We trust that the deep human sympathy you then evinced for a suffering people will stand us in good stead in our present difficult position.

I am writing you this letter at a grave moment in the life of our young State. It came into being as a result of an effort of economic, social and spiritual reconstruction which goes back three generations. Its emergence received the support of an overwhelming majority of the United Nations, who were resolved that the Jewish people should be given the security of a free national life in the ancient land of their fathers and not again be exposed to the dangers

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and torments exemplified by the annihilation of six million Jews in the last war. During these eight years Israel has provided new homes and the prospect of a secure and creative life to nearly 800,000 immigrants -- the bulk of the survivors of the Nazi persecution and nearly 400,000 Jews from the Moslem countries of the Middle East. A new democratic civilization has sprung up in this ancient land, which holds out a message of hope to our brethren in the lands of persecution and provides a significant precedent for the reclamation of the derelict areas of the Middle East.

This great effort is now threatened by hostile neighbours, whose avowed aim is Israel's annihilation. Having failed to achieve their aim eight years ago by a war of aggression, they have since pursued it by incessant guerilla warfare, by economic boycott, by the closing of the Suez Canal to our shipping, and by a violent campaign of threats and incitement. Egypt has recently acquired a position of overwhelming superiority in jet fighters, tanks and other modern weapons over Israel by the arms purchase agreement it has concluded with Czechoslovakia and has, in addition, built up powerful alliances, with unified military commands, with other Arab States, which are directed against Israel. Their declared aim is that of the wicked enemy quoted by the Psalmist:

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"Come and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (Psalms 83:5). The present dictator of Egypt calls Israel "an artificial State which must disappear". Quite recently he declared that he was looking forward to the Egyptian Army meeting the Syrian Army on Israel's ruins. King Saud of Arabia stated that "the only way which the Arab States must go is to pull up Israel by her roots", and asked "why should we not sacrifice ten million out of fifty million Arabs so that we may live in greatness and honour?" One Arab leader after another has voiced similar threats "to raze the State of Israel from the map". "Now that we have got rid of Jordan after the dismissal of General Glubb, "our next step will be to conquer the rest of Palestine".

These words are not empty threats. Hardly a day passes without some act of aggression by Egyptian forces across the Israel frontier. The villagers in the border land have to stand night after night on guard over their homes and dear ones against treacherous attacks from across the border. Moreover, of late, the Egyptian Government has overtly started large-scale preparations for war against Israel. The bulk of their military forces has been stationed along its southern frontier, equipped with large quantities of the offensive weapons recently received from Eastern Europe. As against this threat Israel finds itself grievously

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handicapped by its lack of essential arms. The weakening of its defensive position, which is becoming every day more evident to our enemies, has become a most powerful incentive to their aggressive policies.

In this position of unprecedented gravity I would address to you, Mr. President, a most urgent appeal that we be enabled speedily to obtain such arms and equipment as will permit us to defend ourselves and as will act as a deterrent against enemy attack. The time factor is here of decisive importance. It is a race against months, possibly weeks. The ever more aggressive language of our enemies clearly indicates that as soon as they have absorbed their newly acquired military equipment and trained their soldiers in its use, the blow will fall. It is the responsibility of the free world, and primarily of the United States of America, to redress the present highly perilous imbalance of armed strength in the Middle East so as to avert the aggression threatening Israel.

I was very happy to learn that your health has improved and that you are now fortunately able again to devote your energies to the promotion of the peace of the world and the cause of international cooperation, which has lifted the hearts of all peoples. On behalf of the people of Israel I would ask you to accept my very best wishes for your health and well-being.

I remain, Mr. President,

Yours very sincerely,

Upon my return, I sent the letter to President Eisenhower who was vacationing in Augusta, Georgia. I received the following reply:

Augusta Georgia
April 12, 1956

"Dear Rabbi Silver:

"Thank you very much for your kindness in transmitting to me the long and interesting letter from the President of Israel. I have studied it carefully, and I am requesting the Secretary of State to do the same.

"From different sources I have heard of your effort during your visit to Israel to convince the government and people there of the continued interest of the United States in their welfare and security. Since this is, of course, the fact, I think you have performed a real service.

"With respect to a personal conference, I believe it would be best that you, when next you may be in Washington, get in touch with my Appointment Secretary, Mr. Shanley, to see whether we could not arrange a meeting convenient to us both. Assuming that you would want to talk principally about information gathered on your recent trip, I would arrange to have the Secretary of State with us at the time.

"With personal regard ,

Sincerely,

/s/ Dwight D. Eisenhower "

During my visit to Israel in 1956, I also attended the dedication ceremonies of Kfar Silver on March 29th. On that occasion the Druse Sheik who had been present at the corner-stone laying in 1951, presented me with his abayah and cane and with his initialed watch as a token of friendship. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion was present, and actually startled me and the audience by addressing me as "the greatest American Zionist leader since Henrietta Szold"...

The meeting with President Eisenhower, which I had requested took place on April 26, 1956. Secretary Dulles was present. We spent about an hour together. Our main topic of conversation was the apprehension of our people due to the menacing arms situation.

Throughout the discussion I presented my arguments for permitting Israel to purchase a certain amount of defensive weapons--to restore the military balance--to act as a deterrent to present aggression--and to encourage the other Western powers to do likewise.

The arguments made by Dulles and the President hinged around the one central thought of theirs--that the United States is interested in bringing about a permanent peace settlement in that part of the world and that the

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sending of arms to Israel at this time might jeopardize their major objectives. I told them that their efforts would be facilitated if Israel were stronger rather than weaker.

In the course of the conversation the President indicated that the sale of arms to Israel was not foreclosed and Dulles stated that he felt confident of persuading the Western powers, with whom he was going to meet in Paris next week, to sell Israel the necessary arms. The United States was willing to have Western powers, particularly France, divert arms which they had manufactured under the United States Military Aid Program, to Israel. He had talked with Mr. Pearson of Canada and will talk with him again. The preservation of the State of Israel is one of the major objectives of American foreign policy and America will not tolerate an aggressor. The President said that the subject is giving him daily concern and is uppermost in his mind.

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I told them that Israel was prepared to discuss all issues with the Arabs at a conference table and is prepared, in a spirit of give and take, to make every reasonable concession for a permanent peace settlement. This was not true of the Arabs, who have refused to sit down with Israel for fear that that would imply a recognition of the State.

The president was not aware that Israel had given its consent to the Jordan Valley Authority while the Arabs had refused on political grounds. Dulles stated that this was the fact.

Dulles stated that from Israeli sources he had been informed that in the event of war Israel would win and that anyhow until a year from August the preponderance of military strength was with Israel. He used that as an argument against the sending of arms to Israel. I told them that even if victory were had in such a war the cities of Israel would be in shambles because of the heavy bombers which Egypt has obtained from the Soviet bloc. The President agreed.

Mr. Dulles raised the question of Zionist pressures which gave me ~~the~~ an opportunity to expose the smoke-screen. Zionist pressure was really the pressure of the entire American Jewish Community with the exception of an insignificant number. It was also the pressure of American public opinion generally, as reflected in the American press and this kind of pressure is a legitimate expression of American public opinion and should not be resented.

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One should rather guard himself against refraining from doing that which is right out of fear of being charged as having yielded to pressure.

At the close of the interview Mr. Dulles told the President that during the Senatorial Campaign in New York State, when he, Dulles, was being unfairly attacked as anti-Jewish, etc., it was Rabbi Silver who came publicly to his defense. The President said that Rabbi Silver always speaks out of sincere conviction.



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The next day I wrote the following letter to Secretary Dulles:

April 27, 1956

My dear Mr. Dulles:

I was very happy that you were able to sit in at our meeting with the President yesterday morning and I am grateful for the opportunity which we had to exchange views. I am particularly appreciative of the very warm and complimentary things which you said about me to the President at the conclusion of our conference.

I was very deeply impressed by the earnest expressions on the part of the President and yourself concerning the preservation and the protection of the State of Israel and your constant efforts to bring about a permanent peace settlement. On this score there was never any doubt in my mind nor in the minds of responsible leaders here or in Israel.

In the course of our conversation I became aware of your deep concern with the "pressures" to which you have been subjected. In a democracy, my dear Mr. Dulles, such pressures are unavoidable -- at times desirable as an index of public opinion. It is the accepted way that any group which feels keenly about a subject close to its heart has of giving expression to its views and of defending its interests -- whether it be a farm group, a labor group, a business group, or an oil group. Men in responsible government positions cannot escape these pressures which at times become excessive and virulent, but they proceed to do what they believe to be just and wise without relation to them. One must however be on guard against refraining from an indicated action on the possibility that such action might be interpreted by some people as yielding to pressure. This is a negative and fatal form of pressure.

Thus, if the Israeli request for the sale of defense arms by the United States is justified, dictated by the military imbalance which developed as a result of the massive Soviet arms acquired by Egypt, then that request should be granted regardless of the pressures, at times unrestrained, which have been brought to bear upon you by those who feel very keenly that the thing should be done.

I was happy to learn that you will take up the matter of arms for Israel in Paris. I sincerely hope that you will succeed. You would be sure of success if the United States would, at the meeting, indicate its readiness to make its

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own contribution to a reasonable program. Upon reflection I believe that you will agree with me that the long-term objectives which you and the President have in mind for establishing peace in the Near East would be made easier and not harder of attainment if Nasser and his Arab allies were confronted by a stronger rather than a weaker Israel.

With warmest regards and all good wishes I remain,

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER



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The situation on the borders of Israel continued to deteriorate. As a result of a series of provocations, the armed forces of Israel invaded the Sinai Peninsula on October 29, 1956. The next day, Great Britain and France issued an ultimatum calling on Israel and Egypt to withdraw all troops from an area ten miles on each side of the Suez Canal and to accept Anglo-French occupation of key points on the Canal in order to protect it. Egypt had seized the Suez Canal in July.

Israel agreed to the Anglo-French terms. Egypt rejected them. Whereupon France and England began to attack military targets in Egypt,

On October 30, 1956, I received a call from Sherman Adams, Assistant to the President, in which he requested that I telephone Prime Minister Ben-Gurion in Jerusalem and suggest to him, now that the objectives of the Israel Government to clean out the Fedayeen nest in the Sinai Peninsula had been accomplished, -- the Israel forces had advanced to within a few miles of the Suez Canal in one hundred hours -- that he should announce the withdrawal of the Israeli troops to their borders. He ~~thought~~^{thought} that that would be a move in the direction of peace and would strengthen the friendship between the United States and Israel.

The President was to broadcast an address to the American people the next evening, and the content of his address, as far as it concerned Israel, would depend upon the reaction of the Government of Israel to his request.

Following my conversation with Mr. Sherman Adams, I contacted Ambassador Eban in Washington and reported to him the request which had been made to me. He approved of Mr. Adams' suggestion that I should get in touch with Prime Minister Ben-Gurion.

I spoke with Mr. Ben-Gurion over the telephone on the morning of October 31st. I reported to him my conversation with Sherman Adams. Mr. Ben-Gurion said that he could not talk freely with me on the telephone inasmuch as the enemy was listening in, but that he would send me a coded cable reply through the Israeli Embassy.

In the afternoon, Ambassador Eban read me the reply of Mr. Ben-Gurion, which I at once transmitted to the White House. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion had indicated in his statement that he was ready to propose to his government the withdrawal of Israeli forces if Nasser would sign a clear undertaking to abstain from hostile acts against Israel, including undertakings for liquidating the Fedayeen, abolishing the blockade in the Gulf of ~~Aden~~ ^{Agala} and in the Suez Canal and abstaining from military alliances directed against Israel.

Shortly before the President's address to the nation, I spoke with Mr. Adams. He felt that there were good things in the reply which had been received from Mr. Ben-Gurion and that as a result, the President's message in the evening would be of a character which would not be in any way sharp or critical of Israel. At seven o'clock, the President spoke to the American people and his address was, in many ways, a satisfactory one. He said that

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"We have considered it a basic matter of United States policy to support the new state of Israel and at the same time, to strengthen our bonds both with Israel and with the Arab countries. But unfortunately, through all these years, passion in the area threatened to prevail over peaceful purpose, and in one form or another, there has been almost continuous fighting.

"This situation recently was aggravated by Egyptian policy, including re-armament with Communist weapons. We felt this to be a misguided policy on the part of the Government of Egypt. The state of Israel, at the same time, felt increased anxiety for its safety...

"We are fully aware of the grave anxieties of Israel, of Britain and France. We know they have been subjected to grave and repeated provocations."

He then stated the position of the American Government. "We do not accept the use of force as a wise or proper instrument for the settlement of international disputes. The action taken can scarcely be reconciled with the principles and purposes of the United Nations." There will, therefore, be no United States involvement in these present hostilities. It will be the dedicated purpose of the American government to do all in its power to localize the fighting and to end the conflict. It is the intention of the American government to bring this matter up before the United Nations General Assembly."

Subsequently I learned from reliable sources that the President's radio broadcast was revised at the very last moment in response to the message ^{which} I transmitted from Prime Minister Ben-Gurion.

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The position of our government on the Sinai-Suez action was wrong-headed in the extreme as subsequent developments showed. It alienated its strongest Western allies, England and France, and weakened their position and influence in the Arab world without improving its own. Far from preventing the Soviet Union from becoming an influential factor in the Middle East, it actually enabled it to become a serious competitive power in a part of the world where it had heretofore exercised little influence. And it contributed nothing toward the pacification of that area or its stability.

But it was of utmost importance to make sure that Israel would not be made the scape-goat in this internal crisis which had suddenly flared up, and which dangerously divided the free nations of the Western world.

The long and involved story of what followed the presentation of this issue by the American government to the General Assembly on November 1st, need not be rehearsed here. Israel was not covetous of the territory which it had conquered in the Sinai Peninsula but was determined to make sure that in the future its right of transit through the Suez Canal would be safeguarded, as well as unobstructed transit from the port of Elath through the Gulf of Aqaba, and that Egypt would be forbidden to maintain fedayeen bases in Sinai. Israel's compliance with the United Nations resolutions to withdraw all forces behind the armistice line of 1949 was, therefore, slow and contingent upon obtaining the above assurances which were not all forthcoming.

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A United Nations Emergency Force was created to supervise the cessation of hostilities and to take over as the British, French and Israeli withdrew their forces.

By January 22, 1957, Israel withdrew from all Egyptian territory except the Gaza strip and the Shar^w el Sheikh area, on the Western shore of the Gulf of Aqaba.

On February 20, 1957, President Eisenhower wrote a letter to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion in which he stated:

"Dear Prime Minister:

"I know Ambassador Eban is reporting fully to you the views of the United States Government concerning the withdrawal by Israel behind the Armistice lines in accordance with the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations. The views expressed to Ambassador Eban by Secretary Dulles, as well as those set forth in our Aide Memoire of February 11, are fully shared by me. These are designed to give our national assurances reenforcing the assurances of the United Nations with reference to the future of the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gaza strip. It has been our earnest endeavor, in supporting fully the United Nations in this matter, to explain our attitude and future policies regarding certain future aspects of the problem. This we hoped would encourage you to comply with the resolutions.

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"Acting upon the request of your representatives, and upon the request contained in your letter of February 18 to Secretary Dulles, the United States has supported the postponement of further General Assembly consideration of measures to be taken to achieve implementation of its resolutions on withdrawal. I understand now that the Assembly plans to consider this matter again on February 21 and that further postponement is probably impracticable. Thus, in the absence of an immediate and favorable decision by your Government, there can be no assurance that the next decisions soon to be taken by the United Nations will not involve serious implications. It continues to be my earnest hope that you will announce your intention immediately to comply with the withdrawal resolution and, in the words of the public statement which I authorized on February 17, "rely upon the resoluteness of all friends of justice to bring about a state of affairs which will conform to the principles of justice and of international law and serve impartially the proper interests of all in the area".

"I would greatly deplore the necessity of the United States taking positions in the United Nations, and of the United Nations itself having to adopt measures, which might have far-reaching effects upon Israel's relations throughout the world. Our position must, however, conform with the principles for which we have firmly stood in relation to these tragic events. I have been in touch with leaders of the Congress. I plan again to speak tonight to the

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American people with respect to this matter by radio and television. I also feel that at this time I should express again to you the sincere hope that your Government will accede to the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the members of the United Nations.

"Believe me, Mr. Prime Minister, that this message is sent in the spirit of the traditional friendship between our countries, -- a friendship which we zealously seek to preserve and develop.

Sincerely yours,



Dwight D. Eisenhower "

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I had been informed that the President would broadcast an address on the Middle East on the evening of February 20th. I knew of the message which the President had sent to Ben-Gurion. I contacted Washington and transmitted to Sherman Adams the hope that the President, in his address, would not refer to "sanctions" against Israel and that the address would not be of a nature that it would shut doors. Word reached me later in the day from Sherman Adams and Secretary Dulles that the subject of 'sanctions' would not be mentioned and that the speech was intended to keep the doors open. The President spoke that evening at nine o'clock.

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The next day I was requested / the press to comment on the President's speech. I said:

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"There is the temptation to analyze the President's speech in detail. Much was left unsaid which would have greatly qualified his conclusions. The statement is in spots weak on the side of logic; overstrained in national self-righteousness and in sharp contrast to the much softer words which are publicly directed to Arab Governments. But the President is earnestly seeking a way out of a dangerous impasse -- the result of a long series of diplomatic blunders in the Near East for which our government is not entirely free of responsibility.

"The President acknowledges Israel's legitimate grievances and the justice of Israel's claim to free navigation through the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba and for security against Egypt's attacks from the Gaza area. He further acknowledges that neither the United Nations nor the United States has been vigorous enough in the past to see that justice is done to Israel in conformity with international law. He pledges that the United States will, in the future, press for greater efforts in the United Nations to secure that justice for Israel, and that the United States will vigorously seek it in association with like-minded nations. The President's address does not spell out these greater efforts which are contemplated. He urges upon Israel to put its trust in these earnest declarations of the American Government.

"These declarations put our Government under the most binding moral obligations to see to it that Israel does not suffer in the future by reason of compliance with complete withdrawal. President Eisenhower recognizes this fact and clearly states it.

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"The citizens of Israel have great confidence in the moral integrity and the good will of President Eisenhower, This will weigh heavily in the scale as their Government considers and makes its final decision on this latest appeal of the President of the United States."



The problems of Israel were not the only ones which absorbed my interest. The American scene presented grave problems of its own.

In the Fall of 1957, the struggle over the desegregation of our schools, which had been ordered by the Supreme Court of the United States in 1955, reached one of its deplorable climaxes in the Little Rock episode when Governor Faubus of the State of Arkansas called out the National Guard to bar the admission of nine Negro students from entering Central High School. There were to be other such forceful resistances to the Court decision later on by the Governors of the States of Mississippi and Alabama, leading to violence and bloodshed.



President Eisenhower was resolved to uphold the Federal Constitution by every means at his command. When all efforts at persuasion failed, the President ordered Federal troops into Little Rock and ^{federalized} ~~mobilized~~ the Arkansas National Guard.

On September 24th, the day that the President was to address the nation explaining the reason for the action which he had taken, I wired him:

"In this critical hour when measures must be taken by you to defend the laws of our country and the basic rights of our fellow-citizens, I join the prayers of men of good-will everywhere that God may guide you and strengthen you. Because of your innate love of peace and the grave responsibilities of your office, you have been long patient with those who are impatient and hasten to lawlessness. Now your deep concern for the authority of law at home and the prestige of our country abroad ^{have} ~~has~~ forced you to act. May God establish the work of your hands."

To which he replied:

"This is a much too delayed acknowledgment of your thoughtful message of September twenty-fourth, which I found on my desk here in Washington the night I returned to make the television talk to the country. I was, and am, most grateful for your prayers in these continuing days of trouble and uncertainty. With warm regard, Sincerely, Dwight D. Eisenhower."

As an American, a Jew and a Rabbi, I have been active for many years in support of the struggle of the Negro in the United States for equality before the law, for equal opportunity to earn a livelihood, for unsegregated schools, and for the same manner of respect which is the due of every citizen in a free society.

My position has been that the task confronting us is not a simple one and the strength of no one is equal to its complexity. It is not easy to make straight what has been crooked for so long and to make right a wrong which has been tolerated for so long, but I have been mindful of the admonition of our sages that ours is not the duty to complete the task but neither are we free to desist from it.

This applies to individuals, to nations, to generations.

But we must begin with ourselves. This is what I have stressed on all occasions. It is vital, as a first step, to outlaw by legislative action public practices which are discriminatory. Whatever conditions can be reached and corrected by law, should be done. But there are vast areas of human relationship which cannot be reached by law -- the inner disposition and attitudes of men. Here is where the individual must challenge himself. We must thoroughly house-clean our own minds and souls of racial prejudices and of attitudes which are unworthy of mature people. We must grow up to our full human stature. We must check on our own personal conduct before we point an accusing finger at our neighbor.

I always confronted my people with this simple question: "How do you, yourselves, stand, for example, on the question of allowing a Negro family to settle in your neighborhood?" It is quite easy to love humanity in the abstract, but how about your next-door neighbor, who is not of your color or creed? When you talk of brotherhood, do you include everybody or only your own kind? How inclusive are you in your human sympathies? How much of snobbishness and status-seeking is left in your own make-up? If you are sincere in your devotion to human brotherhood, begin with yourselves! And then work with other men of good-will to make your voice heard in the councils of your community and your government. You must speak up and not be afraid. The greatest threat to the moral integrity of a man, especially of a man in comfortable circumstances, is his unwillingness to take sides in a controversial issue. Why should he invite criticism? Why should he not rather remain at ease in Zion? But this attitude of caution and complacency which is so common to men and to leaders of men is the besetting sin of our society, and in these revolutionary days it is a dangerous attitude.

I am not sure that the movement of passive resistance on the part of the American Negro to obtain his rights will succeed. Conditions in the United States are not identical with those which prevailed in ~~Gandhi's~~ India. But if it fails and the struggle enters other and far less desirable phases, the fault will not be with the Negro, who will never again accept conditions as they are, but with the white man who stubbornly denied him those elementary human rights and with the white man who preferred to remain detached and uninvolved in the struggle.

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We owe it to ourselves to abandon these prejudices because as long as they are with us, we remain civilized barbarians. We owe it to our faith because it summons us all to equality before God. We owe it to our gracious land--a land of noble heritage and tradition, which, until recently, was the hope and pride of free men. We must not continue to defile its image in the sight of the world. America is our beloved home and we can make it a happy and beloved home for all our people.

Those who oppose freedom for all men ultimately forfeit their own.



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On January 28, 1963, I was seventy. My Temple and the community of Cleveland arranged for a beautiful celebration of the occasion. An impressive service was held in the Temple in the morning of January 20th, which was conducted by the Rabbis who had formerly been associated with me at the Temple, and was attended by quite a number of Rabbis whom I had confirmed at the Temple. My life-long friend, Dr. Solomon B. Freehof, delivered the address. In the evening, a Civic Testimonial Banquet was held at the Cleveland-Sheraton Hotel, which was attended by some two thousand guests, civic leaders, representatives of all faiths, men from all walks of life, and numerous guests from out of town.

Antony Celebrezze, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, formerly Mayor of Cleveland, brought a personal message from President John F. Kennedy which he read to the gathering:

"Please extend my best wishes to Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver upon the occasion of his seventieth birthday and his forty-fifth anniversary as spiritual leader of The Temple.

"During these years he has served not only his congregation, but his entire community and the Nation. His advice and counsel, his keen insight and his wisdom have been made freely available to all of us. It is a pleasure for me to join with the others assembled in honoring him for his outstanding service to the people of Cleveland and to the Nation."

Both my sons, Raphael and Daniel, greeted me on that occasion and Mrs. Silver, too, responded charmingly when a presentation was made to her. Dr. Joseph J. Schwartz of New York delivered the principal address.

In honor of the occasion, an attractive volume, "In Time of Harvest", to which eminent scholars from many parts of the world contributed articles of scholarly research, was issued. This "Festschrift" was edited by my son, Daniel.

The American Zionist Council paid me an anniversary tribute on April 28, 1963, at a beautiful concert in Lincoln Center in New York City. It presented me with the Louis D. Brandeis Award in recognition of my "historic service to the Zionist Ideal and to the Rebirth of Israel".

In July of 1963, the Zionist Organization of America held its annual convention in Israel. It was the first time that the Z. O. A., as a body, met in the State of Israel which it helped to create, maintain, and defend. It was a moving and impressive occasion. The first plenary session was held in the Binyanei Ha-Ooma in Jerusalem in the presence of the President of the State of Israel, Cabinet members, and distinguished leaders of the country. The mood which pervaded the huge gathering was that of a happy re-union. All friction and misunderstanding which had existed between the two great communities seemed to have been washed away. I presided at the meeting and spoke in the very hall where twelve years before, at the unhappy Zionist Congress of 1951, I had been the target of such bitter attack. Time is, indeed, a great healer!

On Sunday evening, July 14th, a Testimonial Dinner was given in my honor on the occasion of my seventieth birthday by the Zionist Organization of America in association with the World Confederation of General Zionists and the Liberal Party of Israel at the Sheraton Tel-Aviv Hotel.

David Ben-Gurion attended this function and spoke. His words coming from one with whom I had so often in the past crossed swords moved me deeply. He said:



"The two great men that symbolized European Jewry in its two different forms, that of West European Jewry and that of East European Jewry, were Herzl and Weizmann. Herzl was an assimilated Jew who was made a Zionist by the anti-Semitic manifestations at the Dreyfus trial, and through his Zionism returned to Judaism. Weizmann was a Russian Jew, born and bred in the Jewish tradition and heritage, who came to Zionism through that heritage and tradition and the Jewish education he received as a child in his father's home.,,,

What was the true, specific source of Zionism in America? It was solidarity with the fate of Jews in Europe. Almost all American Jews are descended from European Jews, either from Eastern or Western Europe. Such was the Zionism of the first generation of immigrants in America -- who still spoke Yiddish and to some extent kept up the ways of life and thought that they had brought with them; such was Zionism among the second and third generations, who felt that they must help the European Jews who wanted a national home of their own in the Land of their Fathers. Such was the Zionism of that great Jew, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, or Julian Mack or Louis Lipsky, or Stephen Wise.

Different from them all was the Zionism of my friend Abba Hillel Silver. Although he is every inch an American, like Brandeis and Mack, Lipsky and Wise, Silver drew his Zionism from his Jewish traditions, his deep knowledge of the sources of Judaism and Jewish history. Abba Hillel Silver's Zionism is a unique combination of the courage and the love of freedom, equality and justice of the fathers of the United States, who laid the foundations of its constitution, and a profound identification with the annals of the Jewish

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people throughout the generations from the days of our Father Abraham until our own time, with the historic, eternal, divine right of our people to the land of its fathers and with the age-old yearnings of the Jewish people for national and universal redemption, which have their source in Israel's Prophets. Abba Hillel Silver's Zionism does not begin with the Basle Programme, the Balfour Declaration or the United Nation's decision of November 29, 1947, but with the divine promise to our Father Abraham: "To thy seed I will give this Land."

It is this Zionism that has made Abba Hillel Silver the greatest and most courageous Zionist fighter in American Jewry. In his historic speech at the U.N. Assembly in May 1947, there was no plea for compassion on a suffering people that had undergone the Nazi holocaust but a demand for justice for a people robbed of its land, to whom that land belonged as of right.

This was the motivating force in his political fight for a Jewish State. Not anti-Semitism, not distress, not aid for suffering Jews -- the source of Abba Hillel Silver's Zionism was the consciousness and knowledge that the people of Israel and the Land of Israel have been interlinked without interruption throughout the generations. Apart from the pioneers of the last three generations, who built the land with their toil and shed their blood in its defence before and after the establishment of the State, there was not a single Zionist in the Diaspora who had such profound historic sense of a natural, hereditary, reciprocal bond between the people of Israel and the Land of Israel as Abba Hillel Silver. And although I have not always been -- and perhaps I am not even now -- in agreement on all questions with this courageous Zionist fighter, I realize, as he does,

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that the State of Israel is the collective creation of the entire Jewish people, not only of the people now living, but of the Jewish people in all generations. And I assume that Abba Hillel Silver realizes as I do that this creation has not yet been completed, and that we still have a long road ahead, long and difficult, strewn with obstacles and danger before we can complete our work"...

In my response, I thanked Mr. Ben-Gurion for his gracious tribute.

I also told the assembled guests



that I had much to be grateful for as I look back over the years. I received gifts richer than I deserved. Providence favored me with loving parents to whom a book was even more precious than a loaf of bread, whose quiet courage, piety, and idealism were both sun and shield to me throughout my days. Later in life, I was again the recipient of the blessing of a beloved wife, children and grandchildren. I was privileged to live in a free and gracious land.

I am grateful that I lived in this century, checkered and perilous though the times have been, and on occasions so dreadful. I lived through economic depressions and their attendant suffering, wars, and our people's martyrdom in two world wars. But the years have also witnessed the emergence of new hopes and visions for mankind and for our people, the re-birth of Israel.

Like a golden thread, the Zionist ideal has run through the pattern of my life. From my early, formative years, and throughout my professional career of nearly half a century as a Rabbi, my life has been one with the Zionist Movement. I occupied many high offices. I attended innumerable conventions, conferences and congresses. I campaigned in a hundred cities and addressed a thousand gatherings. I fought many battles and emerged often bloody but always unbowed. I was clobbered by many people who have honored me by their presence here this evening--and I clobbered them in turn. Irritations and frustrations there were plenty. I have made many friends and some enemies in the course of my Zionist career. But never did the glory of the Zionist ideal fail to sustain me, never did its glow fade from my heart. I was privileged to witness with my own eyes the consummation of our people's millennial dream, and to share in the great drama of its realization--what richer guerdon can one ask for?

And so at seventy, dear friends, my days of apprenticeship are about over. At seventy, the emotional chemistry of a man is such that his boiling-point is somewhat higher and his freezing-point somewhat lower. Otherwise, he need not lose his zest for the glorious adventure of life, or cease to be the willing captive of an imperishable dream, even though he now knows that you cannot take heaven by storm.

At the end of each of the twenty-four books of our holy Bible, one word is printed in large type--"Chazak"--"Be strong!" That, you will agree with me, is excellent advice for any man as he concludes one volume and turns to the next in his book of life



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EPILOGUE

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Ever since the establishment of the State of Israel, I have frequently been asked, "What should be the future relationship between the Jews of America and the State of Israel?"

If history is any guide, the Jews of today who will continue to live in other lands will, by and large, maintain the same attitude towards the State of Israel as their forefathers did. Theirs will be a most sympathetic relationship, towards that land. They will materially help it to absorb as many Jews as will wish to go there or may have to go there. They will help to build up its cultural, scientific, and spiritual institutions, as well as its economic life so that it may become a land of which Jews everywhere can be proud. For the eyes of the world will be on the land of Israel to see what Jews, as a people, can accomplish on their own.

Israel will come again to be the non-political center of world Jewry. Pilgrims will go there as of old--and not merely the pious. There will be a free flow of manifold communications, of mutual stimulation, of give and take. Israel will again come to exercise a unifying and sustaining influence in Jewish life everywhere.

We shall remain one people, one historic community, as of old. But the Jews of Israel will be Israeli citizens and the Jews of the United States will be citizens of the United States, and similarly with Jews in other lands.

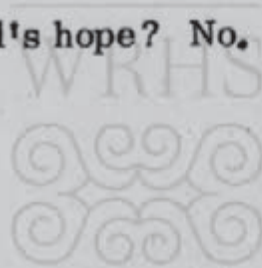
(They will owe undivided allegiance to their respective countries and they will discharge loyally their full duties as citizens, as Jews have

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always done. But they will retain a special attachment to the land of Israel which will in no way interfere with their duties and obligations as citizens of their respective countries.

It was Voltaire who once said that every cultured man should have two fatherlands--his own and France. In an even more profound sense, ~~but~~ ^{THIS OBSERVATION} ~~equally~~ non-political, it may be applied to the Jew and Israel. Israel will be the Sabbath in the life of our people when, according to a beautiful tradition, an additional soul is vouchsafed unto man.

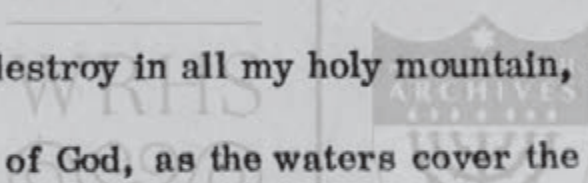
Does the re-establishment of the State of Israel represent the consummation of Israel's hope? No.



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The State of Israel is today a great and glorious fact. But greater than the State of Israel is the people of Israel, and greater than the people of Israel is the immortal vision and hope which sustained our people through the long centuries, which made of it a covenanted people, pledged to the ideal of Malchut Shamayim, the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

The establishment of the State of Israel is not the final act in the drama of Israel. Our people is moving on, the Ark of the Covenant is moving on, in greater freedom now and in greater confidence along the broad highways of the world, to Achrit Hayamim, to the end of days, prefigured by our seers, "When they shall not hurt, nor destroy in all my holy mountain, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea."



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The profound meaning of Jewish history lies not in nationalism but in Judaism. The destiny of our people is linked with the progressive establishment of the good society on earth, in accordance with the ethical and spiritual principles of our prophetic religion. The Jewish community inside and outside of Israel has today, as in the past, the mandate and the privilege of carrying on this work.

The establishment of the State of Israel has in no way diminished this primary and continuing obligation of Jewish life. What has been tragically abnormal in Jewish experience through the centuries--national homelessness--has now been rectified. Upon surer foundations the world Jewish community of tomorrow will be able to build a more affirmative religious ^{and} cultural life, and perhaps recapture its revolutionary religious ^{dynasty} leadership in the world which twice in the past ^{has} remolded civilization.

The establishment of the State of Israel was an act of historic necessity for our people, but it does not represent the consummation of Jewish destiny. Our destiny is linked up with the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Our ancient prophets preached this during the first and second commonwealths. Our prophets of tomorrow will preach it during the third commonwealth. Our people were the first in olden days to proclaim the unity of God and the unity

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of mankind. We, their descendants, must be among the first in the battle for this spiritual vision of human life. We must inspire our youth with the mighty accents of their historic faith so that they will join with all men of good will in the courageous attack upon all that disfigures life and keeps man from his divine patrimony-- upon poverty, upon the economic insecurity of the masses, upon corruption and social privilege, upon the war machine and chauvinism, upon race^{IAL} arrogance and exploitation.

Translated into concrete terms, it means replenishing the spiritual and religious reservoirs of Jewish life--the synagogue, the religious school, the academies, the centers of Jewish learning and scholarship. For years now the Jewish communities of the world, other than those, of course, which were destroyed or ravaged by war and persecution, had to give priority to relief^e, physical rescue and the reconstruction of the State of Israel. Much of this work will have to continue into ^{The} an unpredictable future. Certainly there still remains the urgent and compelling need for taking care of the hundreds of thousands of ~~refugees~~ who are seeking new homes.

But even while this work is going on, and certainly as the urgency and pressure of that work diminishes, as we hope it will with the years, our energies and our resources should increasingly be poured into the permanent and positive spiritual and cultural institutions and enterprises of Judaism. We must begin to think again in terms of the total picture of Jewish life. Millions of Jews will live

in Israel in the days to come; millions more will live outside of Israel. It is the religion of Judaism which will unite them, not any political bonds. Judaism in the past kept our people together as one religious fellowship although they were politically disparate. For the sake of Jews everywhere, for the enrichment of their lives, for their effective contribution to the progress of the countries in which they are citizens, and for hastening the day of the Kingdom, it is imperative that we begin to pour again our creative thinking, our substance and our energies into the institutions of Jewish religious life.

For nearly half a century I have worked as a Rabbi with ^{the} American Jewish Community. What do I think about the future of this great community, and of the tasks which lie ahead?



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"No one can foretell a people's future...no one can know whose hand will draw the threads of the future on the loom of time or what the pattern will be. Fifty years ago no one could have foreseen the practical disappearance of European Jewry. One hundred years ago no one could have foretold that in the U.S. there would arise the largest Jewish community in history. At best we can project our hopes on the basis of our present knowledge and draw reasonable inferences from perceptible trends. If one were to ask



^{up to then} to address myself is, ^{WV 47} can we think hopefully of the next century as Jews, as Americans, as members of the human family--for they are all inter-related. I believe that we ^{WV 47} can. I believe that we have every right to do so, though we cannot be dogmatic about it; for progress is neither guaranteed nor automatic; nor can we ignore the fact that time and again the unforeseen and unpredictable in history have upset all man's careful calculations.

I believe that the age in which we live is a great age and that we are moving towards an even greater age. I believe that our present age is one of the greatest in human history. We are too near our times properly to appraise them. One requires distance in order to see great objects in their proper perspective. We ourselves are too much involved in the turmoil and the conflicts of our day to see objectively the amazing new pattern of life which is emerging.

Many people are quick to describe our age as materialistic, as lacking in idealism, in aim and purpose, an age of breakdown and disintegration...

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However what we are witnessing in our day, if we have eyes not only to see things, but also to see into the heart of things, is not social disintegration, but a radical new reintegration of humanity, a profound change in the social evolution of man, a change not free, of course, from dangers--for there is no progress without danger--but one of boundless and immeasurable potentialities.

I do not wish to overdraw the picture. I am not suggesting that our age is approaching idyllic perfection, or that the millenium is just around the corner.

The important thing to consider is not whether we are on the eve of the millenium, but whether the major trends of our age are in the direction of the hoped-for good society, or away from it. Is our age trying to eradicate poverty and illiteracy and to raise the standard of living of people, regardless of race or color or creed? Is it trying to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of peoples to national freedom and independence? Is it trying to organize the world

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for peace and for international cooperation? I believe that in all these major trends, our age has given welcome evidence of great determination and considerable progress. It is moving purposefully in the right direction -- the abolition of war, the reduction of poverty, and the elimination of racial inequality. These are the three major trends of our century, and they are the major trends both in the East and the West, in the Communist as well as in the non-Communist world. What is tearing these worlds apart is a difference not of ideology or objective, but of method. . .

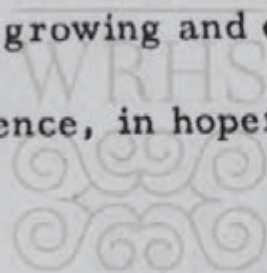
In the days to come there will be new horizons to challenge the adventuresome spirit of man. In science and industry, in invention and discovery, in the arts and the humanities, progress will be unlimited. We are far from having reached the ultimate stage in the evolution of mankind. The twentieth century is building a better and ampler world for man, and the twenty-first century will advance and improve upon it. There will be more of the good things of life for everyone. A society will emerge, I believe, which will be free from the dark heritage of the past, the age-old curse of poverty, misery and exploitation, of inequality, racialism, and intolerance.

And I believe, too, that it will be a great age for American Jewry if the catastrophe of war does not shatter its security and life. As a minority we are helpless against the ravages of hate and demagoguery, which war and economic depressions unleash.

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But given peace and economic stability, the American Jewish community will move forward and develop. It will expand its cultural and religious life and institutions, and will make worthy contributions to the total life of America. The last three hundred years ^{and more} are warrant for it. Our beginnings were humble -- as were the beginnings of all peoples who came to these shores. Steadily through the years, and more rapidly in the last three-quarters of a century, our numbers increased and we shared eagerly and gratefully in the growing and evolving life of America. Our people became in outlook, in confidence, in hopefulness, true children of the New World,



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and in service and devotion, loyal and proud citizens of the United States. They served it patriotically in peace and in war. They made creditable contributions to its material prosperity, to its political and social progress, its democratic institutions, to labor and industry, to its arts, science, literature and music. They supported generously all the philanthropic and social agencies and institutions of their communities -- Jewish and non-Jewish alike. They have been not an unworthy or unimportant part of the colorful unique and noble mosaic which is America.

Nor have they ignored or forgotten their own religious heritage. They remained faithful to it. Upon the shores of the new land they built their synagogues, their schools and their institutions of learning and philanthropy which have always embodied the ethical ideals and the way of life of our people. They did not isolate themselves from the lot of their fellow-Jews in other parts of the world. They remained bound to them in fraternal solicitude. They helped them in their need. They came to their defense when attacked. They poured out their generosity when tragedy overtook them. They rallied to the task of building the State of Israel when the historic moment arrived, and they have undergirded it with their support and unflagging interest since then.

If the American Jews of the coming decades will carry on uninterruptedly and with wisdom and discrimination, putting first things first, and accentuating the positive and indispensable enterprises of Jewish life, they will make the numerically largest Jewish community in the world also one of

the greatest in terms of faith, culture, and scholarship. We are in the growth-stage of our history here, "a fruitful bough by a spring".

What may endanger our Jewish future here is not conscious escapism or deliberate assimilation ~~not tendencies~~ such as characterized Jewish communities elsewhere and at other times. ^{but} Rather, a too facile adaptability, an unconscious drift and a care-free relaxation of all disciplines, ~~not out of conviction but~~ out of sheer indifference.

What we should fear most is the rise of a generation of prosperous Jews who have no spiritual anchorage, or a generation of clever, restless Jews of quick ferment and high voltage, rooted in no religious tradition, reverent of no moral code, ignorant of all Jewish learning and held to social responsibility by no inner spiritual restraint, who will range and bluster all over the American scene from literature and art to politics and government and will commit their fellow Jews in the eyes of the American people. Such floating mines are a danger to all people, but especially to a minority group. Some of these mines are already exploding.

If American Jewry of tomorrow will restore what has become peripheral in our life to the center again -- the synagogue, the school, the academy and the religious disciplines of Judaism -- if it will recapture the wisdom of our ancient teachers who admonished us that the study of the Torah outweighs all other commandments for it leads directly to them all -- then American Jewry is destined to enjoy a resplendent ^{future} century of spiritual growth in this gracious land.

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The next day I wrote the following letter to Secretary Dulles:

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September 2, 1955

My dear Mr. Dulles:

I saw your kind letter of August twenty-fourth addressed to me upon my return to Cleveland from Europe this morning. I had previously read your statement in the public press. I am very happy indeed that you issued that statement. It not only makes clear the deep and continued interest of our government in helping to break the deadlock which has persisted over a period of years in Israel-Arab relations and in easing the tensions which have unfortunately again this week erupted in most serious border incidents, but it also indicates that the American government is prepared to make positive contributions toward reaching a settlement.

I am quite sure that when it finally gets down to it and the two sides sit down to negotiate, the government of Israel will be prepared to discuss all the matters of outstanding issue to which your statement referred. But here's the rub! The representatives of the Arab governments have consistently refused to sit down and engage in such negotiations because they understand that by so doing they are tacitly acknowledging the political existence and sovereignty of the State of Israel. This, as you well know, is the very thing which they are unwilling to acknowledge, and this is the crux of the whole matter.

Until they are prepared to acknowledge this fact, they must under one excuse or another postpone the day of a peace conference and maintain as long as they can the present status of no peace-no war on the borders of Israel.

I know of only one political action which would finally bring the Arab states to their senses -- a clear statement on the part of our government that unless peace negotiations are undertaken forthwith, the American government will proceed to conclude a mutual security pact with Israel.

— Such a pact is on its own merits logical, as an instrumentality for strengthening American interests in the Near East. It should therefore not be made conditional on the willingness of Arab states to conclude simultaneous defense arrangements with our country. If it is the policy of the United States to seek defense arrangements in the Middle East and if, as a spokesman of the State Department declared a while ago, a defense pact with Israel would be "highly logical", then there is really no valid reason for delaying such an arrangement.

But apart from its own merits, the very announcement of such contemplated action on the part of our government would help to convince the Arabs that they have nothing to gain in persisting in their present attitude and that it would be more advantageous to all concerned to accept those benefits which would flow from negotiated agreements on all outstanding issues.

I am very eager to be helpful in urging reasonableness and a spirit of give-and-take on the part of those who may be influenced by my voice in Israel. Of one thing, however, I am quite certain--prior to negotiations, Israel will not make concessions with respect to the unresolved issues.

I will watch with keen interest the reaction of the Arab governments to your statement.

With warmest regards, and hoping that you will have a pleasant and restful vacation, of which I am sure you stand greatly in need, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

As if in reply to Secretary Dulles' friendly proposals to bring about peace, the Egyptian government, on September 27, 1955, obtained huge shipments of arms planes, bombers and submarines from Czechoslovakia of such magnitude as to create a dangerous imbalance in the Near East, seriously threatening the security of Israel. There were, of course, repercussions to this in Israel and in the Jewish world. On November 9, President Eisenhower appealed to the Soviet Union to stop the arms race in the Middle East and declared that the United States would consider the request for arms which were needed for legitimate self-defense. On November 16th, Israel formally applied to

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Dulles reiterated his profound interest in the well being of Israel, and was critical of the Arab ^{leaders} who failed to assist their own people in refusing to use the millions which they were receiving from oil royalties.

At the close of our conversation, he called in the newspaper reporters and told them that he was grateful to me for having assisted materially in bringing about the resumption of the grant-in-aid to Israel.

President Eisenhower on that day announced the resumption of American economic aid to Israel and a few hours later, Secretary Dulles stated that twenty-six million dollars in financial assistance was ready to go forward for the first six months of the fiscal year that began last July first. Israel had responded to the request of the Security Council that the work on the project be suspended pending a United Nations examination of the question. . . .

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"The statements on Israel which have been issued by both candidates for the Presidency of the United States served to strengthen the conviction that the friendship between America and Israel will become even closer and stronger in the months and years to come. Our country's support for Israel has always been bi-partisan in character and the declarations which were made during the past week by General Eisenhower and Governor Stevenson have provided a striking evidence that this bi-partisan policy will be continued in the future. There is clearly no difference of opinion between the Republican and Democratic Parties on the question of friendship and assistance for Israel."

On December 11th I received a letter from Senator Stiles Bridges stating that the President-elect, Dwight D. Eisenhower, has requested

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that the Joint Congressional Inaugural Committee extend an invitation to me to participate in the Inaugural Ceremonies at the Capitol at twelve o'clock noon January twentieth, nineteen hundred and fifty three.

At the impressive Inaugural Ceremonies in Washington on January 20, 1953, I delivered the following prayer:

"O God, who art beyond our knowledge but near to our hearts and our needs, we pray this day for Thy servant, Dwight D. Eisenhower, as he takes up the burdens of the high office of President of these United States of America.

"Keep him with great kindness, O Thou Ruler of nations, and give him a wise and understanding heart that he may lead Thy people in these shadowed times, in truth and steadfastness, in patience and in love.

"Guide his hands to Thy purpose and his will unfailingly to Thy service. May he be the bringer of good tidings and the architect of a new hope for our country and for mankind.

"May Thy Spirit rest upon the Vice-President of the United States and upon all the chosen representatives of our government.

"Be gracious, O Lord, unto our land and our people. Help us to preserve our blessed heritage of freedom and to make secure

our institutions of law, equality and justice. May it be given unto us to walk always in the dignity of free men, secure in our rights and faithful in the obligations of our prized citizenship.

"Make us all of one heart, O God, so that together as one people we may move forward unafraid to the tasks and challenges of the inscrutable years which lie ahead. Amen."

A few days later I received the following letter from President

Eisenhower:

January 28, 1953

"Dear Rabbi Silver:

I want to take this opportunity to tell you that I am particularly grateful for the important contribution you made to the Inauguration ceremonies. In the years ahead the ceremony and your part in it will be a source of real and constant strength to me. I am deeply appreciative.

Sincerely,

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER