



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series VII: Personal Miscellaneous, 1908-1989, undated.

Sub-series A: Biographical, 1908-1981.

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Autobiography/memoirs, fragments, 1963?.

# MISSING PAGE (S)





I spoke twice at the Congress. In my second address I gave my reasons for criticizing the partition position which had been taken by the Executive -- the reasons which I stated in the previous chapter, and I explained my opposition to going to the London Conference.

I dwelt at considerable length on the importance of tactics.

In diplomatic, as in physical warfare, I said, battles are frequently won or lost by good or bad strategy.

Assuming that the Executive was right in its decision, was it tactically sound to proclaim to the world that we will accept partition? As soon as this was announced, partition became the Jewish solution, and therefore, unavailable as a compromise solution. There were many ways open to the Executive to learn whether such a solution would be favorably regarded by Great Britain or the United States. It required no formal action which was sure to become known to the world within twenty-four hours.

If, at least, the manoeuvre of the Executive had succeeded in getting Great Britain to accept partition as a basis for discussion at the London Conference, its advocates might be justified, but Great Britain has not accepted. Every effort in the past few months on the part, both of friends and foes, of partition to get Great Britain to accept the Agency proposal as a basis, failed. The United States, too, did not accept the Executive's proposal, nor did it succeed in persuading Great Britain to accept it.



Because the Executive had made a public offer of partition, it had to insist, in order to protect the Movement, upon an absolute condition, a sine qua non. It would not attend the London Conference unless its proposal of partition was accepted as the basis for discussion. Had the Executive not hastened to make any partition proposal to Great Britain and the United States, it could have considered the question of going or not going to the London Conference on its merits -- whether more could be gained by going than by staying away. If it had decided to go to the Conference, it would undoubtedly present to it the full Zionist program, even as the Arabs would present theirs. Perhaps out of the deliberations at the Conference some satisfactory compromise solution would then evolve. But this was no longer possible as soon as the Executive proposal became public, because this proposal represented its absolute 'irreducible minimum' beyond which the Movement could not go. How can one go to a Conference to negotiate on an 'irreducible minimum'?....

Ben Gurion, the Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency, was somewhat ambiguous at the Congress. He and his Party approved of partition and favored participation in the London Conference, but he personally was unhappy over Weizmann's leadership, and differed with him sharply on the subject of resistance. Accordingly, he sparred forensically....

Dr. Weizmann spoke at the opening of the Congress and again at the conclusion of the general debate.



I listened to his rebuttal at the conclusion of the debate with rapt attention. At times I was deeply moved by it. Dr. Weizmann threw his heart and soul into this speech. It was by way of an 'apologia pro vita sua'. The inner fire of the Weizmann of the earlier days was there, although he was now seventy-three. He reasoned, pleaded, scorned, and castigated his opponents with biting sarcasm -- the extremists, the unrealistic romanticists, the terrorists and activists in Palestine. I came in for my share of reproof. "It is easy to live in Cleveland and tell the youth of Palestine to go shed their blood." Of course, the youth of Palestine had never waited upon my bidding or my approval....

The American delegation felt constrained to issue a statement later expressing its deep resentment "at the offensive remarks concerning American Zionism's support of Haganah and its resistance activities, coming as they did from one who must be fully aware that the Zionists of America were repeatedly called upon by authoritative spokesmen of the Yishuv to give their utmost support to the responsible Jewish resistance movement in Palestine".

I stated my position at the Congress on the subject of resistance. "We believe in resistance to the illegal acts of the Mandatory power. The way to end resistance is to open the doors of Palestine.

"We must, in every way, support the Yishuv in its struggle against the attempt of the Mandatory Government to liquidate the Jewish National Home.



By maximum financial and moral support, we must strengthen the Yishuv's power of resistance. The Yishuv must, in the last analysis, decide for itself the form and the timing of its resistance to British lawlessness in Palestine. But, whatever their decision -- we will stand by them. We must insure, regardless of cost, continued Jewish immigration into Palestine."

Weizmann fought hard in his speech which was to be the peroration to his long and distinguished career. But for what? For a policy of continued cooperation with the British Government which had betrayed him and the Jewish people time and time again! How did his policy of moderation pay off? An historic cross-road had been reached and he -- the astute statesman -- was somehow unaware of it. He was the captive of his own "line" which he had followed faithfully all his life. He could see no other!

Dr. Weizmann remained pro-British in his political orientation, even when it had become clear to many of us that Great Britain had no intention to carry out the mandate either in letter or in spirit and that a new political orientation was called for. Not that Dr. Weizmann accepted tamely and submissively the progressive whittling away on the part of British governments of the clear terms of the mandates. Frequently he voiced his bitter criticism and his indignation at his own government in strong and courageous terms. And one, as in the case of the Passfield White Paper of 1930, which aimed at a suspension of Jewish immigration altogether and the introduction



My own position on the subject of partition and my differences with the Executive of the World Zionist Organization I stated fully at the Z. O. A. Atlantic Convention, October 26, 1946.

"The action of the Executive of the Jewish Agency which was taken in Paris on August 5th to the effect that 'it is prepared to discuss a proposal for the establishment of a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine', must in the last analysis be judged by its results. Results so far have been entirely negative. The high hope which was entertained by the members of the Executive that their partition proposal, constituting as it did 'a supreme sacrifice in order to facilitate an immediate lasting settlement', to quote the words of Dr. Chaim Weizmann's letter to the British Colonial Secretary, would be quickly accepted and would help to clear up the dangerous political log-jam which had developed, did not materialize.

"I am inclined to believe that the action of the Executive was an error of judgment. It had not consulted the Actions Committee which alone had the authority to act for our Movement in the interior between Congresses.

In the absence of any such action, there was but one binding policy to guide, the Movement,  
^ the one which was reapproved as late as August, 1945 by the Zionist Conference in London. This policy was opposed to



Government to fulfill the obligations which it undertook under the terms of the Mandate.

"The whole record of the Administration of Palestine with reference to the upbuilding of the Jewish Homeland has been a series of failures, blunders, inaction and non-cooperation.

"Great Britain undertook, under the terms of the Mandate, to place the country (Palestine) under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home. It failed to do that.

"It undertook to 'facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions'. It has failed to do that. Far from opening the doors of Palestine wide to Jewish mass immigration, it has continually wrangled and bickered and bargained, for minimum schedules for immigrants."

The Convention of the Zionist Organization of America which preceded the World Zionist Congress called to meet in Zurich in August, emphatically rejected the partition proposal.

I sailed for Europe after the Convention. On board ship I received a radio message from Judge Mack, Dr. Wise and Louis Lipsky: "All urge you to go to London first, see Weizmann and communicate unanimous attitude against partition and strong sentiment among delegates."

At the Congress, the principal issue was the acceptance or rejection of the Royal Commission's Report. The debate was on whether negotiations should be undertaken with Great Britain on the basis of the recommendations of the Royal Commission. The majority favored such negotiations. The minority, of which I was one, expressed firm opposition to any discussion with Great Britain that might consider partition, holding that the inalienable rights of the Jewish people to their historic Homeland cannot be bartered away.





"A great hour has not found us, thank God, a small people. We faced our problems with realism, with frankness and with courage. We met each other here in a fine spirit of comradeship and tolerance.

"The future is still very uncertain. Many curtains are still to be drawn aside....

"In all humility I pray to God at this great moment that when we meet again we shall meet in an hour of victory, in an hour of redemption, in an hour of peace."





I attended the corner-stone laying ceremony of the agricultural school in Migdal Ashkelon which was established in my honor by the Zionist Organization of America and the General Zionists of Israel. Present at this gala occasion were Druses, including their Sheik, who had come all the way from Western Galilee to attend this function. This school has since expanded into many buildings and a beautiful campus and is known as Kfar Silver. It is one of the foremost Secondary Schools of this nature in Israel.

At a largely attended press conference, at the Press Club in Tel-Aviv, I was closely questioned about many things, especially about my resignation from the Zionist Executive concerning which there had been much commentary in the public press, a good deal from unfriendly sources. I told them quite frankly: "I did not resign, I was removed. As a result of unjustified intervention, I found myself in a situation where I could not effectively continue as Chairman of the American Section of the Jewish Agency. I was removed from my position by the tactics of those persons who now criticize me for my withdrawal. It was clear that they did not want me to continue in leadership. Why, then, are they complaining now?"

I returned to the United States and soon thereafter on June 24th, I left for South Africa to inaugurate the Fiftieth Anniversary celebration of the Jewish National Fund. The Jewish National Fund has always been the demilitarized zone in the camp of the Zionists, transcending all conflict and party strife. It was a successful tour.



The Zionist Congress, which met in August, 1951, was a dishevelled and untidy affair. It had been repeatedly postponed. It was the first time that Congress met since the establishment of the State. One might have expected an exalted mood of achievement to dominate it and that it would devote itself to outlining a program of action for the future of the Movement. Instead of which, the bitter inter-party strife which had attended the elections for the Constituent Assembly (Knesset) in Israel in 1950, were reflected in the Congress where the largest single delegation was from Israel. Likewise, the sharp friction which had developed during the preceding three years between the Mapai group in Israel and the Zionist Organization of America and my resignation were also in evidence. The Mizrahi and General Zionists of Israel had boycotted the Congress elections altogether, because of the irregularities in the electoral list.

The Congress Court denied them any seats at the Congress although the Court itself did not approve the election procedure and penalized the other parties in Israel by cutting down the number of their delegates.

The acrid general debate with which the Congress opened soon reflected the party cleavages and the clash of personalities. The American General Zionists, who were greatly out-numbered because of the strong Mapai-Hadassah -- Poale Zion alignment became the target of attack, especially the Zionist Organization of America -- and more especially, myself.



My interest in Zionism led me to work among my rabbinical colleagues and to urge them to bring about a re-orientation of the traditional position of the Central Conference of American Rabbis on the subject of Zionism.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, the organized body of American Reform Rabbis, was founded in 1889. Its founder was Isaac M. Wise, one of the leading Reform Rabbis of his day. He also founded the Hebrew Union College for the training of Rabbis. He, as well as his colleagues of those early days, were strongly anti-nationalist or anti-Zionist and they set the tone for American Reform Judaism for the next two generations.

In fact, their confreres in Germany, where Reform Judaism originated in the early nineteenth century, had already set the tone. They confidently proclaimed that Germany was their Fatherland--a rather one-sided proclamation. They needed no other homeland. The early Reformers were riding the high tide of nineteenth century liberalism, but they failed to note the dangerous shoals of the nineteenth century nationalism, the trends towards the centralizing state, and the threat to the Jewish minority of the fast developing class struggle of their day. Especially dangerous was this oversight in a land like Germany, which was only just then recovering, after two centuries, from the physical and spiritual devastations of wars of religion, among a people periodically swayed by waves of hysterical religiosity, hysterical metaphysics and hysterical politics, whose foremost religious leader in the sixteenth century could indulge in an anti-Semitism which was matched only by the anti-Semitism of the foremost political leader of Germany in the twentieth century.



the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, the Key men  
America and other similar organizations

In 1927, the National Society of Scotland and Blade,  
issued a blacklist of 56 "dangerous un-American  
personages who are working to undermine the government  
by their Communist tendencies. It was a disgusting  
list containing such names as Miss Jane Addams,  
Senator William F. Borah, Senator Robert M. La Follette.

Prof. John Dewey and ~~Dr. Spencer Eddy~~ <sup>Dr. Eddy</sup> ~~was also~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~blacklisted by the G.A.R. and the R.O.T.C.~~  
names to be included in the list. But I was

troubled at the young <sup>intimate</sup> among our  
people as evidenced by their self-censored  
so-called patriotic leaders. Anyone who was  
a genuine liberal, an ~~advocate of~~ <sup>advocate of</sup> ~~peace~~ <sup>peace</sup>,  
child labor, a defender of the rights of the Negro, an  
advocate of the World Court, a pacifist, or who  
opposed the Versailles, Russia, was black-

listed on April 30, 1928

I delivered an address at the Temple on the  
subject of "After the Armistice and Blacklist" - in which I  
said, (I wrote - chaffing)



✓ Judaism, too, has experienced a marked revival which is reflected in increased congregational membership, in new synagogues and schools, and in general expansion.

Thus, the prophets of doom who foretold the extinction of Judaism with the disappearance of the sheltering ghetto walls and the physical and spiritual collapse of the Jewish people as a result of the monstrous Nazi carnage have again been proven to have seen empty visions and to have divined falsely. (The Psalmist's paen of triumphant life is echoing in our hearts: "I shall not die but live to declare the deeds of the Lord." There is deathlessness in the faith which is Judaism, and as long as our people remain loyal to it, they share in its immortality.)

✓ It is with a clearer vision that we ~~now~~ can see the road ahead, now that so many of its road-blocks have been ~~cleared away~~ <sup>removed</sup>.

✓ We <sup>know now</sup> ~~are now convinced~~, for example, that there is no refuge for our people in assimilation. The friendly world does not ask for it; the hostile world spurns it. This is a bitter lesson from our credulous past which we are not likely to forget. There is no appeasing the enemy through self-effacement and self-denial. His purpose is not to absorb us but to destroy us. (He hates the modern, thoroughly Westernized Jew even more than other Jews. Dr. Walter Frank, who was Director of the Reich Institute for the History of the New Germany, declared: "It will always remain a task of paramount importance to unveil the so-called 'noble', educated, 'German' Jew and to expose him as the most dangerous type of alien parasite. It is easy to show a Galician Jew as a member of the 'Asiatic horde' on European soil. This is harder when the 'Asiatic' meets us in the civilized form of a Baruch Spinoza, a Moses Mendelssohn, of a Friedrich Gundolf, or an Albert Einstein, a Maximilian Harden, Walter Rathenau or a Benjamin Disraeli.")

✓ Anti-Semites of this type cannot be appeased or answered. They can only be destroyed, and they attend to their own destruction. The free world does not call for the physical amalgamation of peoples, only for their voluntary cooperation for



their common good. The free world does not ask of men to surrender their historic faiths - only to live up to them. Freedom of faith and worship is one of the basic <sup>rights</sup> ~~freedoms~~ of <sup>a</sup> civilized society. Black, brown and red dictatorships dread it and suppress it.

✓ Nor is there security for us or meaning or dignity in fighting anti-Semitism as such or in hectically defending our loyalty or proclaiming our patriotism from the house-tops. No fair-minded man questions our loyalty and no bigot will ever be persuaded of it.

✓ Our security lies in uniting with all right-minded men, to defend ~~our~~ society against all demagogues and political adventurers and against the conditions which give these enemies of the free society their opportunity. Our security lies in fighting poverty, injustice, inequality, and above all, war and the things which lead to war. It is in the championing of the great ethical and spiritual traditions of Judaism which we have shared with the rest of the world - for our faith was born not for ourselves alone but for the whole world - and in our loyal carrying out of its mandates and commitments that our fundamental security lies.

✓ Again we have learned, I believe, that there is no security for our people and, for that matter, for any people in scientific progress alone; for more knowledge does not mean more goodness, more tolerance or more brotherhood in the world.

✓ The great slaughtering of our people took place in the most scientifically advanced country in the world - Germany, and the progress of the centuries did not attenuate the virulence of intolerance. In the middle of the 17th century one-third of the Jews of Europe were massacred. In the middle of the 20th century two-thirds were massacred.

✓ Likewise, we shall not find security in formal political democracy. Democratic institutions succumb when the spirit which informed them languishes. These forms are



actually exploited by those whose ~~very~~ purpose is to destroy democracy. The dictators who bestride our world today and who have destroyed every vestige of freedom and human rights in their countries have all proclaimed themselves to be the very champions and defenders of democracy. With the decay of the spiritual foundations of society in our generation, the foundations of democracy, too, have begun to crumble. Thomas Jefferson foresaw such a development and warned against it: "Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure," he asked, "when we have removed their only firm basis - a conviction in the minds of the people that their liberties are the gift of God?"

✓  
Freedom and security for us and for mankind lodge where the prophets of Israel discovered them, in a faithful covenant with the living God.

Our recent experiences have also taught us that there is no refuge for the soul of our people, especially for the souls of our intellectual sons and daughters, in the economic messianism of the 20th century any more than their predecessors found it in the internationalism and enlightenment of the 19th. These movements in thought and in society are no surrogate for Judaism. They should be weighed, measured and corrected by the ethical code of Judaism and by the techniques of human progress which Judaism has evolved. But they do not displace Judaism. An ancient faith such as ours which has witnessed ~~the many~~ mighty changes in human history and has been able to distill out of the turbulent centuries a patient and profound wisdom, is in position to give the idealist and the crusader for righteousness not only a compass and a chart, but also a perspective against excess, a criterion against error and delusion, and in defeat, proud comfort and reassurance.

Those who center all their hopes in a given economic system or in the mood and temper of an age are destined to find themselves betrayed, for no system can fully realize the high hopes of a man and the mood of an age changes rapidly with the change in its political and economic fortunes. Judaism is concerned not with systems or with any economic or political dogmatism, but with the safeguarding of the moral



Golda Meyerson (now Meir), speaking for the Mapai, delivered an especially partisan and vitriolic attack upon me -- which outraged almost the entire press in Israel. Its tone displeased and embarrassed many in <sup>her</sup> ~~our~~ own party. Her arguments were, in the main, those which Mr. Ben-Gurion had employed when he addressed American Zionists in New York, in April of that year.





Autobiog

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I realize now that the reason for his coming to my anniversary celebration was a three-fold one. He wished to express his appreciation to me for having accepted his invitation earlier that year to visit England during the war and to address the Jewish communities of England, to keep up their morale and to urge them to re-double their efforts, even in the dark years of the war, in behalf of Palestine. He also wished to honor me on that occasion, the 25th anniversary, an honor which I, of course, deeply appreciated. But evidently he sought the occasion also in order that he might serve notice on me and on the congregation that he had certain demands to make and would soon make them. And he said in that address - these are his words:

I do believe that Rabbi Silver is destined to perform things which will transcend the framework of even a great community like yours, and very often, I confess it to you, I had it in mind, to exercise the authority and power which was given to me by my constituents in drafting away Rabbi Silver, at least for a short time, and loading upon him the great and difficult tasks of service to the national ideal at this very critical time.

And the draft soon came, early that year, in 1943, at his urgent request and that of the heads of the Zionist Movement in the United States. I accepted the office of Chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council and held that office until the State of Israel was established in 1948.

✓ During those <sup>5</sup> ~~six~~ tempestuous years of struggle to build the Jewish state, we came frequently together at meetings, congresses and delegations, missions, here and abroad, far more often than in the earlier years. And my adulation and respect for Dr. Weizmann grew with acquaintance and never diminished even after I found myself diverging from his political line even more sharply as political events moved on to their dramatic climax. Our methods came to differ very sharply. Frequently we were in very sharp disagreement, but our objectives never differed and our mutual regard.

Dr. Weizmann, - he was a British subject, loyal and proud of his adopted country - to which country, ~~by the way~~, he gave the life of his <sup>beloved</sup> son in the last war - he was loyal and proud to his adopted country where he had achieved not alone personal fame and fulfillment, but where he had also succeeded in November 1917, with the aid of others,



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the literature of the Western world, for the later years of his youth and of his early manhood were spent in the universities of Germany and of Switzerland, and he drank deep not alone of the knowledge they offered, but of all that emergent political, social and economic complex of ideas and ideals which were dominant in Western Europe in the closing quarter of the 19th century.

One saw in Dr. Weizmann always and unmistakably the stamp of the cultural cosmopolitan, the intellectual, the intellectual liberal, the citizen of the world, and as unmistakably, one also saw in him always the great Jew, the Jew who walked through life with head erect and moved among the great of the earth with unconscious dignity and pride, like a prince in Israel. There was a superb blending in him of traditional loyalties and of all that was fine in the modern world, of Jewish obligations and the supreme ideals of humanity. And that blending was the result of deep insight and of great courage and of great pride.

✓ Ten years ago, when Dr. Weizmann visited the United States in June of 1942, a testimonial dinner was given to him at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City, and I was invited to be among those to pay him tribute, and in his presence then I said these words which I am about to read to you. I repeat them now when he is no longer among us, but among the immortals.

X I am very happy to be here tonight to pay tribute to Dr. Chaim Weizmann - the Ezra of our Second Restoration. (As a people we have a stronger sense of history than of biography and we think of a great man not so much in relation to himself and his personality as to his work and the greatness and merit of his achievements. The individual is absorbed in the organic process of the cause which he serves. "The essence of the biographies of the righteous," said the Rabbis, "is to be found in their deeds." Often outstanding figures in Jewish history are referred to not by their own names but by the name of some great book which they wrote. This custom is similar to the gracious custom which exists among the Arabs, called Kunya, in which a person is called not by his own name but as the father of so and so. The rich fancy of our people goes a step further. A man is to be known not so much by what he actually achieves - for man is finite and is sharply limited in his powers of achievement - but by the things for which he sacrifices and for which he gives his heart's blood.



"Everything for which a man dedicates his life and makes major sacrifices is called by his name."

Our greatest men, according to the remarkable biographic modesty of our tradition, are the unknown and unrecognized men, the invisible hierarchy of the 36 saints by whose merit the visible order of the universe is maintained.

And yet our people did delight at all times to honor its beloved sons as we honor Dr. Weizmann tonight, and he is not the least in the jewelled crown of our people's pride.

✓ Of the giants who were in <sup>the</sup> these early battle days of our movement, very few are left - Herzl, Nordau, Sokolow, Ussishkin, Bialik. Weizmann, thank God (I said ten years ago) is still with us. The dynamic leader of nearly two generations, vigorous and indefatigable as of old - a torch then, a beacon now. X

✓ Our brilliant galaxy of heroes offers some rare and precious combinations in personality. Thus, we have poets who were philosophers, like Gabirol and Halevi; philosophers who were legalists like Saadia and Maimonides; legalists who were mystics like Nachmanides and Joseph Caro. In Dr. Weizmann we have another rare and fortunate combination - a scientist who is a statesman. I call it fortunate; for his scientific training and discipline have favorably ~~more~~ affected his statesmanship. They have been responsible for that patient, experimental and pragmatic technique which he has brought to the leadership of our movement, which has often baffled and disconcerted us and as often subjected him to sharp criticism. Dr. Weizmann has at all times been even-keeled and level-headed. Though a leader of a movement of national rebirth and resurgence, he has consistently refused to indulge in that unbridled and vehement nationalistic romanticism upon whose wheel so many noble ideals of mankind are being broken in our day. ~~Max has exclaimed~~ X

✗ There was never in Dr. Weizmann's patriotism and nationalism this excessive chauvinism. It was broadly human and gracious and tolerant. His nationalism, like that of classic Zionism generally, aimed to correct the abnormal political status of the Jewish people in the world, to put an end to its millennial national homelessness which has been the source of so much misfortune and suffering, to give to the people of Israel that which every historic people is entitled to have, a national home and a territorial base; in a word, to restore the broken harmony of Israel's life in the Diaspora. This was to be achieved not through the conquest of other peoples or through the expropriation of other people's territory or at the cost of the happiness and well-being of anyone else, but, giving the chance - and all we asked for was the chance - to achieve the status of a free people among the other free peoples of the earth by our own sweat and blood in our own historic home - in Palestine.



Dr. Weizmann never lost sight of this main purpose. He never swerved from it. He would make concessions and compromises, but never at the sacrifice of the essential thing itself. The circumference always remained true to the center. The center was the need - the undenied and undeniable need of finding a home for a homeless people - the need which has been so tragically under-scored in the last decade - the blackest in our history. Zionism for him any more than for Herzl was not the cloth of romance woven in an idle day on the loom of dreams. It was inescapable fate, unavoidable necessity.

✓ Dr. Weizmann was frequently defeated, thwarted, and not only by non-Jews, and disappointed, but like the stout-hearted scientist that he is and the patient leader of a long-suffering people hardened to defeat and catastrophe, he returned over and over again to his one absorbing task. (He experimented as a scientist with new formulas, new combinations and new approaches.) His heartaches were many, for he led a movement which was essentially moral and spiritual in character in a period of the world's history when post-war Europe was rapidly deteriorating morally and spiritually. But he persisted. He knew what every sower of the seeds of life must know, that even after a poor harvest one must sow again.

Dr. Weizmann has at all times been the seasoned and responsible guide - never too far ahead of those whom he was charged to lead, never beguiling his followers with glittering prospects and never holding out false hopes. His words were, on significant occasions, enkindling and inspiring, but he always sought to persuade by reason rather than to incite by passionate utterances. Though firm in the espousal of his position, he was seldom given to the foam and spindrift of polemics. He has made mistakes and has acknowledged them. He is not a doctrinaire - he is a leader, a leader of a people which in every grave crisis in its history, has had the genius to produce leaders who were adequate to the emergency.

✓ In a great national crisis comparable to our own at the time of the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of the people at the hands of the Romans, Israel produced a leader who matched his hour - Jochanan ben Zakkai. Of him it was said in tribute that he was "The Light of Israel, the Pillar of Strength, the Mighty Hammer". These three qualities of character - the light of reason, the strength of purpose, and the courage of attacks, one finds in abundant measure in Israel's leader in the present crisis - Dr. Chaim Weizmann.

There is no reward for leadership. Leadership is not a crown but a cross. But this should be your sustaining thought at all times (I said to Dr. Weizmann on that occasion), that forever your name will be sweet upon the lips of a people whose memory is long, a people which never forgets those of its sons who serve it in devotion and sacrificial loyalty.



✓ Be strong and of good courage! The sun will not go down upon our battle until it is won. We shall meet the smouldering philosophy of the Hun with the cool, calm fortitude of our own. We shall survive; they will perish. We were not born in helplessness. We shall not go out in defeat. And we shall rebuild our national life which the ages have wasted, and our national home, and you will be numbered among the foremost of the "builders of Zion and of Jerusalem".

✓ This was said years before the State of Israel was established and years before Dr. Weizmann became its first President. I would not subtract a single word or syllable from what I said then, today, and I would add much more if I could in memorial tribute. But is it really necessary?

✓ The great English architect, Sir Christopher Wren, lies buried in the magnificent St. Paul's Cathedral which he designed and rebuilt, and on a tablet over the inner doorway are inscribed these words: "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice." "If you desire a monument, just look around and see."

✓ If men today or men tomorrow will look for a monument to bespeak Dr. Weizmann's life and achievements, all they will need to do is to look around them and see the new State of Israel which he helped to build, a reborn Jewish nation, a new life developing there, the Hebrew University which he established, the scientific institute which he founded, and they will continue to tell to all future generations of his greatness and of his achievements.

X Naturally, I am filled this morning as I speak of Dr. Weizmann with memories of him and of an association with him over many years in the cause of Zionism. Six months after his reception in New York City, where I spoke in tribute of him, Dr. Weizmann visited Cleveland. It was the occasion of my 25th anniversary as Rabbi of The Temple, on January 24, 1943. Dr. Chaim Weizmann was the guest of honor on that occasion and spoke from this very pulpit. Many of you may remember it. His address was recorded on a record. Yesterday afternoon I played that record and heard again the voice of my friend and my revered leader, the voice now silenced in death, and I was deeply moved.



people in Palestine mounted as boatloads of Jewish refugees, crowded in unseaworthy boatloads, unable to discharge their human cargoes on the shores of Israel, were ~~foundered~~ <sup>or</sup> and turned back and sank in the Mediterranean <sup>their cargo</sup> and the Black Sea, ~~and~~ as <sup>the</sup> refugees who reached the shores of Palestine were seized and turned back and trans- shipped to Eritrea<sup>s</sup> and other places, and the anger of the people mounted until it broke out in violent acts of resistance, of sabotage, of killings and explosions.

Dr. Weizmann was opposed to all these acts of violence, <sup>and</sup> denounced them. And when, following the conclusion of the Second World War in 1945, ~~and when~~ the general elec- tions in England resulted in a great victory for the Labor Party which had been so friendly to Zionism while it was <sup>out of</sup> ~~not in~~ office, and <sup>from</sup> ~~for~~ which party so much was hoped for when it <sup>would come</sup> ~~came~~ into office - <sup>and</sup> when it turned out that <sup>ever</sup> ~~that~~ under the new regime, where Ernest Bevin was the Foreign Secretary and Atlee was the Prime Minister, there <sup>still</sup> ~~would be~~ no relief of the situation at all, still Dr. Weizmann <sup>could</sup> ~~would~~ give his move- ment no new direction. The opposition to him grew and intensified and reached its climax at the 22nd Zionist Congress at Basle of 1946, where Dr. Weizmann was not re- elected president of the movement. His line was repudiated. It was, however, not a personal repudiation of Dr. Weizmann. It was a policy that was abandoned. Dr. Weiz- mann at the time was very bitter about it. (And in his autobiography, "Trial and Error", speaking of that Congress, he has <sup>much</sup> ~~this~~ to say, but I. W. blames me + B.S. -

The 22nd Congress, therefore, had a special character differing in at least one respect from previous Congresses - the absence among very many delegates of faith and even hope in the British govern- ment, and a tendency to rely on methods never known or encouraged among Zionists before the war. These methods were referred to by different names - resistance, defense, activism - but whatever shades may have been expressed by these terms and the distinctions were by no means clear, one feature was common to all of them - the convic- tion of the need for fighting against British authority in Palestine or anywhere else, for that matter. My stand on these matters was well-known. I made it clear once more at the Congress. I stated my belief that our justified protest against our frustrations and injustices we had suffered could have been made with dignity and force, but without buckling to the demoralizing forces in the Move- ment. I became, therefore, as in the past, the scapegoat for the sins of the British Government, and knowing that their assault on the British Government was ineffective, the activists, or what-



ever they would call themselves, turns their shafts on me. About half of the American delegation, led by Rabbi Silver, and part of the Palestinian, led by Mr. Ben-Gurion, had made up their minds that I was to go. On the surface it was not a personal matter; the debate hinged on whether we should or should not send delegates to the Conferences on Palestine, which were to be resumed in London towards the end of January 1947, at the instance of the British Government. By a tiny majority, it was decided not to send delegates - and this was taken as the moral equivalent as a vote of no confidence in me. What happened in the end was that my election as President having been made impossible - no President was elected - the delegates went to London by a back door.

✓ I left the Congress depressed, far more by the spirit in which it had been conducted than by the rebuff I had received. ~~Ex~~

But I am sure that Dr. Weizmann must have come to see all ~~this~~ <sup>that</sup> what transpired at that Congress - in quite a different light a few years later. Had his line been followed in the critical, formative years, there would be no Jewish State today, and he would not have been President of the State of Israel.

The British Government had to be brought to a full realization that it must do one of two things, either fulfill the Mandate faithfully, or give it up. And it was furthermore important to turn to another great power other than Great Britain because it clearly could not solve the problem - to the great emergent new power, the United States of America, as the decisive factor in the situation.

Ultimately, Great Britain had to give up the Mandate. She threw the whole problem into the lap of the United Nations. A new road was opened up, and what followed is history. The new road led in two short years ~~to~~ <sup>there</sup> ~~a hearing~~ <sup>an assembly</sup> of our case before the United Nations. I was privileged to present the cause of the people of Israel. The appointment by the United Nations of a Special Committee to make a new survey of the whole problem; the report of this Special Committee which favored the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Palestine; the vote of acceptance of this report by the Assembly of the United Nations on November 29, 1947, where the American Zionist organization and the American government played the decisive role, and the proclamation of the State of Israel by the Jews of Palestine on May 14, 1948, with the American government being the first government to give formal recognition to the new State of



Israel, and two days later, Dr. Weizmann was elected President by the Provisional Government of Israel.

Ultimately, of course, the Jews of Palestine had to underwrite with their lives and their blood and their valor on the battlefield these political rights which were granted them by the nations of the world because freedom is never given and never won by argumentation. Freedom is achieved, frequently at great cost. Freedom has to be fought for. Men have to die and bleed for it. And a people that is not ready to fight for its freedom is a people that will never have freedom for long.

It was fortunate for Dr. Weizmann, for the Jewish people, that his policy was not followed in the last years when the climax in the age-old struggle was reached.

Dr. Weizmann was a very fortunate man, far more fortunate than other great leaders of peoples, who are not privileged to see with their own eyes the fulfillment of their dearest dream. Dr. Theodor Herzl was not so fortunate, the great man of vision who founded political Zionism and organized the people for the great effort - he was not privileged to enter the promised land. When the State was finally established, the bones of Dr. Theodor Herzl were transferred from Vienna to Mt. Herzl in Israel.

Moses, who led the children of Israel out of slavery and led them through forty years of suffering, trial, struggle, through the wilderness, brought them to the very doors, the very gates of Canaan, but he himself was never privileged to enter it. He died at the top of Mt. Nebo and no one knows his burial place to this day.

Dr. Weizmann was fortunate and a privileged man. He gave his life to the cause. He gave his brilliant talents to the cause. He worked terribly hard; not only a leader, but a worker in the ranks, who traveled all over the world, from country to country, from city to city, to arouse, to inspire, to plead with his people. He was privileged to see with his own eyes the fulfillment of his life's dream, to become the first President of the newly-established State of Israel. I think he must have died a contented and happy man. May his memory be blessed.



*Among them  
were Isaac  
Ben Zvi and  
Moshe Shertok.*

The Paris meeting of the Executive was held in a desperate hour for our Movement. Zionist leaders were imprisoned in Latrun. The British Army was taking brutal retaliatory measures against the Yishuv, and there was the danger of more serious clashes to follow. Always present was the tragic plight of fellow-Jews in the camps throughout Europe, pressing for remedial action. In view of all this, one can readily understand the eagerness for finding a quick solution, and the belief that the solution of <sup>to</sup> partition would have wide support in England and the United States -- and even among some Arabs, and would be quickly accepted.

An emissary of the Jewish Agency, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, was dispatched by the Executive from its meeting in Paris, to sound out Washington, the members of the Cabinet Committee and others on partition as a solution. Dr. Goldmann reported that the members of the Cabinet Committee approved the proposals of the Jewish Agency. It was not made clear by him, however, that our government did not accept them as government policy and did not transmit them to Great Britain as the proposals of the Jewish Agency. *American Government. They were transmitted as the proposals of the Jewish Agency.* The President of the United States, before very long, took occasion to point out specifically in a statement issued on August 16th that "although the President has been exchanging views with Prime Minister Attlee on the subject, this government has not presented any plan of its own for the solution of the problem of Palestine." The



British Government drew the full implication<sup>2</sup> from this statement of the President. The proposals evidently did not have the authority of the American Government behind them. It was not surprising that all the efforts of the Executive of the Jewish Agency in the two months which followed to persuade the British Government to accept partition as a basis for negotiations, failed completely. All the long-drawn-out negotiations resulted in nothing, and during those two months, the American Government acted as though it had done all that had been requested of it -- it had transmitted the Agency proposals to London -- and what more did the Jews want? It gave the impression of having washed its hands of the entire matter, even the subject of the hundred thousand refugees seemed to have been shelved.

The American Zionist Emergency Council again went into action in an intensified campaign. The approaching November elections offered a favorable opportunity. It is at such times that governments in a democracy are more sensitive to the sentiments of its citizens. A Political Actions Committee was organized to mobilize the Jewish citizens of America to demand in the name of American principles and American commitments, action from our government in connection with Palestine. Our purpose was not to elicit another statement from the White House. Of these, the records showed that we have had quite a number. Nevertheless, the pressure of aroused and indignant public opinion was so great that on October 4th, the President did



issue a statement. It was a long statement of some fifteen hundred words in which he reviewed the Administration's efforts regarding Palestine -- a rather unconvincing record. The President strongly urged that in view of the postponement of the London Conference, which Great Britain had convoked to December 16th, "that substantial immigration into Palestine cannot await a solution to the Palestine problem and that it should begin at once. Preparations for this movement have already been made by this government and it is ready to lend its immediate assistance". This was an admirable statement and in making it, the President went back to the position which he took at the time of the publication of the report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. He separated the short-term recommendations from the long-term and demanded immediate action where action was immediately imperative.

With reference to the ultimate solution for Palestine, the President took note of the Jewish Agency's proposals to "solve the Palestine problem by means of the creation of a viable Jewish state in control of its own immigration and economic policies in an adequate area of Palestine, instead of the whole of Palestine". It was his belief that a solution along these lines would command the support of public opinion in the United States. However, the President still did not commit the United States Government to the Agency proposals. "I cannot believe", he stated, "that the gap between the



proposals which have been put forward (the Grady-Morrison plan and the Agency plan) is too broad to be breached by men of reason and good-will. To such a solution our government could give its support."

In other words, while the United States definitely refused to give its support to the Agency proposals, it was prepared to give its support to a compromise proposal as between partition, which was the Agency proposal, and the Grady-Morrison plan.

This statement which President Truman made on October 4, 1946, called forth a protest from King Ibn Saud who had, on previous occasions, complained to President Roosevelt. President Truman replied on October 28, 1946, in a very different vein from those of President Roosevelt's. In this letter he wrote:

"The Government and the people of the United States have given support to the concept of a Jewish national home in Palestine ever since the termination of the first World War, which resulted in the freeing of a large area of the Near East, including Palestine, and the establishment of a number of independent states which are now members of the United Nations. The United States, which contributed its blood and resources to the winning of that war, could not divest itself of a certain responsibility for the manner in which the freed territories were disposed of, or for the fate of the peoples liberated at that time. It took the position, to which it still adheres, that these peoples should be prepared for self-government and also that a national home for the



Jewish people should be established in Palestine. I am happy to note that most of the liberated peoples are now citizens of independent countries. The Jewish national home, however, has not as yet been fully developed.

"It is only natural, therefore, that this Government should favor at this time the entry into Palestine of considerable numbers of displaced Jews in Europe, not only that they may find shelter there but also that they may contribute their talents and energies to the upbuilding of the Jewish national home."

On December 7, 1946, just prior to the holding of the World Zionist Congress in Basle and by way of inducing the Zionist Congress to participate in the London Conference which the British Government had called, Secretary Byrnes announced that he had held several conferences with Mr. Bevin on the Palestine situation and has had an exchange of letters with him. Byrnes *wrote* had-written: "The Jewish leaders, with whom I have recently conferred, regardless of views formerly held by them, now regard the partition proposal as the most practical long-term solution. My opinion is that before agreeing to attend the Conference in January, they would want to be assured specifically that the partition proposal favored by them, would be fully considered by His Majesty's Government."

In his reply Mr. Bevin assured the Secretary of State that "all proposals made by the Arab, Jewish and British delegations at the Conference will be given equal status on the Conference agenda. His Majesty's Government do not regard themselves as committed in advance, to their own proposals.



Nor, of course, are they prepared to commit themselves in advance to any other proposals". He would go no further.

Secretary Byrnes also announced that the United States Government would have an observer at the London Conference, and he advised the Jews to attend it....

When Mr. Bevin was in New York City on November 20th, I saw him twice at the Waldorf-Astoria in the presence of the British Ambassador, Lord Inverchapel. I discussed the Palestine situation with him fully. The sum and substance of all that he would tell me was no different from what he later told Byrnes.





November 25, 1946

~~Meeting with Mr. Ernest Bevin and Lord Inverchapel Wednesday, November 20, 1946,~~  
~~10:00 to 10:45 A.M. at the Waldorf-Astoria.~~

At the very outset Mr. Bevin showed me a "formula" dated September 14, 1946, sent to him by Nahum Goldmann, stating that the Jewish Agency would attend the London Conference to discuss the solution of the Palestine problem (no condition of ~~any~~ partition as a basis for discussion which was contained in Dr. Weizmann's letter to the Colonial Secretary of September 4 is mentioned). He asked me whether I knew about it. I told him that I did not. I know only of the letter of Dr. Weizmann where a condition was clearly stated. I told him that no one had any authority to offer such a formula. I read to him the pertinent extracts from Dr. Chaim Weizmann's two letters to Mr. Hull.

I told him what the situation would be at the forthcoming Zionist Congress. Great Britain had not accepted the Anglo-American Commission report. Great Britain was unwilling to implement the full purpose of the mandate -- a Jewish National Home in the whole of Palestine. The Grady-Morison proposals were rejected by the American Government and by the Jewish Agency. The Agency in an effort to end what it regarded as a deadlock offered to make a great sacrifice by proposing the establishment of a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine, i.e. partition. Many of us thought that the decision of the Agency was most unwise; that such a sacrifice should never be demanded of the Jewish people since two-thirds of Palestine have already been cut away when Transjordan was set up as an Arab state, and that tactically it was a blunder to make such a proposal in its own name rather than wait to consider such a proposal when put forward as a compromise solution by Great Britain.

Nevertheless, if even this proposal which represents the irreducible minimum is not accepted in principle by Great Britain, there would be nothing left for Congress to do but to repudiate the action which was taken by the Executive, reaffirm our full legal rights to Palestine and refuse to go to the London Conference. The situation would then remain in its present tragic stalemate, and conditions in Palestine would deteriorate. To which Bevin replied that Great Britain had very much an open mind on the subject of partition; that he is not prepared to give a definite answer, and that the Cabinet was considering it.

Lord Inverchapel asked me whether I meant that Great Britain should indicate in writing that it accepts partition in principle. I stated that that is not the essential factor. Any clear indication given to us that Great Britain accepts partition in principle, the details to be worked out at the London Conference, would serve the purpose because I assumed that no such indications would be given to us unless the British Government had made up its mind and had authorized it.

Bevin again spoke of the disturbances in Palestine and of the Agency's connections with them. He mentioned Shertok. I pointed out to him how tragic it was that men of the noble type of Shertok were treated as enemies by Great Britain, and that the very people who most closely represent the social and economic philosophy of the British Labor Government are being singled out by that Government as enemies and criminals.

I mentioned the effort of the Hagana to pacify the country. Mr. Bevin stated that it is much better now. I reminded him that the Hagana and the Jewish Agency would not be able, by themselves, to achieve the pacification of the country as long as the Government continues its present policy of keeping the doors of Palestine closed.



Our people in Palestine must be strengthened by proper political action on the part of the Government. Open the doors of Palestine and the country will steadily quiet down!

Mr. Devlin spoke of the fears of the Arabs that the Jews would crowd into the country, that is, into the Jewish State after partition, and would overflow into the surrounding Arab country. I stated that the Arabs had no reason to complain of crowding. They have 1,500,000 square miles of territory as against Palestine's 10,000. Their territory was under-populated. With proper agricultural and industrial development the territories of the Arab states could support a population ten times their present size. I reminded him that five Arab states had been established since the First World War, one carved out of Palestine. The promises made to them had been almost entirely fulfilled, and the promises made to the Jewish people had been entirely ignored. What did the Arabs do to earn their political independence, and how have the Jews been repaid for the great sacrifices which they made? Has the time not already come, and long since overdue, to fulfill the pledges made to the Jewish people?

I urged upon Mr. Devlin that a courageous statesmanship is not called for, and that he and his Government should take the initiative in breaking the log-jam. America is prepared to go along to give its fullest political and economic support. Mr. Devlin replied that he would very much like to have the United States take over the mandate, or the UN. As on the previous occasion I expressed serious doubts as to whether Great Britain really wished to have the United States or the UN take over the trusteeship. I read to Mr. Devlin the statement of the British Labor Party on Palestine made at its annual conference in December 1944. Mr. Devlin stated that it sounded like Harold Lasky. He himself, he stated, had never consulted himself on the subject.

I stated to Mr. Devlin that in my judgment formal conferences will lead to no results unless there are preliminary understandings. Surely he did not want us to go through the motions of the prospect of a satisfactory settlement were not in sight. The Palestine subject is certainly not new. All proposals are very well known and have been for years. For new arguments are likely to be presented. What is called for now is for Great Britain to make up its mind and to let us know.

I mentioned that we had been informed that some Arab states would favor partition. Mr. Devlin stated that he had made careful inquiry and could not find a clear favorable stand. I indicated to him that they would not take such a stand unless they were assured beforehand that Great Britain would favor such a solution.

I told Mr. Devlin, referring to a statement in the Peel report, that Great Britain needed the Jews during the war and may need them after the war. I said that this is still true today. Great Britain has need of friends, especially in the United States. Great Britain must make it possible for the Jews in the United States to remain friends of Great Britain as they were before and during the war. Unfortunately, the actions of the British Government are poisoning the relationship not alone between the Jews of the United States and Great Britain, but between Great Britain and America.

Mr. Devlin stated that he would discuss the Palestine matter with Secretary Byrnes. He indicated further that his Government had been approached by Jewish leaders in London asking for the postponement of the London Conference. He said that as far as he is concerned he had no objection to postponement due to pressure of work in connection with UNO.



Mr. Devin referred to Jews and Arabs as kindred people and that this might account for their fighting one another. I told him of the friendly relations which had existed between these people through many centuries when Jews, who fled from Christian persecution, found haven in Arab lands, and that these two peoples could be friends again as soon as the legitimate national aspirations of both are fully satisfied.





My own position on the subject of partition and my differences with the Executive of the World Zionist Organization I stated at the Z. O. A. Atlantic City Convention October 26, 1946.

"The action of the Executive of the Jewish Agency which was taken in Paris on August 5th to the effect that 'it is prepared to discuss a proposal for the establishment of a viable Jewish State in an adequate area of Palestine', must in the last analysis be judged by its results. Results so far have been entirely negative. The high hope which was entertained by the members of the Executive that their partition proposal, as it did 'a supreme sacrifice in order to facilitate an immediate lasting settlement' to quote the words of Dr. Chaim Weizmann's letter to the British Colonial Secretary, would be quickly accepted and would help to clear up the dangerous political log-jam which had developed, did not materialize.

"I am inclined to believe that the action of the Executive was an error of judgment. To question the judgment of the Executive is not to challenge the authority of the Jewish Agency. The Executive is only an instrumentality of the Jewish Agency, and it is charged with carrying out its policies. At the time of the vote on partition, the Executive had not consulted either the Smaller or the Larger Actions Committee of our movement which alone have the authority to ~~act for our movement in the interim between Congresses~~<sup>Report</sup>. When the Executive of the Jewish Agency acted on partition in Paris, there was but one binding Zionist policy to guide it -- the one which was reaffirmed as late as August, 1945, by the post-war Zionist Conference in London, and this policy was opposed to



partition. 'There can be no solution', stated the London Political Resolution, 'to the inseparable twin problems of the Jewish people and Palestine, except by constituting it, undivided and undiminished, as a Jewish State in accordance with the original purpose of the Balfour Declaration'.

"This policy, by the way, is still the only authentic and binding policy for the Zionist movement. There is no other, and there will be no other, until the World Zionist Congress alters or revises it. When and if it does, it will be binding upon everyone who recognizes and accepts its authority.

" We questioned the wisdom of the Executive of the Jewish Agency to make the radical decision which it did make and to proceed to act forthwith upon it in its contacts with governments, without first receiving approval of either the Smaller or Larger Actions Committee, not to speak of the Congress itself. Our movement was thus confronted with a fait accompli. The explanation which has been given that the situation called for the greatest speed has not been established by subsequent events. The Executive did move rapidly and precipitously but moved toward nothing. We are not unmindful of the sincere and honorable motives which moved the members of the Executive in Paris to make their decision. The tragic plight of European Jewry, the desperate position of the refugees and the mood of the beleaguered Yishuv, all undoubtedly were factors in the decision. Nevertheless, as events have demonstrated, their decision did not correct any of these tragic situations. "

".... We felt that it would be a colossal political blunder for us to announce publicly that the Zionist movement proposes to sacrifice one-half of Palestine



in order to retain the other half. Once that is done, a partitioned Palestine becomes our maximal position, from which Governments may properly ask us in the name of reasonableness and compromise to recede still further.

This over, partition proposals would be still further whittled down.

"But if nothing was gained, something substantial was lost, I am afraid. A partitioned Palestine now represents our maximum Zionist demands, both in London and in Washington and in the Arab world. Our own government now suggests a still further compromise, not as between the Biltmore program and partition, but between partition and cantonization. From now on anyone who will go to Washington to talk with officials about a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth in the whole of Palestine -- and this, mind you, is still the official position of our movement -- will, I am afraid, be laughed out of court....

"We have not succeeded in achieving the Biltmore program, but we have also failed to achieve partition. Wherein then have the so-called pro-partisan moderates scored over the Biltmore extremists?

"If it is true that the present Government of Great Britain is unwilling to grant us statehood in even a part of Palestine, and the record of the present British Government is very clear on this subject, what point is there in making one grand gesture of renunciation after another and in publicly proclaiming our readiness for supreme sacrifices when our gestures are disdained and our sacrifices are contemned!



have these negotiations, I ask, yielded a single response of fairness and generosity on the part of the Government?

"How long can we follow along this road of renunciation and abnegation without tearing the heart out of our movement?

"Something else has been lost, I am afraid. In their eagerness to persuade the Governments of Great Britain and the United States to accept partition, the spokesmen of the Jewish Agency quite naturally praised their proposal as very reasonable and moderate. The impression accordingly was left with Governments and with the press of the world that those Zionists who remain loyal to the Biltmore plan, to the classic Zionist program, to the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, are unreasonable and extremists. It was not long before reports began to circulate through the press, some of them inspired I am afraid by some of our own people, reports emanating from Paris or London, to the effect that a sharp struggle exists in the Zionist movement between the moderates and the extremists, that the Jewish Agency represents the temperate and the moderate wing of the movement, and that certain Zionists, principally the Zionists of the United States, represent the extremists. Your president was singled out time and again as the spokesman of these intransigent extremists. My resignation from the Executive of the Jewish Agency (over this issue) was interpreted in the public press in this manner: 'If his resignation goes through, it will be regarded as a new sign of growing "moderate" influence in the Jewish Agency top ranks.' As recently as two weeks ago there appeared an inspired newspaper column in the Washington Post which quoted an anonymous administration source to the effect that the purpose of President Truman's statement of October 4th was to strengthen the influence of the so-called moderates in the Zionist Organization of America against the so-called extremists under Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver.



31 missing ?

"Those Zionists all over the world who have been loyally following the classic Zionist line, have overnight become extremists. Even some Zionists are falling into this unsuspected trap and are accepting this piece of idiotic perversion....

"Dr. Nahum Goldmann may consider sixty percent of Palestine as a reasonable and moderate goal, but a spokesman of the Foreign Office in London, commenting on his moderate and reasonable proposal, stated that 'The Foreign Office has noted with interest a plan under which thirty percent of the population of Palestine would occupy sixty-five percent of the territory'. Dr. Goldmann himself is fearful that his moderate and reasonable plan will be regarded as extreme by the British Government, and he sees no other alternative but extreme violence against the British Government within a few weeks. So even the partition plan cannot be carried out without the threat of violence, and violence is not the counsel of moderation.



( I reject with contempt all those who unctuously and mendaciously suggest to Governments or to the public press that those Zionists who do not favor partition are dangerous extremists, and that partition must be accepted lest the movement fall into their hands. The Zionists who remain loyal to the classic Zionist Program, who demand that Great Britain fully and honorably discharge the obligations which it had assumed voluntarily as the Mandatory Government of Palestine, the Zionists who are not stampeded by the emergencies of the hour and who do not believe that either the Yishuv or the Jewish people are so weary and shaken as to be prepared to accept any settlement however cruelly unjust, these Zionists I maintain are not extremists. They are the proud and loyal followers of Herzl, Nordau and Ussishkin and of all the splendid men and women who by the sweat of their brows and blood of their hearts have in the last fifty years been building Eretz Israel. Courage, faith and persistence even under the most desperate conditions are not extremism, and defeatism is not to be confused with moderation.

"When proposals will be made to us by Governments which we will find truly reasonable and which will meet our fundamental needs and satisfy our national aspirations and our sense of justice, the whole movement will be prepared, I am sure, to give them every serious consideration. But such proposals have definitely not been made to us by anyone. So far they represent the wishful thinking of certain Zionists who have begun to act, in relation to the Zionists who disagree with them, as if partition were actually in the bag. Sound and just proposals are bound to be made to us sooner or later, if we do not lose our nerve, and if we are not misled by artful political manipulators who outsmart themselves.

"Until such time there is nothing else for us to do but to carry on as energetically and determinedly as heretofore, insisting upon our historic



and legal rights to Palestine, our rights under the Mandate. There are no other legal or political realities in the situation, at present. There are no partition proposals before the Zionist movement. It is along the line of our historic claims and legal rights to the whole of Palestine that we must continue our struggle--and unfortunately the whole of Palestine has now come to mean one-third of Palestine, for we have already been victimized by catastrophic partition in 1922 when Transjordan was torn away."

Shortly before I left for the World Zionist Congress in Basle, a spokesman for the Arab Office declared that Arab leaders would refuse to attend any more Palestinian Conferences with the British dealing with the partition of the Holy Land, and that Arab leaders would refuse to attend any meeting at which Zionists were present....



These reformers were thinking of progress as most men of their day did, in terms of a steady advance, an unbroken march forward, rather than in terms of a succession of cyclical movements, which, over and again, come again and which result only in a slight net advance for mankind. There were ample warnings all around them, portents which less romantic eyes did appraise more realistically -- signs of an irreconcilable opposition, an indurate racial, cultural, economic and religious hostility which had not and would not accept the humanistic and democratic synthesis which a revolutionary middle-class capitalism had popularized in the nineteenth century, and which was destined sooner or later to disintegrate.

Dr. Isaac M. Wise entertained this same premature confidence that mankind was rapidly approaching the era of a universal faith and a universal republic. He declared in 1875:

"Before our very eyes, the world moves onward into the golden age of redeemed humanity and the fraternal union of nations, as our prophets thousands of years ago have predicted. We are fast approaching the universal democratic republic with civil and religious liberty, cemented by the world's advanced intelligence. This century settles old accounts. It is progressive." The following year he declared: "The Jews do not think of going back to Palestine among Beduins and sandy deserts, and the nations in power do not want them to go there. No European country today would give permission to the Jews to emigrate with their wealth or even without it...It is all dream and fantasy. The world goes not backward, its march is onward, and this will expunge the old race prejudices as well as the religious superstitions of the races...."



And so, when Dr. Wise and his colleagues came to formulate a Declaration of Principles for Reform Judaism, as they did in 1885 in Pittsburgh, they stated:

"We recognize, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish State."

When the Balfour Declaration was issued in 1917. the Central Conference of American Rabbis went on record at its Convention in 1918: "We do not subscribe to the phrase in the Declaration which says: 'Palestine is to be a National Homeland for the Jewish people.'.. We are opposed to the idea that Palestine should be considered the Homeland of the Jews... The ideal of the Jew is not the establishment of a Jewish State -- nor the reassertion of Jewish nationality which has long been outgrown "

The Central Conference of American Rabbis always favored the *physical* rehabilitation of Palestine for such Jews as may desire to go there and even urged upon Jews the duty to contribute to the reconstruction of the country but it remained obdurately opposed to Zionism and to the establishment of a Jewish National Homeland.

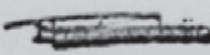


But the sentiment of many of its members, especially of the younger generation, moved steadily away from this doctrinaire position. Life was forcing them to a new orientation. The exponents of the classical, anti-Zionist position in the Conference were soon fighting a rear-guard action. The showdown came in 1935, at the Chicago Convention. It was now fifty years since the Pittsburgh Platform had been adopted. The Conference arranged for a re-evaluation of that Platform, more particularly of its position on Zionism.

Dr. Samuel Schulman of Temple Emanuel, New York, and I were invited to present our contrasting views. I had, from time to time, been honored by my colleagues by being invited to deliver a sermon or read a paper at their conventions on some subject related to Judaism. On all such occasions, I urged a new attitude on the part of ~~the~~ Reform Judaism toward Zionism. In this climactic discussion in 1935, I was <sup>again</sup> ~~also~~ invited to present the Zionist viewpoint. This turned out to be the last major debate on the floor of the Conference on the subject of Reform Judaism and Zionism.

Dr. Schulman, in a very scholarly paper, in the main defended the Pittsburgh pronouncement on Zionism, although he was far less dogmatic than he himself had been in 1918 at the Convention following the issuance of the Balfour Declaration. After all, much had happened in the intervening years....

Dr. Schulman acknowledged that the strength of what he called the nationalist party, consisted in the fact that it had emphasized the importance of Israel by calling it a nation. Indirectly, it had strengthened the backbone of Jewish consciousness, although it braced it artificially.... Its weakness was





that while it wants to strengthen the backbone of Jewish consciousness, it has assimilated away the Jewish soul by making Israel a "goy" like other "goyim", a nation like other nations.

He called for unity and not for bitter controversy among Jews over this issue.... "Let us work together, we the religionists and those who differ with us.... Not to stand aloof is our aim, but recognizing the value of Palestine for hundreds of thousands of our brethren in Israel, let us help increase the settlement, at the same time let us bravely uphold the truth that Israel is not a "goy" like other "goyim". It always was, it is now and if it is to live at all, will always be a witness to God." (C. C. A. R. Year Book, 1935, p. 309 ff).

Thirteen years later, on the eve of the proclamation of the State of Israel, when Israel did become a "goy" like other "goyim", Dr. Schulman wrote me: "I feel the need of saying to you that I hail the courageous assertion of the Jews of Palestine, with pride in their spirit, and I invoke God's blessing upon their efforts. May God bless the new State.... May He give victory to the valiant defenders of their country and may peace come soon.... I congratulate you upon the dignity and brilliance with which you have represented the cause before the United Nations."

In my paper I took issue with the accepted thesis that the Jewish people was nothing more than a religious community and that its mission to humanity precluded the idea of national restoration.



The ideal of the mission of Israel, I maintained, is not a denial, a revision or a substitution for any other concept heretofore held basic in Jewish thought, but only a supplement, an addition, another bulwark for national security. It does not supplant nationalism. It re-enforces it. It does not look upon the dispersion as a blessing. It confronts it as a tragic fact which, however, must not be permitted to endanger the survival of Israel. It does not assume that the Jew must remain in exile in order that Yahweh may become the God of all the nations. It does not proclaim that Israel is no longer a nation but only a religious community, whose sole raison d'être is the conversion of the Gentiles. The prophecies of Second Isaiah ring with the recurrent refrain of Israel's approaching restoration to Palestine. When the prophets speak of Restoration they are not thinking of "the colonization of Palestine as a philanthropic effort deserving of general support" (a concession made to Palestine even by anti-Zionist Reform Rabbis), but of the rebuilding of the political life and home of the Jewish nation.

Zion rebuilt and Israel ingathered are the passionate themes of the prophets following the exile, and they did not regard them as being in any way irreconcilable with the hope of converting the whole world to Yahweh.

Any one who attempts to exploit the historic Mission Idea of Israel as an argument against Jewish nationalism or against the rebuilding of Palestine or in justification of the Galut is guilty of gross distortion of an idea which is very clearly and unambiguously defined in its original sources. The prophets did not believe that the Jews should continue to live in exile, nor that they should welcome the Dispersion as a blessing for the sake of their mission.



Nation, race, land, language were always vital and indispensable concepts in Jewish life, indissolubly associated of course with religion. It was never a case of one or the other. They were all one, organically united. There were times when one or the other had to be stressed. Whenever one of these factors of survival was threatened, the strong instinct of the people rallied to its defense. Hence in our history we find eras of accentuation of one or another of these several concepts and eras of attenuation. But never was any one of them abandoned -- until the time of the Reform Rabbis of Germany which is, of course, a very recent and seemingly a rapidly vanishing phenomenon.

A Messianic hope not bound up with the restoration of Israel to Palestine is simply not found in Jewish religious literature anywhere from the time of the Second Isaiah to our own day. National restoration was the very heart of the Messianic ideal from its very inception. To substitute for this national ideal an anti-national, nebulous Messianic Age, on the plea of religious evolution, is to be guilty not of revision but of distortion. It is both new and counterfeit.

It is idle, of course, to talk of our people as no longer a nation but a religious community, in the face of the fact that millions of Jews are today recognized by the law of nations as national minorities in Poland, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, millions more as a distinct nationality in Soviet Russia, where an autonomous Jewish region is actually being built, and hundreds of thousands in Palestine where a Jewish homeland is being created under the terms of a mandate of the League of Nations which recognizes not only the national existence of the Jewish people but its historic claim to a national home. It is not only idle today to repeat the "religious-community" shibboleth of the early Reformers but also quite fantastic.



The Jewish people produced the Jewish religion, but people and religion are not synonymous terms. The Jewish religion--and I use the term in its customary sense, for I do not believe that a clever neology--the use of a word in a new and unsanctioned sense--is equivalent to a new theology--is a colossal and world-revolutionizing concourse of spiritual ideas unfolding itself in the life of a people of a particular character and temperament, but the Jewish religion does not exhaust the full content of the Jewish people.

Jewish life possessed in its great epochs a classic balance, and the aim of religious leaders today should be to restore it. Many tributaries flow into the historic channel of Jewish life. In recent years some zealous and mostly uninformed partisans have attempted to reduce Jewish life to what is only a fraction of itself--to race or nationalism or folkways or theologic abstractions. Quite unconsciously they are all falsifying Jewish life. It is a mark of decadence in the diaspora that so many of our people have lost the sense of the classic harmony in Jewish life and are attempting to substitute a part for the whole.

It is the total program of Jewish life and destiny which the religious leaders of our people should stress today--the religious and moral values, the universal concepts, the mandate of mission, as well as the Jewish people itself and all its national aspirations. Thus the strength and security of our life will



be retrieved, and, whether in Palestine or in the diaspora, we shall move forward unafraid upon the road of our destiny."

The discussion of my paper <sup>absorbing</sup> ~~proved~~ so ~~intriguing~~ that at one o'clock in the morning the Conference which was meeting in a club in the suburbs of Chicago, decided not to adjourn <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ session but to return to the headquarters hotel in the city, and there to resume the discussion. This was done and it was not until the early hours of the morning that the session finally adjourned.

It was at this Conference that the traditional opposition of the Central Conference of American Rabbis to Zionism was finally officially abandoned. It was replaced by a position of benevolent neutrality. It left the acceptance or rejection of the Zionist program to the determination of the individual members of the Conference themselves, and it further resolved that the Conference would continue to cooperate in the up-building of Palestine.

Two years later, when a new set of guiding principles for Reform Judaism, the so-called Columbus Platform, was adopted to replace the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, it declared:

"In the rehabilitation of Palestine, the land hallowed by memories and hopes, we behold the promise of renewed life for many of our brethren. We affirm the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed, but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life."

In February, 1942, I was invited to deliver the sermon at the convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis which met that year in Cincinnati. The time and the city were chosen to coincide with the Centenary <sup>C</sup>~~celebration~~ of the founding of the congregation which bears the name of Isaac Mayer Wise,



and whose pulpit Dr. Wise occupied for many years. Commenting on this convention, the "Reconstructionist"<sup>a</sup>/magazine of reform within Conservative Judaism stated that "The Convention of American Rabbis which took place recently demonstrates again and quite forcefully the happy capacity of Reform Judaism for self-examination, self-criticism and fresh adjustment.... The Conference sermon preached by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver from the pulpit occupied for many years by Isaac Mayer Wise, set the theme for the convention. The sermon was a moving experience, and a penetrating critique of Reform Judaism.... Additional proof of the central importance of Zionism, logically a spiritual concept synonymous with Judaism, in contemporary Reform Jewish thinking, was the bold and vigorous plea of Dr. Silver for Jewish nationalism and for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, a plea which he coupled in his sermon with one for greater consecration to God, Torah, and Israel and which was enthusiastically received by the vast majority of the Conference members."

It was at this Conference that a resolution endorsing a Jewish army for Palestinian Jewry was adopted over the bitter opposition of the "old guard". The resolution read: "The Central Conference of American Rabbis adds its voice to the demand that the Jewish population of Palestine be given the privilege of establishing a military force which will fight under its own banner on the side of the democracies under allied command, to defend its own land and the Near East to the end that the victory of democracies may be hastened everywhere."



The "old guard" was so outraged at the adoption of this resolution, that it called a conference which was attended by only 33 Rabbis and organized what subsequently became the Council of American Judaism, a notorious anti-Zionist group from which the Rabbinic constituency steadily withdrew, leaving it almost entirely in the hands of super-patriotic laymen whose chief interest was not Judaism but anti-Zionism.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, in the critical years of the last quarter of a century, during which time the the battle for the establishment of the State of Israel was waged, and its foundations laid, maintained a positive, constructive and most helpful attitude. Many of its members were leading champions in the struggle.

*I had the honor of speaking at the President's the  
Conference during the 7 years 1945-47.*