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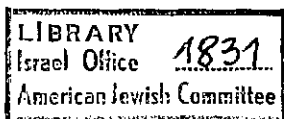
in vigilant brotherhood

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE'S
RELATIONSHIP TO PALESTINE AND ISRAEL**

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in vigilant brotherhood

**THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE'S
RELATIONSHIP TO PALESTINE AND ISRAEL**



... No one will ever forget how you stood in vigilant brotherhood at the cradle of our emergent statehood; and how you helped us lay the foundations of our international status and of our crucial friendship with the Government and people of the American Republic.

Faithful to your own American principles and to your sentiments of Jewish brotherhood, you were able to play an indispensable role.

—Abba Eban, Ambassador of Israel to the United States and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at the Fifty-Second Annual Meeting of the American Jewish Committee, April 18, 1959.

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INTRODUCTION

The objects of this corporation shall be, to prevent the infraction of the civil and religious rights of Jews in any part of the world; to render all lawful assistance and to take appropriate remedial action in the event of threatened or actual invasion of such rights, or of unfavorable discrimination with respect thereto; to secure for Jews equality of economic, social and educational opportunity; to alleviate the consequences of persecution and to afford relief from calamities affecting Jews, wherever they may occur . . .

—Charter of the American Jewish Committee

THE principles which have guided the American Jewish Committee for almost six decades are nowhere better exemplified than in its historic relations with Palestine, and later with Israel. During crisis after crisis in the Middle East, conflicting pressures from many quarters have been powerful indeed, but never has the Committee deviated from the mission envisaged in its charter.

Today it is a source of deep satisfaction that unremitting labors on behalf of Israel have been repeatedly acknowledged by those best qualified to judge — the Israelis themselves. Yet at no time has concern for Israel diminished the Committee's profound sense of responsibility to our Government and to American Jews.

While our religious and cultural identity as Jews has been a stimulating force in our support of Israel, our guiding principle has always been that such support be consistent with objectives of the United States and with the rights of the individual, be he Jew or non-Jew. As Americans, we have not hesitated to withhold this support or to disagree publicly when Israel's actions appeared to depart from this principle.

What follows is a review of the Committee's role in one of the most dramatic and decisive eras in Jewish history.

PALESTINE UNDER OTTOMAN RULE

THE Ottoman Empire, which had opened its gates to the Jewish exiles from Spain in 1492, continued its policy of tolerance until the rise of modern nationalist movements throughout the Empire toward the end of the 19th century. Then, fearing that Jewish or Arab nationalism might weaken Turkey's hold on Palestine, just as nationalism among Turkey's Christian subjects had already resulted in the loss of the Balkan provinces, the Turkish authorities began to adopt various regulations limiting sharply the entrance of Jews into Palestine, restricting their purchase or sale of land, and otherwise hampering their activities.

Contributing to Turkish apprehension was the steady growth of the Jewish population. After 1880, the persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe, principally Russia, and the beginnings of modern Zionism increased the rate of influx. Thus, Palestine's Jewish population, only slightly more than 10,000 in 1845, doubled by 1882 and increased to 47,000 by 1895. At the outbreak of World War I, it had grown to nearly 85,000.

Shortly after its establishment in 1906, the American Jewish Committee vigorously defended the rights of the Jewish community against Turkish repression and opposed attempts to restrict the development of new settlements. A specific cause of the Committee's concern was a regulation that Jews of foreign citizenship who had business in the Holy Land would be admitted only as "pilgrims or visitors" for a period of not more than three months. They were compelled to deposit their passports with the Turkish Government on entry and to carry a special permit known as "the Red Ticket." A protest lodged by the United States in 1888 had brought no results, and on July 3, 1913, the

American Jewish Committee asked U.S. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan for renewed "American insistence upon relaxation of the Turkish regulations" which subjected American Jews, as well as Jews from other countries, "to most serious hardships."

The Committee felt strongly that the Turks should respect "the rights and privileges of American citizens bearing passports issued by our State Department, who may have occasion to visit Palestine on business or otherwise." Louis Marshall, writing as President of the Committee, noted that American interests in Palestine had greatly increased, "especially those of American Jews of whom we are informed there are at present upwards of eleven hundred in Jerusalem alone."

Several months later the Committee received word from the United States Embassy in Constantinople that the Ottoman Council of Ministers had decided to abolish the three-month rule and would no longer take up passports of foreign Jews.

Within a year, the American Jewish Committee was again to be concerned with the welfare of Jews in Palestine, by then cut off from their co-religionists in the warring European nations. In late August 1914, Secretary of State Bryan received a cablegram from Henry Morgenthau, Sr., United States Ambassador at Constantinople, requesting him to inform Louis Marshall and Jacob H. Schiff, noted philanthropist and one of the Committee's founders, that "the Jewish charities and colonies in Palestine require immediate assistance." Secretary Bryan relayed this message the same day, adding that "the Department is planning to send a relief ship in the near future."

Ambassador Morgenthau had suggested that \$50,000 be raised as the nucleus of a free loan fund, and the Committee's Executive Board immediately agreed to contribute \$25,000 of this amount from its special fund. Mr. Schiff and the Federation of American Zionists contributed the rest. The money, raised overnight, was taken to Palestine on the U.S. relief ship by Maurice Wertheim, later president of the AJC.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Arthur Ruppin, head of the Jewish relief committee in Palestine, wrote to Mr. Marshall to report on allocation of the funds. He also made this comment: "We

may say that the sending of this money has created . . . a deep impression and one which will not fail to add to the prestige of the Jews in Palestine."

While the immediate need was to assure adequate food supplies for the population, the American Jewish Committee recognized that underlying economic problems could best be overcome by stimulating constructive Jewish enterprises. Consequently, the plan of distribution provided that a large proportion of the funds available be used for interest-free loans for the employment of Jewish labor.

Although most of the Committee's members were not Zionists in the political sense, many were among the founders and principal backers of pioneering institutions established in Palestine before World War I, such as the Haifa Institute of Technology (Technion), the Bezalel School for artistic and industrial craftsmen, and the first modern agricultural research station. This close interest in the educational and cultural development of the Jewish community continued throughout the years. Committee leaders were among the founders of the American Friends of the Hebrew University, established in 1925.

The feelings behind this outflow of support were summed up by Louis Marshall in January 1914, in a letter to Nathan Straus, who had financed sanitation and other public works in the Jewish settlements. "I am not a Zionist, certainly not a Nationalist," Mr. Marshall wrote. "I am a Jew from conviction and sentiment, one who takes pride in the literature, the history, the traditions and the spiritual contributions which Judaism has made to the world." Palestine, he said, as the cradle of Jewish development, aroused in him "great feelings of love and reverence."

America, Mr. Marshall noted, had provided freedom and opportunity for countless European Jews, and the AJC was in the forefront of the struggle to keep the doors open; yet, in a passage that was to prove tragically prophetic, he expressed the fear that "restrictive immigration laws will be passed, with the result that, to a considerable extent, the storm-tossed children of Russian and Roumanian ghettos will be unable to receive admittance here. . . ." Concluding that "to thousands of our people, the star of hope points to the land of our fathers," he declared it

the bounden duty of those of our people who have been blessed by Providence with worldly possessions . . . to concentrate their efforts toward the development of that land, which, after all, should rouse the most tender feelings in the heart of every Jew. . . . I believe that I am not a mere dreamer when I express the conviction that it is possible that large tracts of land may be acquired in Palestine for the development of colonies, for the stimulation of agriculture, horticulture and forestry, for the establishment of extensive industries, and for the creation of a permanent home for those of us who have had no secure abiding place.¹

¹ Louis Marshall, *Champion of Liberty: Selected Papers and Addresses*, Charles Resnikoff, ed. (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1957), vol. II, pp. 708-710.

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION AND THE MANDATE

THE American Jewish Committee's first formal statement on Zionism and Jewish settlement in Palestine, adopted at the annual meeting in April 1918, was prompted by the issuance of the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 1917.¹ This declaration of British policy stated that "His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object . . ."

While receiving the Declaration "with profound appreciation," the American Jewish Committee stated as "axiomatic" that "the Jews of the United States have here established a permanent home . . . and recognize their unqualified allegiance to this country, which they love and cherish and of whose people they constitute an integral part." The Committee added that in other democratic lands as well, most Jews "will continue to live . . . where they enjoy full civil and religious liberty."

But, continued the statement, the AJC was "not unmindful that there are Jews everywhere who, moved by traditional sentiment, yearn for a home in the Holy Land for the Jewish people." This hope "has our whole-hearted sympathy."

The AJC also regarded as of "essential importance" the stipulation in the Balfour Declaration that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in any other country."

The Committee pledged to "cooperate with those who, attracted by religious or historic associations, shall seek to establish in Palestine a center for Judaism, for the stimulation of our

¹ See Appendix for full text.

faith, for the pursuit and development of literature, science and art in a Jewish environment, and for the rehabilitation of the land."

At the end of World War I, the Committee joined with other Jewish organizations in urging President Woodrow Wilson to seek Peace Conference action implementing the Balfour Declaration and conferring the mandate for Palestine on Great Britain.

In April 1920, the Supreme Allied Council entrusted Britain with the mandate over Palestine, which had been detached from the defeated Ottoman Empire. In July 1922, the Council of the League of Nations confirmed this action. The Balfour Declaration was formally incorporated in the mandate.

The Jewish Agency and Non-Zionist Participation

The mandate provided for the establishment of "an appropriate Jewish agency" to advise and cooperate with the mandatory power on matters affecting "the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and . . . to assist and take part in the development of the country." The Zionist Organization was temporarily recognized as this agency, and the mandate stated that it should seek the cooperation of "all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home."

Recognizing the importance of non-Zionist cooperation, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, president of the Zionist Organization, met with various Jewish groups and communal leaders, including Louis Marshall and other AJC spokesmen. In his autobiography, Dr. Weizmann described how "greatly impressed" he was by "Marshall's forceful personality, his devotion to Jewish matters and the great wisdom he brought to bear."² Following the meetings, a group of AJC leaders, including Mr. Marshall; Dr. Cyrus Adler, chairman of AJC's Executive Committee; Judge Horace Stern of Philadelphia; and Herbert H. Lehman convened the first conference of non-Zionists to consider Palestine problems.

The initial conference, held in February 1924, with some 150

² Trial and Error, *Chaim Weizmann* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 308.

participants, was chaired by Louis Marshall. His introductory address set the tone and purpose:

As loyal American citizens . . . we have a right to consider the question as to what, if anything, we shall do with regard to Palestine and its development, and as loyal Jews we have the duty to take action with regard to this all-important subject . . .

We have no right to be indifferent. . . . We here who are happy, who have been the recipients of all the bounties and the blessings which God has given us as citizens of this free land, must remember that there are millions of Jews in other parts of the world . . . who are still seeking for an abiding place, for a home . . . upon the soil which they and their ancestors have always regarded as holy ground. . . .

Where shall the Jews go? . . . Where will the pioneer spirit which forces thousands to the resolution to leave everything behind and seek a new home—where will that find its outlet, if not in Palestine? And it is for that reason that we must not close our eyes any longer to the problem which calls in stentorian tones for solution . . .

Two decisions were reached: to organize an investment corporation with adequate capital to develop Palestine resources and to study possibilities of American non-Zionist affiliation with the Jewish Agency.

At a second conference, in March 1925, the Palestine Economic Corporation was formed with a capital of \$3 million. The PEC later became a major factor in Palestine's economic development.

The second conference also formulated a plan for non-Zionist representation in an enlarged Jewish Agency which came into being in August 1929. Numerical parity between spokesmen of Zionist and non-Zionist groups was established in the three Agency bodies: the Council, the Administrative Committee and the Executive Committee. Louis Marshall was elected chairman of the Council.

Thereafter the AJC took the position that, since the Jewish Agency now represented all elements interested in promoting Jewish settlement in Palestine, it should be given full responsibility in this field; separate action by the AJC would unnecessarily duplicate the Agency's work.

However, the AJC retained its independence of judgment and freedom of action. Thus, for example, when a rumored change in British policy threatened the continuance of free immigration to Palestine, the American Jewish Committee did not hesitate to voice a protest, once it was felt that such additional independent action might be effective.

Immigration: British Restrictions and Arab Opposition

The Mandate for Palestine directed the mandatory power "to facilitate Jewish immigration," but laid down no guiding principles. In June 1922, Winston Churchill, then Britain's Secretary of State for the Colonies, declared "it is necessary that the Jewish community in Palestine should be able to increase its numbers by immigration." But, he said, immigration "cannot be so great in volume as to exceed whatever may be the economic capacity of the country to absorb new arrivals."

While affirming that his Government was committed to "the further development of the existing Jewish community," Mr. Churchill reassured the Arabs that Britain had never contemplated "the disappearance or the subordination of the Arab population, language or culture in Palestine."

Finally, Mr. Churchill stressed that "the existence of a Jewish National Home in Palestine should be internationally guaranteed, and that it should be formally recognized to rest upon ancient historic connection."

On June 18, Dr. Weizmann conveyed to the British Government the decision of the Zionist Organization's Executive to act "in conformity with the policy" set forth in the Churchill memorandum.

The American Jewish Committee concurred with this British statement of policy. It also gained general acceptance among the Jewish community in Palestine, and won international recognition when the Council of the League of Nations approved the British mandate, which made specific reference to the Balfour Declaration and the Jewish National Home.

As the Jewish community in Palestine grew, Arab nationalist reaction became increasingly violent. There were anti-Jewish

demonstrations in April 1920 and May 1921; but worse disasters were to come. In August 1929, organized riots and assaults on Jewish settlements killed 132 persons, including eight Americans.

The AJC held an emergency meeting and telegraphed Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson asking him to convey to the British Government the Committee's "profound sorrow and disappointment . . . that in spite of tension known to have existed for some time it was not possible to avert the unfortunate outbreaks."

To prevent the spread of violence to neighboring Moslem states, the AJC also asked that our Government "bring to the attention of the governments of such countries the desirability of taking necessary precautionary measures." Several members of the Committee subsequently met with President Hoover to discuss the possibilities of American action.

In October 1929, Felix M. Warburg, a member of AJC's Executive Committee and one of the leading financial backers of the Palestine Economic Corporation, led a delegation to see British Prime Minister J. Ramsay MacDonald, then visiting New York. Mr. Warburg stressed the responsibility "of the Mandatory Government to restore confidence in the safety of life and property in Palestine."

Following an investigation of the Arab disorders and a subsequent inquiry into the questions of immigration and land settlement, the British Government, in October 1930, issued a new policy statement known as the Passfield White Paper. Declaring that British obligations to the Jews and the Arabs were "of equal weight" but "in no sense irreconcilable," the White Paper went on to state that "there remains no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants." Accordingly, it recommended strict land-transfer and immigration controls—restrictions which would seriously hamper Jewish settlement in Palestine.

The officers of the Jewish Agency, including the non-Zionists, resigned in protest against the new British policy. The AJC strongly supported the Agency's position.

The cumulative effect of protests by Jewish groups throughout the world, echoed as they were in the British Parliament by the

Conservative and Liberal parties, caused the Labor Government to reformulate its new Palestine policy. This was done through an "authoritative" interpretation of the Passfield White Paper by Prime Minister MacDonald in a letter to Dr. Weizmann, president of the Jewish Agency. The Prime Minister assured the Agency that the Mandatory Government did not intend to prohibit the "acquisition of additional land by Jews" or to bar "Jewish immigration in any of its categories."

During the 1930's, as Palestine's Jewish community was strengthened by immigration from Germany, Arab opposition increased, breaking into widespread violence in April 1936. At the same time, local Arab nationalist groups joined in an Arab Higher Committee, which immediately proclaimed a general strike, a boycott of Jewish enterprises and a campaign of civil disobedience to enforce compliance with Arab nationalist demands. Foremost was the demand that the British mandate be replaced by an independent Arab state, as was being done in neighboring Egypt and Iraq.

Presently, successive outbreaks and acts of sabotage developed into open rebellion, and "Committees for the Defense of Palestine" were formed in most of the larger Arab cities of the Middle East. The guerrillas, encouraged by propaganda from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, were finally contained only by the arrival of substantial British reinforcements in September.

The Peel Commission

In November 1936, a Royal Commission appointed by the British Government to investigate the disturbances left for Palestine. Headed by Earl Peel, former Secretary of State for India, the Commission issued its findings eight months later.

The Commission reported that the demands of Jews and Arabs had become irreconcilable and that an "irrepressible conflict" was developing. In the face of Arab opposition, Britain could not meet its obligation under the mandate to foster the development of the Jewish National Home without a policy of repression which would run counter to British principles. The Commission therefore recommended partition of the country into

sovereign Arab and Jewish states, with a British mandatory zone to include Jerusalem, the Holy Places and a corridor to the Mediterranean.

The Jewish state was to occupy about 20 per cent of the total area. Jewish land purchases and settlement in the proposed Arab territory were to be prohibited. In addition, the Peel Commission abandoned the Churchill principle of linking immigration quotas to the country's economic absorptive capacity. Henceforth, the Commission recommended, the rate of Jewish immigration should be determined by "political, social and psychological as well as economic considerations," and for at least five years should not exceed 12,000 a year.

THE NAZI TERROR AND WORLD WAR II

THE Peel Commission report was issued in July 1937, some four years after the Nazi regime had begun its campaign of persecution, impelling many German and other European Jews to seek places of refuge. The American Jewish Committee strongly opposed the contemplated restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine. AJC spokesmen joined in protest delegations to Sir Ronald Lindsay, British Ambassador to the United States, and to Secretary of State Cordell Hull.

The proposed partition plan was likewise opposed. As Sol M. Stroock, chairman of AJC's Executive Committee, explained at the time, "We do not appeal either for or against the establishment of a Jewish State. We seek . . . the protection of the rights of Jews, including their right to settle and live peacefully in Palestine. . . ."

The Peel Commission's partition plan was ultimately dropped by the British Government, but another White Paper, issued in May 1939, was even more restrictive. It limited total Jewish immigration to 75,000 during the following five years, with subsequent immigration possible only by Arab consent. It severely restricted land purchases, and provided for eventual self-government under conditions that would freeze the Jewish population as a permanent minority of one-third of the population.

In July 1939, on the eve of World War II, the world was stunned by the British Government's announcement of a six-month halt of all Jewish immigration, in reprisal for the alleged "illegal" entry of Jews who were fleeing the Nazi terror. The American Jewish Committee joined with the Zionist Organization of America, Hadassah, Mizrachi, Poale Zion and the American Jewish Congress in a cable to Prime Minister Neville

Chamberlain, appealing "to the English people and their government to avert this punitive action against the innocent victims of an unparalleled persecution."

As German war victories extended nazism's rule, the need of a haven became daily more acute. The tiny groups of refugees who managed to escape Nazi torture and murder waited on the shores of Europe. But all doors were closed.

The Search for Political Solutions

In the spring of 1941, Dr. Weizmann approached AJC leaders unofficially to consider the reconstitution of the Jewish Agency and to revive its nonpartisan character, which had disappeared with the appointment of outspoken Zionists to some of the European "non-Zionist" seats in the Agency. Negotiations began between Zionists and non-Zionists.

In May 1942, while these discussions were under way, a conference of some 600 Zionist delegates from all parts of the United States was held at the Biltmore Hotel in New York. The conference urged

that the gates of Palestine be opened; that the Jewish Agency be vested with control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for upbuilding the country, including the development of its unoccupied and uncultivated lands; and that Palestine be established as a Jewish commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world.

This final clause of the Biltmore Program, which set as the Zionist goal the immediate establishment of a "Jewish commonwealth" to encompass all of Palestine — although Jews constituted only one-third of the country's population — was regarded by many in the American Jewish community as contrary to democratic principles. The timing of this demand, at the height of the war, was also considered by some to be unwise and unrealistic. The program thus became the subject of intense and heated discussions during the following months.

In January 1943, the American Jewish Committee adopted a "Statement of Views on the Present Situation in Jewish Life," a basic declaration of policy. With regard to Palestine, the State-

ment favored continued development of Jewish settlement, but urged that no rigid formula for Palestine's ultimate future be adopted at the time. It affirmed "our deep sympathy with and our desire to cooperate with those Jews who wish to settle in Palestine," backed "the policy of friendship and cooperation between Jews and Arabs in Palestine," and approved for Palestine "an international trusteeship."¹

Advocacy of a provisional international trusteeship reflected the Committee's hope that, under a disinterested and progressive administration, Jewish immigration and settlement as envisaged in the Balfour Declaration would be guaranteed, physical security of Jews would be protected, and development of a harmonious political relationship between the Jewish and Arab communities would be encouraged. Moreover, trusteeship was to be replaced "within a reasonable period of years" by a "self-governing commonwealth."

Some AJC members who disagreed with the Committee's pragmatic stand and wanted it to adopt a position of categorical opposition to the eventual establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine, left to join the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, established in April 1943. At the same time, a few of the Zionists in the AJC resigned because of the Committee's refusal to endorse the entire Biltmore Program.

At the end of August 1943, more than 60 national organizations and many local communities sent representatives to a meeting of the American Jewish Conference, called to consider problems arising from the war. AJC's delegates were its president, Judge Joseph M. Proskauer, Executive Committee Chairman Jacob Blaustein and Fred Lazarus, Jr., member of the Executive Committee.

In presenting the AJC's position, Judge Proskauer called on the assembled delegates not to seek mere formal unity, but to explore the areas on which all were agreed so that a common program could be submitted, at the war's end, to the international architects of peace. He proposed that the Conference unite in demanding that the Allied nations provide help for the millions

¹ See Appendix for text.

of victims of Axis barbarism, and that there be "a complete restoration of the equal civil and religious rights of the Jews." In Palestine, said Judge Proskauer, "we rejoice to know that there are today, 600,000 Jewish people living under their own vine and fig tree," and he indicated that the American Jewish Committee did not rule out the eventual establishment of a Jewish state there.

However, it soon became evident that the Zionist organizations, thanks to a complicated electoral machinery, had gained complete control of the Conference and were pledged in advance to push through a Zionist program. Their resolutions, adopted on September 1, reiterated the Biltmore Program and called for an immediate Jewish sovereign state in all of Palestine. The AJC opposed these resolutions and several other groups abstained.

In October 1943, the AJC withdrew from the Conference, making clear, however, that it would continue "to exert our most diligent efforts" to seek the abrogation of the White Paper and the opening of the doors of Palestine to Jewish immigration. It recommended "that all Jews should concentrate" on attaining these vital immediate objectives "rather than on debates regarding ultimate political aspirations."

A few months later, in accordance with its pledge, the American Jewish Committee presented a memorandum to Viscount Halifax, British Ambassador to the United States, urging repeal of the Palestine White Paper of 1939, as contrary to the spirit and letter of the Balfour Declaration and the mandate: "The American Jewish Committee has from the beginning supported the Balfour Declaration as the legal sanction for the creation of a homeland for Jews within Palestine. . . . It seeks today the safeguarding of the Jewish settlement in, and Jewish immigration into Palestine. . . . It specially pleads for the abrogation of the White Paper which discriminates against Jews as such."

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THE QUEST FOR A WORKABLE FORMULA

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WITH the war's end, the unbelievable horror of the murder of six million Jews became known to a shocked world. The pitifully few survivors of the death camps streamed into the displaced persons camps in Western Europe. In 1946, when there was grave danger that the United States would close its occupation zone in Germany to additional refugees from Eastern Europe, representatives of Jewish organizations under the chairmanship of Jacob Blaustein received assurances from the State Department and the Army that the borders would remain open. But where were the displaced persons finally to go?

In June 1945, President Truman instructed Earl G. Harrison, dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School and American representative on the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, to investigate the condition of the non-repatriable displaced persons, many of whom were Jews, and to determine where they would prefer to go. Reporting to the President in September, Dean Harrison wrote that "Palestine is definitely and pre-eminently the first choice" of the Jewish refugees. He endorsed the Jewish Agency's request that the British Government make 100,000 Palestine entry permits available. During this period, Judge Proskauer and Jacob Blaustein visited President Truman and corresponded with Secretary of State James F. Byrnes to detail the need for admitting 100,000 Jewish refugees into Palestine.

President Truman wrote to British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, citing the Harrison report and informing him that "the American people, as a whole, firmly believe that immigration into Palestine should not be closed and that a reasonable number of Europe's persecuted Jews should, in accordance with their

wishes, be permitted to resettle there." Following discussions between the British and American Governments, it was announced on November 13, 1945 that an Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry would be set up to study and report on the Palestine question and the situation of Jews in Europe.

Mr. Blaustein and Dr. John Slawson, AJC executive vice-president, conferred with Secretary of State Byrnes a few days thereafter and strongly urged that the appointment of the Committee of Inquiry "in no way preclude or delay the granting of President Truman's request for the admission of 100,000 displaced Jews into Palestine." They also suggested that possibilities of immigration to other countries be considered, and that the United States share the responsibility by offering immigration opportunities to the European refugees.

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry

The Anglo-American Committee, consisting of six Britons and six Americans, began hearings in January 1946. It heard a wide range of viewpoints — including those of the Arabs, who opposed any change in the status quo, and of the Jews, who were unanimous in favoring sizable immigration but differed on eventual political solutions.

Testifying on behalf of the American Jewish Committee, Judge Proskauer stressed the urgent human problem of the displaced persons. "Your immediate task," he declared, "is not to wait while you are determining what shall happen in Palestine in the ultimate; not to stand by while you complete the investigation of other, more obscure and difficult questions . . . but to take these human beings immediately out of the misery in which they find themselves."

Judge Proskauer pointed out that "the only place those people can go immediately is Palestine." He urged abolition of the White Paper of 1939 and prompt admission of 100,000 Jewish survivors into Palestine ". . . where there is already created the basis of a life in which they can make themselves an integral part. . . ." He also called for acceptance by other countries of substantial numbers of displaced persons, and the establishment

of a temporary trusteeship in Palestine under the administration of the United Nations "to prepare that country for ultimate democratic self-government."

In April 1946, the Anglo-American Committee issued its report, unanimously recommending the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish victims of Nazi persecution into Palestine, creation of a United Nations trusteeship, and eventual establishment of a self-governing state "which guards the rights and interests of Moslems, Jews and Christians alike and accords to the inhabitants as a whole the fullest measure of self-government."

The American Jewish Committee wired President Truman urging him to use his influence with the British Government for "the immediate and unconditional transfer" of the refugees to Palestine. Telegrams were sent at the same time from the American Jewish Conference and the American Zionist Emergency Council. AJC leaders continued close contact on this subject with high officials in Washington.

President Truman promptly endorsed the Anglo-American Committee's report. But, against a background of Arab threats and campaigns of terror mounted by both Arab and Jewish extremists in Palestine, the British refused to implement the report pending a political settlement and assurances of American financial and military support.

In another effort to break the impasse, President Truman in June 1946 appointed the Secretaries of State, War and Treasury to a Cabinet Committee on Palestine and Related Problems. Alternate members of this committee, headed by Henry F. Grady, a prominent businessman, went to England to explore the problem further with a similar group appointed by the British Cabinet under the chairmanship of Herbert Morrison, Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. Blaustein and Dr. Slawson met with Mr. Grady and other members of the Cabinet Committee shortly before their departure for London. The AJC representatives stressed that the continued refusal of the British Government to permit the immigration of Jewish displaced persons, as recommended by the Anglo-American Committee, was greatly weakening the influence of moderate elements in the Jewish community of Palestine.

Meanwhile, refugees continued to stream "illegally" toward Palestine, and Britain forcibly diverted their ships to Cyprus, where they were once again interned.

Within a short time, the Anglo-American Cabinet Committee issued a proposal which became known as the Morrison-Grady Plan, recommending federalization of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish canton or province, each with limited local autonomy. A central British Administration would continue to control defense and foreign relations, and would govern Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and the Negev. Most important, Britain would retain final control over immigration.

The federalization plan satisfied neither the Arabs nor the Jews. It provided no prospect of genuine independence. Moreover, the area allotted to the Jews was even smaller than that of the Jewish state recommended by the Peel Commission nine years earlier, amounting to only some 15 per cent of Palestine.

The American Jewish Committee also found the plan unacceptable, stating it would continue to press for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish refugees and for keeping Palestine's gates open to immigration. Later, President Truman wrote Prime Minister Attlee that he could not support the Morrison-Grady plan.

The Partition Proposal

Britain's refusal to grant 100,000 entry certificates and the desperate plight of the Jewish refugees in Europe and Cyprus added to the pressure on the Jewish Agency to find a compromise. In August 1946, a moderate wing within the Agency, including Dr. Weizmann and Dr. Nahum Goldmann, prevailed upon its Executive to accept a partition plan which provided for "further reduction of the area of the Jewish National Home" in exchange "for the establishment of a viable Jewish state in an adequate area of Palestine." This plan envisaged creation of two states — one with a Jewish majority and the other with an Arab majority — each controlling its own immigration policy and guaranteeing equal rights to Moslems, Christians and Jews.

Though certain important Jewish Agency and Zionist leaders still opposed partition, Dr. Goldmann was asked by the Execu-

tive of the Jewish Agency to go to Washington to explore whether the American Government would support such a plan. Dr. Goldmann conferred with Judge Proskauer, and the two men met with Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson. The Secretary's immediate personal reaction to partition, as Judge Proskauer reported later, was favorable. Judge Proskauer then discussed the question with Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson who also agreed that partition was the only feasible course, and welcomed the American Jewish Committee's support of this plan.

Noting that partition, which he himself considered "the most promising, if not the only means of throwing open the gates of Palestine," was now favored by our Government, Judge Proskauer, in a statement to the press on August 20, outlined the main features of the Jewish Agency's plan and expressed his confidence in the Agency's assurances as to the democratic character of the future state. He concluded with a call for wholehearted cooperation by "all friends of Palestine," whether Zionist or non-Zionist, to aid the Jewish Agency "in the discharge of its grave responsibility."

In the course of Judge Proskauer's discussions with U.S. Government officials, he communicated regularly with Jacob Blaustein and Dr. John Slawson in New York, and later with Mr. Blaustein in Paris, where an American Jewish Committee delegation was meeting in connection with the allied peace conference with former Nazi satellite states. (The AJC delegation met with representatives of other major Jewish organizations to develop joint recommendations to the allied statesmen at the conference for the protection of Jewish rights within the framework of the peace treaties.)

While in Paris, Mr. Blaustein conferred with David Ben-Gurion, then chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, who was not pleased with the concept of partition and still wanted a state encompassing all of Palestine. Mr. Blaustein stressed that Mr. Ben-Gurion's goal was impossible and urged him to accept a partition plan.

The American Jewish Committee delegation also conferred with other Agency leaders in Paris and London, and with officials

of various other Jewish organizations, recommending acceptance of partition.

On September 15, 1946, the AJC's Executive Committee received Mr. Blaustein's report on the DP camps in Germany—which he had just surveyed with Judge Phillip Forman, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, and Rabbi Stephen Wise at the invitation of General Joseph T. McNarney, Commander of the United States occupation forces in Europe. Mr. Blaustein said:

At each of them, the displaced Jews by the hundreds would follow us, crowd around us and talk with us, eagerly searching for some word of improvement of their condition and some word of hope as to when they would be moved to a permanent country of residence. For anyone who has seen these people and the camps with his own eyes the conviction is inescapable that, from a humanitarian standpoint, there rests upon the governments of the world a responsibility, and upon us more-fortunately situated Jews a moral obligation, to do everything in our power — without trifling unduly about ideologies — to have the gates of Palestine and other countries opened at the earliest possible moment.¹

Both Judge Proskauer and Mr. Blaustein pointed out that the Agency's partition plan "would in no way contravene the democratic principles for which the American Jewish Committee has always stood," and Mr. Blaustein stressed that the territory to be assigned to the new Jewish state already possessed a preponderantly Jewish population, while those areas containing an Arab majority would be assigned to a sovereign Arab state.

The Executive Committee approved support of the partition plan, gave the AJC's officers broad discretion "to do all things reasonable and necessary to arrive at the best possible settlement" of the Palestine problem, and endorsed continued cooperation with the Jewish Agency and other interested groups.

At its annual meeting in January 1947, the Committee again called on Britain to solve the problem of government in Palestine and demanded that it abrogate the White Paper and fulfill its obligation under the mandate "to facilitate Jewish immigration into Palestine."

¹Fortieth Annual Report, *American Jewish Committee*, 1946, p. 71.

The United Nations Approves Partition

As the struggle for partition gathered momentum, the Committee established a close working relationship with the Jewish Agency at the UN. It was agreed that the Agency would take no major steps without prior consultation with the AJC and certain other non-Zionist organizations. As a result, the Committee succeeded to some extent in modifying extreme attitudes, and in turn was of material assistance in interpreting the Agency's point of view to our Government.

Tension in Palestine continued to mount and, in April 1947, the British Government called for a special session of the United Nations General Assembly to consider the problem. On May 15, 1947, the Assembly set up a United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to examine all aspects of the situation and submit recommendations.

The American Jewish Committee submitted a brief to UNSCOP pointing out that while, in theory, an international trusteeship for a number of years was a possible alternative, this solution was rendered impracticable by the widespread desire for rapid independence, among the Arabs no less than among the Jews. Therefore, the Committee contended, partition was the only answer — "the only one that does not turn over Palestine completely to undeserved Arab domination."

The UNSCOP report, issued at the end of August against a background of mounting tension and increasing violence in Palestine, unanimously recommended that the mandate be ended as soon as possible and independence granted. However, the UNSCOP members were split on the type of state to be created. The majority proposed partition into Arab and Jewish states, with the city of Jerusalem under an international trusteeship. The minority called for a federal organization with subsidiary Arab and Jewish states possessing only limited autonomy.

The AJC telegraphed Secretary of State George C. Marshall, urging that our Government endorse the majority proposal. In October 1947, the United States delegation to the UN expressed support of partition. On November 29, the UN General Assembly, by a vote of 33 to 13, approved the partition plan.

The struggle was not yet over. In a sense it had just begun. In the following months, acts of violence by armed bands of Arabs, including many from neighboring states, were committed with increasing frequency. In an attempt at amelioration, our State Department announced that it would temporarily stop licensing all arms shipments to the Middle East. However, since Britain continued to supply arms to Transjordan and other Arab states under its treaty arrangements with them, the embargo's effect was to deprive Palestine's Jews of legal means of obtaining arms in the United States in order to defend themselves.

In February 1948, the Committee presented a memorandum to President Truman asking that the embargo be lifted. The AJC also asked our Government to take the lead in securing a declaration by the UN Security Council that Arab threats and attempts to alter the partition decision by force constituted a threat to the peace and an act of aggression. The AJC urged the establishment of a UN constabulary and military force "sufficient to maintain order in Palestine and repel external aggression."

As violence continued in Palestine, our Government began to have second thoughts on the advisability of partition. Even President Truman, who was among its staunchest supporters, indicated that it might be better to defer partition "temporarily." Consequently, in March 1948, the United States delegation called for a special session of the UN General Assembly to consider the establishment of a UN trusteeship for an indefinite period.

The AJC expressed its "keen regret at the modification of our Government's position regarding Palestine," and declared that failure to support the UN partition resolution "has resulted in a loss of international prestige by the United States and has been a blow to the United Nations." Recalling that the decision for partition "was arrived at by our Government and the Assembly of the UN on its merits," the Committee saw nothing to indicate that partition could adversely affect "the security of the United States, which we, together with all other American citizens, will always regard as paramount."

The Committee further noted "that the Arabs threatened violence, and subsequently have employed violence, to defeat the

implementation of the Assembly resolution." While "we quite understand and applaud the desire for peaceful solution," the United Nations "cannot with dignity and safety be put in the position of arriving at a decision and then submitting to internal and external violence in Palestine to thwart it."

The AJC therefore again urged our Government to press for firm action by the Security Council to discharge its obligations under the UN Chârter and to "summarily put an end to the invasion of Palestine by Arab countries and restore order within Palestine."

The discussions concerning a temporary trusteeship were quickly outdistanced by events. The British completed their withdrawal, the Jewish National Council in Tel Aviv proclaimed the independent "State of Israel" on May 14, 1948, and the mandate formally came to an end at midnight, Palestine time, May 14-15. Eleven minutes later the White House issued the following statement to the press:

This Government has been informed that a Jewish state has been proclaimed in Palestine and recognition has been requested by the Provisional Government thereof. The United States recognizes the Provisional Government as the *de facto* authority of the new State of Israel.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL IS BORN

ON April 17, 1948, the UN Security Council had adopted a resolution calling on Arabs and Jews in Palestine to "cease all activities of a military or para-military nature," including "acts of violence, terrorism and sabotage," and further called upon foreign governments "and particularly those of the countries neighboring Palestine" to take effective measures to prevent "the entry into Palestine of armed bands and fighting personnel, groups and individuals and weapons and war materials."

Yet within hours after the formal proclamation of the State of Israel, the regular armed forces of Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, together with token forces from Saudi Arabia, launched a full-scale invasion. Jerusalem, which had been cut off as a result of the earlier irregular attacks, was now besieged and threatened on all sides.

Hailing President Truman's immediate *de facto* recognition of Israel, the AJC again urged our Government "and every other democratic nation to see to it that the Security Council forthwith brings into action" its full powers to halt Arab aggression and restore peace.

Throughout this period, AJC leaders worked intensively with our Government officials and representatives of Israel to obtain a general truce and particularly to effect a cease-fire in Jerusalem, where the Jewish population was faced with starvation and eventual massacre.

In September 1948, Mr. Blaustein visited President Truman, urging him to confer *de jure* recognition and grant an early loan to Israel. Mr. Blaustein also asked that our Government seek to have the Arabs negotiate direct peace settlements with Israel, and that our delegation to the United Nations support Israel's application for membership.

The following month, the AJC expressed to our State Department its strong opposition to the proposal of Count Folke Bernadotte, UN Mediator for Palestine, to exclude the Negev from the Jewish State.

Following seven months of struggle against overwhelming odds, Israel repulsed the Arab armies. During the first half of 1949, separate General Armistice Agreements were concluded between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

Independence naturally brought with it a change in the political objectives of Israel's leaders. Before 1948, the emphasis had been on obtaining unrestricted immigration and liberal land policies; now Israel was in a position to decide these questions independently. The major new objectives were international recognition, military security and the upbuilding of a viable economy.

Israel's independence also introduced a new factor in the relations between the Jews of that land, now citizens of a sovereign state, and Jewish citizens of other nations. "We Jews in America," the AJC stated, "must entertain for this government the warmest feeling of fraternity and extend to it unmistakable evidence of goodwill. But politically, we have not and cannot have any attachment to the Government of Israel. We are brethren of the citizens of Israel. We are citizens of America alone."

The American Jewish Committee expressed its position on the new relationship in a "Statement of Views" adopted at its annual meeting in January 1949:

We hold the establishment of the State of Israel to be an event of historic significance. We applaud its recognition by our own and other governments. We look forward to Israel's assumption of its full place among the family of nations as a government guaranteeing complete equality to all its inhabitants. . . . Citizens of the United States are Americans and citizens of Israel are Israelis. . . . Within the framework of American interests, we shall aid in the upbuilding of Israel as a vital spiritual and cultural center and in the development of its capacity to provide a free and dignified life for those who desire to make it their home.¹

¹ See Appendix for text.

In keeping with this concept, the Committee continued to urge *de jure* recognition of Israel by the United States and American support for Israel's admission to the United Nations. On January 31, 1949, our Government announced *de jure* recognition. On May 11, 1949, Israel was voted to membership in the UN.

On another front, there was danger in 1949 that Iran would close its borders to Jews emigrating to Israel from Iraq through Iran. Jacob Blaustein, newly elected president of the American Jewish Committee, conferred with the Shah of Iran, who agreed to keep this escape route open. Mr. Blaustein also conferred with Assistant Secretary of State George McGhee in 1951, and urged him to bring the State Department's influence to bear upon Iraq to extend the deadline for the emigration of Iraq's Jews to Israel. The deadline was extended.

The New Zionist Role

With the creation of the State of Israel, a reappraisal of the Zionist movement's methods and objectives was to be expected. Many persons felt that Zionism had achieved its goal and there was no further justification for continuing the movement. Mr. Ben-Gurion himself declared that he no longer considered himself a Zionist, that indeed the term had lost its meaning now that Israel had been established. As for American Zionists who planned to remain in the United States, the Prime Minister indicated that he saw no distinction between these individuals and other friends of Israel who had never adopted Zionist ideology.

Nevertheless, leaders of the World Zionist Organization continued to press for legislation by Israel to confer special status upon the WZO. Such recognition, they felt, would give renewed prestige to the Zionist movement and revitalize its standing among Jewish communities throughout the world.

Mr. Blaustein, speaking for the American Jewish Committee, immediately communicated to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion its objection to this proposal, pointing out that Israel's recognition of one group to represent Jews in other countries would be harmful both to Israel and to Jewish communal life in those countries.

In January 1952, a bill was submitted to the Knesset embodying the demands of the Zionists for special status. The AJC promptly registered its views with Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, objecting to the bill's designation of the World Zionist Organization as "the representative of the Jewish people," with exclusive rights to organize Jewish activities on behalf of Israel throughout the world. The arguments advanced by the AJC were given serious consideration by the Israel Government. While the bill was still in committee, Mr. Ben-Gurion recommended that it be tabled.

In November 1952, a law was adopted which fell far short of the Zionists' request. The World Zionist Organization-Jewish Agency was designated as the "authorized agency" *within Israel* for immigration, development and settlement programs. But it was granted no special status outside of Israel; nor was it recognized as the representative of Jews in other lands.

Economic Assistance

The American Jewish Committee repeatedly drew our Government's attention to the importance of giving economic and technical aid to the new democracy in the Middle East. Thus Mr. Blaustein, as previously noted, visited President Truman soon after Israel's recognition by the U.S., to explore the possibility of an initial loan. In the spring of 1949, the AJC expressed its gratification at an Export-Import Bank loan of \$100 million for the development of Israel's agriculture, industry, housing and communications facilities.

In the fall of 1950, Mr. Blaustein again conferred at the White House and, at President Truman's suggestion, with leading American officials of the State Department, the Export-Import Bank, and other Government departments, to explain the pressing needs that the mass Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe and the Moslem countries imposed upon Israel's economy. An additional loan of \$35 million for the development of agriculture was granted in January 1951.

In further contacts with President Truman and the State Department during 1950, 1951 and 1952, and with President Eisenhower in 1953 and thereafter, Mr. Blaustein stressed the

importance of Israel as a stabilizing factor in the Middle East and its potential role in the West's defense planning for the region. He pointed out that helping Israel cope with economic needs should be viewed not as philanthropy, but rather as a policy that would further U.S. interests in the Middle East. He also explored the possibility of assistance within the framework of our Point Four and other aid programs.

Our Government authorized a grant-in-aid to Israel of \$63,500,000 for the fiscal year ending June 1952, and an additional grant of \$70,288,000 the following year. These grants and loans—which, by 1963, had totaled \$879 million—aided in the absorption of new immigrants and in the development of Israel's resources. United States assistance thus figured substantially in establishing Israel's economy on a firm basis.

The American Jewish Committee also played a leading role on another crucial economic front—the complex negotiations with the Federal Republic of Germany on behalf of both the State of Israel and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, to secure financial settlements for the rehabilitation of the surviving victims of Nazi persecution. Mr. Blaustein has been the Senior Vice-President of the Claims Conference from the outset.

As a result of Mr. Blaustein's discussions with President Truman, important State Department officials and U.S. High Commissioner for Germany John J. McCloy, the Committee was also instrumental in securing support from the United States Government for the objectives of the Claims Conference.

Between 1952, when the reparations negotiations were concluded, and January 1964, Israel had received goods and services valued at about \$773 million from the West German Government. In addition, West German payments to individual victims of nazism are currently bringing more than \$100 million a year to persons living in Israel. The overall program for compensation to individuals will cost West Germany more than \$3 billion.

THE SEARCH FOR MIDDLE EAST STABILITY

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SOON after the armistice agreements in 1949 between Israel and the neighboring Arab states, the Committee suggested that our Government join with the other Great Powers in efforts to promote peace and prevent any renewal of aggression in the Middle East. In his discussions with President Truman, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson and State Department officials, Mr. Blaustein asked that the Western powers recognize Israel's need to purchase arms for internal security and defense; that they coordinate their arms shipments to the region to avoid a new arms race; and that they publicly declare their intention of preserving the existing frontiers.

The AJC was gratified when, in May 1950, our Government, Great Britain and France issued a joint declaration that "the Arab states and Israel all need to maintain a certain level of armed forces," that an arms race should be prevented, and that they would not furnish arms to any country in the region unless assured "that the purchasing state does not intend to undertake any act of aggression against any other state."

In this Tripartite Declaration, the Western powers also declared "their unalterable opposition to the use of force or threat of force" by any state in the region. The three governments supported the maintenance of the Israel-Arab armistice agreements by pledging that if "any of these states was preparing to violate frontiers or armistice lines," they would "immediately take action, both within and outside the United Nations, to prevent such violation."

At this time the Committee was occupied with a succession of other problems emanating from the Middle East, ranging from the increase of pro-Arab propaganda in the U.S. — which was

the subject of day-by-day scrutiny — to the dislocations caused by Egypt's continued barring of the Suez Canal to Israel-bound shipping.

In June 1951, at the suggestion of Assistant Secretary of State McGhee, Mr. Blaustein conferred with the Egyptian Ambassador to the United States on possible steps to promote stability. In November he met with President Truman and Mr. McGhee concerning Western plans for a Middle East defense command and, frequently, in subsequent years, with UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, to discuss the role of the United Nations in furthering peace and regional cooperation in the Middle East.

New Crises

During the summer of 1953, relations between Israel and the neighboring Arab states began to deteriorate rapidly, and border incidents multiplied. In August, three Israeli soldiers were ambushed by Jordanians; and, by early October, eight Israeli civilians, including a mother and two infants, had been murdered in attacks on border settlements.

On October 14, an Israeli force crossed into Jordan territory, attacking the village of Kibya, and in the words of the UN Armistice Commission, "using automatic weapons and explosives, blew up 41 dwellings, resulting in the cold-blooded murder of 42 persons, including men, women and children, and the wounding of 15 more."

The Israeli retaliatory raid led to sharp notes of protest by the Western powers and to a strong condemnation of Israel by the UN Security Council. Israeli officials and press termed the stand of the Great Powers "one-sided" and "hypocritical," inasmuch as there was no similarly sharp denunciation of earlier Arab attacks, which had been clearly of a planned military nature. The Israel Government said that since May 1950, when the three Western powers had guaranteed the armistice agreements, 421 Israelis had been killed or wounded in 866 armed attacks.

The American Jewish Committee condemned "recent acts of violence on both sides of the Israel-Jordan frontier in which

innocent people have lost their lives." The Committee declared that "Repeated attacks on Israeli settlements may explain the Kibya incident, but cannot justify it. Violence and bloodshed should be condemned, whether by Arabs or Israelis."

The Committee noted the failure of the United Nations to carry out its peacekeeping role in the region, and found it "particularly regrettable" that the U.S., Britain and France "have not fulfilled the special responsibility expressly assumed by them in the Tripartite Declaration of 1950 for the maintenance of peace in this area." The AJC pointed out that "prompt and vigorous action to compel compliance with the provisions of existing armistice agreements could have prevented this needless bloodshed." It urged that the UN machinery be fully utilized.

Among the factors fanning new outbreaks were the sending of specially trained commando forces from Egypt and Jordan on raids into Israel, recurrent Syrian firing upon Israeli irrigation projects and fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, retaliatory action by Israeli forces, increased Arab boycott activities, and the tightening Egyptian blockade of Israeli and Israel-bound shipping both through the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba.

During this period, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles sought to weld the "northern tier" of Middle East states into a defensive alliance against communism on the model of NATO. The new American policy resulted in the conclusion of a U.S. military assistance agreement with Iraq in April 1954.

American Middle East defense policy led in 1955 to the entry of Iraq, Turkey, Britain, Iran and Pakistan into the Middle East Treaty Organization (Baghdad Pact), and was accompanied by energetic efforts to win the support and adherence of other Arab states. Israel was excluded from membership and Israeli requests for arms from the United States were refused.

Throughout this critical period the AJC maintained close contact with our Government officials, Israeli representatives in the United States, and American civic leaders. Messrs. Blaustein and Irving M. Engel, who was elected AJC president in 1954, each met several times with Secretary of State Dulles and had frequent consultations with Assistant Secretary Henry A. Byroade, his successor, George V. Allen, and other State Depart-

ment officials. Talks were also held with the U.S. Ambassador to Israel and Israeli Ambassador Abba Eban.

In addition, the American Jewish Committee frequently made public its recommendations regarding United States policy toward the Middle East. In January 1954, and again in May, the AJC called on the United States to intensify its efforts to reduce Arab-Israel tensions and bring about a lasting peace. The AJC endorsed American steps to encourage regional cooperation for development of water and other resources, and supported continuation of economic assistance to the entire Middle East. The Committee strongly opposed the reported U.S. plans to supply arms to the Arab states, declaring that military aid to any nation "which has not shown a genuine desire to live at peace with its neighbors" would defeat American interest in peace and stability.

In April 1954, following an emergency meeting of AJC officers, AJC President Engel made public a telegram to Secretary of State Dulles. Declaring that tensions had mounted to the point that "guerrilla warfare virtually exists" between the Arab states and Israel, the message called attention to the "shocking" and "deplorable" series of ambushes, massacres and retaliatory raids that had been taking an ever-increasing toll of innocent lives on both sides.

Charging that the Communist world sought to keep the Middle East in turmoil, and noting that "the Soviet Union's deliberate use of its veto power to block constructive action" had rendered the Security Council impotent, the AJC deemed it essential for our Government to take "prompt and vigorous action to compel compliance with the existing armistice agreements."

In the following months, American and British arms shipments to the Arab states accelerated. On October 24, the AJC stated that "if arms are to be furnished, then each of the countries of the Near East, including Israel, should be dealt with without discrimination in accordance with its willingness to contribute to the common defense of the region without creating an imbalance of arms in the area."

In January 1955, the Committee called for "firmer guarantees of the territorial integrity of the area," and in May, it urged

“positive and decisive action” by the United States and the United Nations to restore peace in the Middle East, and asked the U.S. Government not to supply arms to the region, “and certainly not to the Arab states to the exclusion of Israel as is being done at the present time.”

The Dulles Statement*

Finally, on August 26, 1955, Secretary of State Dulles made a major policy statement, setting forth proposals concerning the Arab refugee problem, regional development, definition of boundaries and security guarantees. He declared in the name of President Eisenhower that the United States would grant a large loan to Israel to help it compensate the Arab refugees and enable them “through resettlement and — to such an extent as may be feasible — repatriation” to resume “a life of dignity and self-respect.” The United States, he declared, was also willing to “contribute to the realization of water development and irrigation projects which would, directly or indirectly, facilitate the resettlement of the refugees.”

Realizing that mutual fear and suspicion were building continued tension, Mr. Dulles announced that “given a solution of other related problems,” the President “would 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 between Israel and its Arab neighbors.” He hoped that other countries would join in such a security guarantee and that it would receive UN sponsorship.

A few months later, the Soviet Union concluded a massive arms supply agreement with Egypt and a similar arrangement with Syria via Czechoslovakia. Then, as a rival to the Baghdad Pact, Egypt and Syria concluded a mutual defense pact in which Saudi Arabia and Yemen also joined.

The American Jewish Committee found “notably constructive” Secretary Dulles’ proposals for economic aid and his support of collective security measures. It pointed out, however, that the Dulles program would require considerable time to reach fruition, while “recent maneuvers of the Soviet Union, and especially the

sale of arms . . . to Egypt, have drastically changed the situation and make swift action essential . . . to defeat the intent of the Kremlin to exploit unrest in the Middle East."

Indicating "that it would be unrealistic and unwise to defer American guarantees until such time as agreement had been reached between Israel and the Arab states on permanent boundaries and the other related problems," as Mr. Dulles suggested, the Committee urged that the security guarantees proposed by the Secretary be offered immediately to all the peoples of the Middle East. The Committee noted that such guarantees were an integral part of American foreign policy and that similar agreements had been concluded with 44 other states.

On January 29, 1956 the AJC warned that tensions in the Middle East were "daily becoming more explosive," and repeated its call for "effective security guarantees." The statement also declared that "the prerequisites of peace include (1) no change of the status quo by either side through force of arms; (2) cessation of any and every aggressive act on the part of any nation; (3) withdrawal of economic boycotts; and (4) elimination of hate propaganda."

On May 12, 1956, the AJC warned that "there is a definite likelihood that war will break out in the area."

Clash at Sinai

The subsequent course of events is still too fresh in memory to require detailed presentation. There was, in effect, a new outbreak of war as Israeli armed forces, at the end of October 1956, occupied the Sinai Peninsula, in order, according to official Israeli statements, to wipe out the bases of Arab commando bands in Sinai and the Gaza Strip, and to free Israeli shipping from Egyptian blockade.

On November 3, the American Jewish Committee wired Secretary of State Dulles, pointing out that the UN-arranged cease-fire provided the United States with "the opportunity to exercise statesmanship," and warning that if the United States allowed a return to the status quo it would restore "the very conditions which have caused bloodshed, misery and turmoil," and would

build up "pressures for a more disastrous war." The Committee declared that "the persistence of Arab refusal to negotiate peace is in itself a breach of agreement, and thus the primary cause of the present crisis," and noted that no sanctions had been imposed upon Egypt for hostile economic measures employed against Israel in "open defiance" of "the express resolution of the United Nations."

The Committee submitted to Mr. Dulles a three-point program for achieving peace in the Middle East:

1. The United States should propose that the UN General Assembly, before recessing, require the Arab States and the State of Israel to enter into direct negotiations for a just and durable peace.
2. Refusal by any nation so to negotiate in good faith for a durable peace should be branded by the United Nations as an act incompatible with the Charter; if deemed necessary, such sanctions shall be invoked as the Charter contemplates against those who disturb the peace of the world.
3. The Treaties so arrived at should be guaranteed, with the United States as one of the guarantors.

On January 17, 1957, the AJC wrote Secretary Dulles asking that the United States recommend UN Emergency Force occupation of the Gaza Strip and the Red Sea areas of the Sinai Peninsula "until a satisfactory agreement is reached."

CONFLICTS OLD AND NEW

IN the aftermath of Sinai and Suez, the position of Jews and other minorities in Egypt was gravely endangered. In April 1957, the American Jewish Committee asked the UN Economic and Social Council and the UN Commission on Human Rights to consider Egypt's "continuing violations of the Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Charter by its discrimination against and persecution of Jews and other persons because of race, religion or national origin." The Committee also appealed to the United States Government to take "prompt and energetic action in behalf of Jewish victims of Egyptian tyranny and persecution" and, to admit to the United States "a reasonable number of refugees from Egypt."

In May, the AJC declared that "the Jews of Egypt are being deprived of their civil rights, their property and their citizenship, and are being ruthlessly driven from their country."

In October, the Committee called upon our Government "to intensify the efforts toward permanent settlement in the Middle East it recommended during the Sinai crisis." In 1958, the Committee reiterated its request that the United States provide "formal assurances of security . . . to all Middle Eastern nations, including Israel, which are willing to accept them and the responsibilities that go with them."

In January 1959, Ralph Friedman, then chairman of the AJC's Foreign Affairs Committee, disclosed that the United Arab Republic was running an "underground railway" from Germany to recruit fugitive, convicted war criminals and Nazi agitators for high propaganda and military positions in Egypt and Syria. Mr. Friedman reported that the Nasser regime had refused "repeated extradition requests from the Government of Germany

for escaped war criminals." The Committee cabled Chancellor Adenauer, urging the West German Government "to devote special attention to the investigation, exposure and eradication of U.A.R. subversive interference."

In April 1960, the Committee noted with concern that "the armaments race in the Middle East continues at an increasing pace," largely as a result of massive military shipments by the Soviet Union to the U.A.R. In October, the AJC once again asked the American Government "to use its good offices to put an end to the armaments race" in the Middle East, and "to encourage contact between Israel and the Arab states, either directly or through the United Nations."

In recent years, the American Jewish Committee has also given intensive consideration to the problem of the Arab refugees, and to Arab boycotts, blockade and discriminatory practices against American Jews.

In April 1957, the AJC called for immediate efforts to encourage and implement plans for humane solutions of the Arab refugee problem, "without awaiting a general settlement of all pending issues." In the summer of 1957, after discussions with Israel's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, an AJC delegation reported: "There is a great desire on the part of Israel to help solve this serious problem, providing the Arab countries evince a willingness to assist in its solution."

In June 1959, UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld issued a report on the Arab refugees, pointing out that "the reintegration of the Palestine refugees into the surrounding economic life of the area is possible only within the context of general economic development." He estimated that the investment of between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion of foreign capital over an initial five-year period would generate a sufficient number of new jobs to absorb the refugees as well as the increasing native labor force of the United Arab Republic, Lebanon and Jordan — principal host countries. Rapid economic development, he concluded, "should lead us to regard the refugee population not as a liability but as an asset for the future."

In November 1959, the American Jewish Committee endorsed the recommendation of the UN Secretary-General and urged

the United States to reaffirm Secretary Dulles' 1955 proposal to provide loans and other financial aid to facilitate a permanent solution.

In April 1960, noting with regret that there was little likelihood that the concrete steps proposed by the UN Secretary-General would be taken in the foreseeable future, the Committee called on

our Government to reiterate its basic beliefs that the Palestine Arab refugee problem can be resolved only in the framework of total Middle Eastern economic and social development, and that evidence of progress in solving the problem by countries in the area is essential to the continuance of American assistance.

Egypt's barring of the Suez Canal to Israeli ships and to other ships bearing Israeli cargoes continued to be of concern to the AJC. Jacob Blaustein held numerous conferences on this subject with the UN Secretary-General, the White House and the State Department. In April 1957, the Committee demanded that "Israel be given equality of rights with all other nations with regard to freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal." In April 1960 the Committee reported that "the blockade of the Suez Canal against Israel has been extended and intensified . . . in defiance of the United Nations and in violation of the reported agreement between UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold and the United Arab Republic." The Committee urged "our Government, through the United Nations and other channels, to explore this flagrant violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter and of international law."

In April 1961, AJC President Herbert B. Ehrmann deplored the fact that our Government had "overlooked" U.A.R. President Nasser's "turning into empty words the sincere assurances of President Eisenhower concerning the use of the Suez Canal."

Violations of American Citizenship Rights *

During the past decade, Arab League boycotts and blockades, directed not only at Israel but also at Jews in the U.S. and other countries, have aroused deep concern.

In May 1956, Committee President Irving M. Engel reported

on Arab measures discriminating against firms owned, managed or staffed by American Jews, preventing American Jews from traveling to certain Arab countries, and restricting the assignment of American Jewish servicemen to U.S. military installations in Saudi Arabia. Concluding that "our Government has been derelict in the defense of the rights of American Jews," Mr. Engel pointed out:

this is not a question of religion, or domestic politics . . . or military strategy. It is fundamentally, inescapably, a moral issue. For America, it is *the* moral issue — does this nation honor its constitutional commitments to all its citizens?

At the same time, the Committee's Executive Board recorded its vigorous objection to the derogation of American citizenship rights by Arab League countries, and called for remedial action by the U.S. Government. In November, the AJC expressed satisfaction with the unanimous resolution of the United States Senate which "restated in unmistakable language the historic policy of our country to protect the integrity of United States citizenship" without distinction of race or religion.

In November 1957, the AJC expressed its "disappointment and distress at the acquiescence of our Government" in Saudi Arabia's exclusion of American soldiers and civilians of the Jewish faith from U.S. installations or private employment by American firms doing business in Saudi Arabia. The Committee called for U.S. action to end "this affront to our country and its citizens."

In April 1960, the Committee pointed out that some U.S. Government agencies had "indirectly cooperated with "Arab discriminatory policies, and asked that our Government "make clear its uncompromising opposition to all forms of discrimination . . . and that all governmental agencies be directed to act accordingly." In April 1961, AJC President Ehrmann devoted a major portion of his presidential address to this subject. In June, James Marshall, an AJC vice-president, testified on behalf of the American Jewish Committee before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, to urge that U.S. loans or grants be "withheld from any country which discriminates against American citizens."

In July 1961, the American Jewish Committee submitted to Secretary of State Dean Rusk a detailed document on the Arab boycott and its effects on the rights of U.S. citizens. The AJC study, *Invasion of American Rights on the Part of Arab League Nations*, concluded that the U.S. Government had "accommodated itself" to discriminatory measures "in contracts for foreign-aid shipments, in personnel assignments to Arab territory," and in various other ways. The AJC report declared:

Foreign countries have no sovereign right to discriminate among American citizens. . . . That any other power should presume to tread on liberties declared inviolate by our Constitution is an assault upon the American people, an invasion of its rights. The dignity of the United States, its status as a champion of universal human rights, demands that this invasion be promptly repelled.

In April 1962, officers of the Committee, including President Louis Caplan, Honorary Presidents Jacob Blaustein and Irving M. Engel, Honorary Vice-President Herbert H. Lehman and Executive Vice-President John Slawson, met with President John F. Kennedy at the White House to discuss Arab League discrimination against U.S. citizens of Jewish faith. They stressed the urgent need for a decisive U.S. stand against this infringement of American citizenship rights.

Recently there has been some relaxation of Arab discrimination against American Jews — largely in response to intensified diplomatic intervention by the U.S. Government and repeated expressions of disapproval by the U.S. Congress, including declarations of principle in foreign-aid bills.

The United States agreement with Saudi Arabia on the Dhahran Air Base, under which the Defense Department deferred to Saudi Arabia's exclusion of Jewish soldiers from that country, expired in April 1962. The following year, when plans were reported for U.S.-Saudi Arabian military training maneuvers, the American Jewish Committee inquired whether any attempt would be made to screen Jewish personnel from the American units. On May 24, 1963, a spokesman for Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara informed the Committee that "units presently scheduled for deployment in Saudi Arabia in connection with this

exercise do include personnel of the Jewish faith." This fact was later publicly confirmed.

In Jordan, the Government for many years required baptismal certificates or other proof that Americans applying for tourist visas were not Jewish. Early in 1963, after quiet diplomatic efforts, the Jordanian Government began to relax its restrictions. Today, while "active Zionists" are still barred, most American Jews receive visas without difficulty.

The Arab Military Build-Up

In May 1963, the Committee called attention to intensified Egyptian efforts to acquire and develop missiles and other sophisticated weapons, and warned of the potentially explosive situation then developing in the Middle East. The AJC called on our Government to implement a five-point program to:

1. Clearly define what it would consider "aggression."
2. Intensify efforts to end the arms race in the area, meanwhile assuring that the balance of arms remains undisturbed.
3. Provide to any state in the region, upon request, a formal guarantee of its independence and integrity.
4. Vigorously discourage the violent hate campaigns against Israel conducted by the Arab states.
5. Reevaluate the present U.S. policy of impartiality toward peaceful nations and those nations pursuing belligerent policies inimical to the peace and stability of the Middle East.

At the same time, the AJC urged the West German Government to utilize "existing legal and administrative means" to prevent its scientists from contributing "to the war potential of the United Arab Republic," and "to seek new means, if necessary, to control such activities." The statement cited "evidence that many of the Germans employed by the UAR are pro-Nazi and have expressed strong anti-democratic and anti-Semitic attitudes."

In June 1963, Jacob Blaustein discussed this situation in separate meetings with Chancellor Adenauer and Finance Minister Ludwig Erhard in Bonn, and was advised that they would urge the Bundestag (Parliament) to adopt legislation enabling the Government to take remedial measures.

At this writing, the Committee is gravely concerned about the present state of relations between Israel and her Arab neighbors. A race to acquire sophisticated weapons heightens the risk of war in the area. Arab proposals to obstruct the Jordan River water project — so essential to the growth and development of Israel's economy — have further exacerbated tensions. The Arab refugee problem still festers and will be a major issue in the UN General Assembly in 1964.

During these eventful years, the American Jewish Committee has sought to keep the American people informed. A variety of pamphlets, fact sheets and background memoranda have been distributed widely to Government officials, opinion leaders and the mass media.¹ The AJC's Committee on Israel, under the chairmanship of Theodore Tannenwald, Jr., will continue to devote itself to these vital problems and to spearhead the search for solutions.

¹ See Appendix for selected list.

PROBLEMS OF A YOUNG DEMOCRACY

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EVER since the State of Israel was established in 1948, the American Jewish Committee has consistently sought to advance that nation's development as a modern democracy. The Committee has spoken frankly when certain Israeli policies or actions have seemed inconsistent with democratic ideals or the interests of Jews in other countries — but always with scrupulous care to avoid intervening in Israel's internal political affairs.

In recent years, problems absorbing the AJC's attention have included the following:

Integration of New Immigrants: The Committee considers it essential that the necessary conditions and facilities be created to provide full social, educational and economic opportunity for the many new immigrants from North Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Only in this way will their formal legal equality become meaningful and will Israel be able to maintain its modern Western institutions and democratic society.

Status of the Arab Minority: The Committee realizes that the continued hostility of the neighboring Arab states poses difficult problems of security. Yet, in line with its belief that Israel has a special responsibility to maintain the highest moral standards, and confident that this can be done in a manner consistent with security needs, the AJC has urged the Israel Government to accord full and equal rights to all individuals and groups within its borders. The Committee is particularly gratified that the areas under military government, in which many Israeli Arabs live, have been greatly reduced, and most of the military-security restrictions eliminated.

Israel's Nationality Law: The AJC has long regarded as undemocratic the preferred legal status given to Jews under the Nationality Law, which provides that a Jewish immigrant automatically acquires Israel citizenship on arrival in Israel, unless he signs a formal declaration refusing it.

While the Committee has always supported the right of full and free immigration for all Jews wishing to go to Israel, it believes this can be ensured without automatic citizenship, which has caused unnecessary misunderstandings.

Relationships Between the Government and Organized Religious Institutions: The AJC has always maintained that freedom of conscience and religious liberty must be upheld in every part of the world. Israel accords these essential rights to its Moslem and Christian communities, which have their own government-recognized clerical institutions and special courts with jurisdiction over such matters of personal status as marriage, divorce and inheritance. With respect to Jews, however, jurisdiction over such questions is vested solely in the Orthodox rabbinate. Thus, in practice, complete legal equality is not available to those Jews who do not wish to accept this authority, either because they are secularists or because they prefer to be affiliated with non-Orthodox bodies.

The AJC recognizes that the present situation is the result of many complex factors — the desire not to offend the Orthodox or break with tradition; the legacy of four centuries of Ottoman rule, with a social order consisting of officially recognized and virtually autonomous religious communities; and the realities of a multi-party political system which includes the Orthodox parties. The AJC has nevertheless pointed out that the monopoly of the Orthodox in matters of personal status tends to deny the free exercise of religion to the non-Orthodox, and that comprehensive civil legislation in accordance with basic democratic principles should be enacted.

In March 1964, the American Jewish Committee and six other national Jewish organizations cabled Israel's Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol, urging him to resist the pressures of Orthodox religious groups in the United States and Israel for legislation

that would abridge religious freedom in Israel. "The overwhelming majority of American Jews support the principles of separation of religion and state and of freedom of religious belief," the cable stated. Pointing out that "in the American Jewish community there are several recognized and acknowledged religious constituencies," the message rejected the claims of certain religious elements "that they and they alone represent the Jewish religious community."

Shortly thereafter, Ralph Friedman, chairman of the Committee's Executive Board, discussed this question further with Prime Minister Eshkol, stressing the AJC's concern for full and free expression of religion in all its aspects, in Israel as elsewhere in the world.

Attitudes of Israeli Youth: It is quite natural for Jewish life to develop its own forms and institutions in each country. Thus, life in Israel will evolve in response to the unique conditions of a state where Jews comprise the majority and play a dominant role in shaping social institutions and values. In this unprecedented situation, the AJC has been anxious lest Israel's youth come to consider their country the totality of Jewish life and become estranged from their fellow Jews in other countries.

The new generation in Israel is urgently concerned about its own identity. The Eichmann trial deeply stirred the country's Jewish youth, bringing a number of questions into sharp focus. What does "being Jewish" mean? What is the relationship of Israel's Jews to Jews of other countries, and of the Jewish past to the present and future? What ties can link Israel with other Jewish communities? How can estrangement be prevented and fruitful interrelationships nurtured?

In December 1963, in cooperation with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the American Jewish Committee announced its sponsorship of a three-year attitude study among the youth of Israel, designed to discover some of the answers to these questions. This research is under independent scientific auspices, jointly directed by Dr. Moshe Davis, head of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University, and Drs. Shimon Herman and Erlin O. Schild, of the University's Department of

Psychology. Maximo Yagupsky, director of the AJC's Israel Office, works closely with the University's officials.

Thoughtful Israelis feel that Israel can develop its full stature, spiritually and culturally, only if it preserves its links with Jewish communities throughout the world. Many of the country's leaders in government and education look to this pioneering study for important guidelines to strengthen understanding between Israelis and Jews in other lands.

AMERICAN JEWS AND ISRAEL

AS noted earlier, the AJC's efforts to help define the relationships between American Jews and Israel go back to the earliest days of the new State. The Committee first sought to clarify this subject in its 1949 Statement of Views. In the spring of that year, when a group of AJC officers, led by President Jacob Blaustein, visited Israel on invitation of Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, they discussed with the Prime Minister the need for a clear understanding that Jews outside Israel owe that country no political allegiance. The AJC leaders urged that Israeli officials speak only as representatives of their own citizens.

Another matter of concern to the AJC was the continued insistence of leading Israeli spokesmen that Jews must emigrate en masse to Israel, and that Jewish survival could never be assured except in a sovereign Jewish state. The Committee emphasized that such statements were prejudicial to the position of Jews in the United States and elsewhere, antagonized some Jews against Israel and provided propaganda for Israel's enemies.

An AJC resolution, adopted in April 1950, rejected the Zionist principle that all Jews must go to Israel, as well as the anti-Zionist viewpoint of such groups as the American Council for Judaism.¹ The resolution declared:

Today, within the American Jewish community, two extreme and divergent points of view are sometimes heard,

¹ In subsequent years, as the position of the American Council for Judaism became increasingly extreme, the AJC, in private discussions with Council leaders, sought to make clear the harmful effects of the Council's public statements on Jews everywhere. These discussions proved fruitless. In January 1957, after an intensive study of Council publications and statements, the AJC issued a fact sheet, *The Nature and Consequences of the Public Relations Activities of the American Council for Judaism*, demonstrating that Council propaganda was used by anti-Semites to bolster hostile attitudes toward Jews.

the one preaching the impossibility of maintaining a free and flourishing Jewish community in America and in countries other than Israel, and the other apparently regarding concrete manifestations of sympathy for Israel as inconsistent with the obligations of American citizenship. Both these extremes are wrong; both underestimate the vitality and diversity of American democracy. Both are unrealistic; both ignore the basic fact that American Jews have the fullest confidence in their life here.

The 1950 Ben-Gurion - Blaustein Clarification Statements

On August 23, 1950, on invitation of Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, Jacob Blaustein again visited Israel, accompanied by Dr. Simon Segal, director of the AJC's Foreign Affairs Department. Following lengthy discussions, the Prime Minister and Mr. Blaustein issued statements expressing their mutual understanding about the relationship of Israel to Jews in the United States and other free countries.

The importance attached to this clarification by the Government of Israel was reflected in the detailed preparation that preceded the Prime Minister's statement. The matter was considered at the Cabinet level, with Eliahu Elath, Israel's first Ambassador to the United States, participating. Both Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's statement and Mr. Blaustein's reply were made public at an official function attended by all high-ranking government officials.

At Mr. Ben-Gurion's suggestion, Mr. Blaustein and Dr. Segal carried both statements to Israel's President, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, then in Switzerland. Dr. Weizmann wholeheartedly concurred in the clarification and authorized that his approval be made public.

Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's Statement

Mr. Ben-Gurion described his and his Government's position as follows:

The Jews of the United States, as a community and as individuals, have only one political attachment and that is to the United States of America. They owe no political allegiance to Israel. In the first statement which the represen-

tative of Israel made before the United Nations after her admission to that international organization, he clearly stated, without any reservation, that the State of Israel represents and speaks only on behalf of its own citizens, and in no way presumes to represent or speak in the name of the Jews who are citizens of any other country. We, the people of Israel, have no desire and no intention to interfere in any way with the internal affairs of Jewish communities abroad. The Government and the people of Israel fully respect the right and integrity of the Jewish communities in other countries to develop their own mode of life and their indigenous social, economic and cultural institutions in accordance with their own needs and aspirations. Any weakening of American Jewry, any disruption of its communal life, any lowering of its status, is a definite loss to Jews everywhere and to Israel in particular.²

Mr. Ben-Gurion explained that Israel's "success or failure depends in large measure on our cooperation with, and on the strength of, the great Jewish community of the United States," and emphasized that "nothing should be said or done which could in the slightest degree undermine the sense of security and stability of American Jewry."

Mr. Blaustein's Statement

In his response, Mr. Blaustein paid tribute to Israel's great progress and expressed his confidence in the new nation's ability to overcome the difficult problems it still faced. Recalling the American Jewish Committee's active support, Mr. Blaustein promised: "We shall do all we can to increase further our share in the great historic task of helping Israel to solve its problems and develop as a free, independent and flourishing democracy."

Mr. Blaustein emphasized, however, that "Israel also has a responsibility in this situation — a responsibility in terms of not affecting adversely the sensibilities of Jews who are citizens of other states by what it says or does." He pointed out that "American Jews vigorously repudiate any suggestion or implication that they are in exile. American Jews — young and old alike, Zionists and non-Zionists alike — are profoundly attached to America."

² See Appendix for full text.

Elaborating further on this point, Mr. Blaustein declared:

To American Jews, America is home. There, exist their thriving roots; there, is the country which they have helped to build; and there, they share its fruits and its destiny. They believe in the future of a democratic society in the United States under which all citizens, irrespective of creed or race, can live on terms of equality. They further believe that, if democracy should fail in America, there would be no future for democracy anywhere in the world, and that the very existence of an independent State of Israel would be problematic. Further, they feel that a world in which it would be possible for Jews to be driven by persecution from America would not be a world safe for Israel either; indeed it is hard to conceive how it would be a world safe for any human being.³

This exchange of views, welcomed by Jews all over the world—and by non-Jews as well — as a much-needed clarification, represented a basic step toward revision of outdated ideological views. It also indicated a realistic acceptance on the part of Israel that Jews everywhere are not a single political unit and that, in Western democracies such as the United States, a thriving and secure Jewish religious, cultural and communal life is possible. Many felt that the authoritative pronouncement by Israel's Prime Minister gave the lie to accusations of "dual allegiance" leveled by Arab propagandists and American anti-Semites. The Ben-Gurion-Blaustein Statements were characterized by UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and the U.S. State Department as historic documents.

Continuing AJC Discussions With Israeli Leaders

In the summer of 1957, a delegation of AJC officers surveying Europe, North Africa and the Middle East met with Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and other Israeli leaders on a variety of issues. These included possible solutions to the Arab refugee problem, the status of Israeli Arabs and other minority groups, religious freedom in Israel and the Nationality Law. Relations between Israel and American Jews once again came up for serious discus-

³ See Appendix for full text.

sion, and Mr. Ben-Gurion reasserted his 1950 position that "the State of Israel represents and speaks only on behalf of its own citizens and in no way represents or speaks on behalf of Jews of any other country."

Although the principles set down in 1950 by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and Mr. Blaustein were clear, as was Mr. Ben-Gurion's reaffirmation in 1957, the controversy about certain aspects of Israel's relations with Jews in other democracies continued nonetheless. In the winter of 1959-1960, for example, following the outbreak of swastika daubings and other anti-Semitic incidents in a number of countries, Israel, in notes to various foreign governments, seemed to assume the role of spokesman for Jews everywhere. Appeals by Israeli leaders for mass emigration of Jews from other lands to Israel were also very disturbing.

Particularly distressing to Jews outside Israel was the Prime Minister's address to the World Zionist Congress in December 1960, in which Mr. Ben-Gurion declared:

Since the day when the Jewish state was established and the gates of Israel were flung open to every Jew who wanted to come, every religious Jew has daily violated the precepts of Judaism and the Torah by remaining in the Diaspora. Whoever dwells outside the land of Israel is considered to have no God, the sages said.

Contrasting Jewish life in Israel with life in other countries where "specifically Jewish life, insofar as it exists, is compressed into a small corner, without roots in the reality surrounding it," Mr. Ben-Gurion concluded that Judaism was in as much danger of extinction in the United States and other free societies as it was in the dictatorships.

"In several totalitarian and Moslem countries," Mr. Ben-Gurion said, "Judaism is in danger of death by strangulation; in the free and prosperous countries it faces death by a kiss — a slow and imperceptible decline into the abyss of assimilation."

The American Jewish Committee immediately pointed out that Mr. Ben-Gurion's speech was "a violation of the explicit understanding" reached with Mr. Blaustein in 1950 and of "the basic spirit of understanding" inherent in the agreement.

Reaffirming the Committee's view that "emigration to Israel must be an act of free choice," the AJC stated that Mr. Ben-Gurion was committing a "grievous error" in attempting to interpret the obligations of Jewish religious belief and practice to Jews throughout the world. Judaism, the AJC declared, "is in fact a flourishing religion which, in democratic countries such as the United States, enjoys equal rights and opportunities with all other religions."

Reaffirmation of the 1950 Agreement in 1961

In view of the serious "doubts as to whether the 1950 agreement still had full validity as far as Mr. Ben-Gurion and the Israel Government are concerned," Mr. Blaustein, now an Honorary President of the AJC, renewed his conversations with the Prime Minister and other Israeli officials in Jerusalem in the spring of 1961. These talks resulted in a joint statement by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and Mr. Blaustein on April 23, 1961, strongly reaffirming "the spirit and the content of the 1950 Agreement."⁴ Before returning to the United States, Mr. Blaustein reviewed this statement with all available members of the Israel Cabinet and received their concurrence.

The new statement "agreed that everything should be done on both sides in order to obviate such misunderstandings in the future, so that it would be entirely clear to everybody concerned that the 1950 Agreement had lost none of its force and validity as far as either side is concerned." Mr. Ben-Gurion, it continued, would "do everything within his power to see to it that the agreement is in future kept in spirit and in letter."

In June 1963, when Prime Minister Ben-Gurion retired from office and was succeeded by Levi Eshkol, Mr. Blaustein wrote to Mr. Ben-Gurion and to the new Prime Minister. To the latter he stated:

You will recall that the last thorough conversation I had with you was in Israel in April 1961, after Ben-Gurion and I had reaffirmed our previous understanding regarding the relationship between Israel and Jews in other

⁴ See Appendix for full text.

countries. I wanted to make sure, before I brought that Statement back to the United States, that you and the other members of the Cabinet were in agreement with it—and I was gratified that you and the others were. I hope, now that you are Prime Minister, you will continue to abide by this understanding.

Mr. Blaustein received written assurances from both leaders that the earlier commitments would continue to be respected.

Prime Minister Eshkol also welcomed Mr. Blaustein's offer of continuing cooperation: "Knowing as I do of all you have done to help Israel over so many years, I attach weight and significance to your readiness to extend to me the helpfulness which always characterized your relationship with Mr. Ben-Gurion.

"As for the understanding between Mr. Ben-Gurion and yourself," the Prime Minister continued: "I well remember our discussion on the matter. You are right when you say that this understanding enjoyed my full support. It continues to do so and will do so in the future."

In November 1963, when Mr. Blaustein was again in Israel at the invitation of Prime Minister Eshkol, these assurances were personally reiterated.

There have been no significant violations of the Ben-Gurion-Blaustein Clarification Statements since the 1961 Reaffirmation, and the American Jewish Committee is convinced that they provide a most useful set of principles for the development of future relations between Israel and the Jews in other free democracies.

The AJC Office in Israel

To meet the growing need for effective communication between Israel and Jews in other parts of the world, the American Jewish Committee established an office in Israel in the fall of 1961. Its goal is to help Israelis increase their knowledge of Western democracy and particularly of America, and to develop a greater understanding within Israel about American Jews and their role in American life.

The American Jewish Committee's Office in Israel, which maintains close contact with Israel Government officials and the U.S. Embassy, has been welcomed and praised by the coun-

try's political and cultural leaders. During its first two years of operation, the Office launched a number of important projects, including the following:

Ammot (Evaluations), a bi-monthly literary magazine of opinion, in Hebrew, is published in cooperation with an independent editorial board of intellectual leaders. It has already gained wide recognition for its thoughtful discussions of cultural and social developments in Israel, contemporary Jewish issues and world affairs.

Tfutsot Israel (Jewish Life Abroad), a monthly press bulletin in Hebrew, provides information about Jewish life throughout the world, with particular emphasis on the activities of American Jewry.

AJC-sponsored discussions have included a series on "The Role of American Jewry Today," "America and Americans in the Eyes of Israel," and "Understanding the American Way of Life," as well as seminars on the attitudes of Israeli youth, the Ecumenical Council, and problems of Jewish-Christian relations. Hundreds of Israelis attend these sessions, which receive broad press and radio coverage. Editors and publishers, university professors, students and political leaders are among the participants.

The AJC's Israel Office also publishes pamphlets and other materials in Hebrew, including translations of various AJC studies and educational reports. It helps prepare texts and radio programs on the nature of American democracy and the role of the Jewish community in the U.S.; and sponsors studies of basic sociological problems.

The AJC and Israel Today

Today, as in the past 16 years, the American Jewish Committee and Israel stand together "in vigilant brotherhood." Perhaps the words that best summarize the Committee's position are to be found in the statement issued after the 1962 visit of an AJC delegation to Israel. In December of that year, a group of Committee officers, headed by President A. M. Sonnabend, were invited by the Israel Government to survey the country's progress and to consult with Government leaders on matters of mutual interest.

At the conclusion of its visit, the delegation declared:

. . . We have been deeply impressed not only with the dynamic and progressive programs being conducted for the betterment of the people but also with Israel's brilliant programs of assistance to the newly emergent African nations. This initiative, as well as Israel's earlier accomplishments in receiving and absorbing hundreds of thousands of immigrants from scores of countries, and simultaneously creating a forward-looking democracy, is a source of deep pride to us as Jews.

While we realize that Israel is still beset by a multitude of problems, both external and domestic, we are convinced by what we have seen that the State will overcome those difficulties and will make a noble contribution to the spiritual development and the morale of Jews everywhere. We also strongly believe that Jews in other countries, especially American Jewry, will do their utmost to continue and increase their cooperation with Israel so that the bridges of understanding will be strengthened through our mutual beneficial influences upon one another.

The American Jewish Committee is pledged, within its means and according to its philosophy, to do everything it can to achieve these objectives. We returned to the United States even more firmly dedicated to this effort.

APPENDIX

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE ENDORSES THE BALFOUR DECLARATION APRIL 28, 1918

The American Jewish Committee was organized primarily to obtain for the Jews in every part of the world civil and religious rights, to protect them against unfavorable discrimination, and to secure for them equality of economic, social and educational opportunity. These will continue to be its objects.

The Committee regards it as axiomatic that the Jews of the United States have here established a permanent home for themselves and their children, have acquired the rights and assumed the correlative duties of American citizenship, and recognize their unqualified allegiance to this country, which they love and cherish and of whose people they constitute an integral part.

This Committee, however, is not unmindful that there are Jews everywhere who, moved by traditional sentiment, yearn for a home in the Holy Land for the Jewish people. This hope, nurtured for centuries, has our wholehearted sympathy. We recognize, however, that but a part of the Jewish people would take up their domicile in Palestine. The greater number will continue to live in the lands of whose citizenship they now form a component part, where they enjoy full civil and religious liberty, and where, as loyal and patriotic citizens, they will maintain and develop the principles and institutions of Judaism.

When, therefore, the British Government recently made the declaration, now supported by the French Government, that "they view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object," the announcement was received by this Committee with profound appreciation.

The conditions annexed to this declaration are regarded as of essential importance, stipulating as they do that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." These conditions correspond fully with the general purposes for which this Committee has striven and with the ideals of the Jews in America.

The opportunity will be welcomed by this Committee to aid in the realization of the British Declaration, under such protectorate or suzerainty as the Peace Congress may determine, and, to that end, to cooperate with those who, attracted by religious or historic association, shall seek to establish in Palestine a center for Judaism, for the stimulation of our faith, for the pursuit of development of literature, science and art in a Jewish environment, and for the rehabilitation of the land.

SECTION ON PALESTINE IN THE
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE'S *STATEMENT OF VIEWS*
JANUARY 31, 1943

We recognize that there are now more than half a million Jews in Palestine who have built up a sound and flourishing economic life and a satisfying spiritual and cultural life, and who now constitute substantially one-third of the population, and that while this Palestinian immigration has been a blessed amelioration of the condition of this large number of Jews, and has helped to bring about a great development of the country itself, settlement in Palestine, although an important factor, cannot alone furnish and should not be expected to furnish the solution of the problem of postwar Jewish rehabilitation.

We affirm our deep sympathy with and our desire to cooperate with those Jews who wish to settle in Palestine.

With respect to the government of Palestine, we recognize wide divergence of opinion and that under existing conditions there should be no preconceived formula at this time as to the permanent political structure which shall obtain there. Since we hold that in the United States as in all other countries Jews, like all others of their citizens, are nationals of those nations and of no other, there can be no political identification of Jews outside of Palestine with whatever government may there be instituted.

We endorse the policy of friendship and cooperation between Jews and Arabs in Palestine and urge that every possible avenue be followed to establish good will and active collaboration between them.

We approve for Palestine an international trusteeship responsible to the United Nations for the following purposes:

(a) To safeguard the Jewish settlement in and Jewish immigration into Palestine and to guarantee adequate scope for future growth and development to the full extent of the economic absorptive capacity of the country.

(b) To safeguard and protect the fundamental rights of all inhabitants.

(c) To safeguard and protect the holy places of all faiths.

(d) To prepare the country to become, within a reasonable period of years, a self-governing Commonwealth under a Constitution and a bill of rights that will safeguard and protect these purposes and basic rights for all.

SECTION ON ISRAEL IN THE
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE'S *STATEMENT OF VIEWS*
JANUARY 23, 1949

We hold the establishment of the State of Israel to be an event of historic significance. We applaud its recognition by our own and other governments. We look forward to Israel's assumption of its full place

among the family of nations as a government guaranteeing complete equality to all its inhabitants, without regard to race, creed or national origin, and as an advocate of liberty and peace in the Near East and throughout the world. Citizens of the United States are Americans and citizens of Israel are Israelis; this we affirm with all its implications; and just as our own government speaks only for its citizens, so Israel speaks only for its citizens. Within the framework of American interests, we shall aid in the upbuilding of Israel as a vital spiritual and cultural center and in the development of its capacity to provide a free and dignified life for those who desire to make it their home.

STATEMENTS BY PRIME MINISTER DAVID BEN-GURION
AND MR. JACOB BLAUSTEIN ON THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN ISRAEL AND AMERICAN JEWS
AUGUST 23, 1950

MR. BEN-GURION:

We are very happy to welcome you here in our midst as a representative of the great Jewry of the United States to whom Israel owes so much. No other community abroad has so great a stake in what has been achieved in this country during the present generation as have the Jews of America. Their material and political support, their warm-hearted and practical idealism, has been one of the principal sources of our strength and our success. In supporting our effort, American Jewry has developed, on a new plane, the noble conception, maintained for more than half a century, of extending its help for the protection of Jewish rights throughout the world and of rendering economic aid wherever it was needed. We are deeply conscious of the help which America has given to us here in our great effort of reconstruction and during our struggle for independence. This great tradition has been continued since the establishment of the State of Israel.

You, Mr. Blaustein, are one of the finest examples of that tradition, and as an American and as a Jew you have made many and significant contributions to the Jewish cause and to the cause of democracy. We are therefore happy on this occasion of your visit here as our guest, to discuss with you matters of mutual interest and to clarify some of the problems which have arisen in regard to the relationship between the people of Israel and the Jewish communities abroad, in particular the Jewish community of the United States.

It is our great pride that our newly gained independence has enabled us in this small country to undertake the major share of the great and urgent task of providing permanent homes under conditions of full equality to hundreds of thousands of our brethren who cannot remain where they are and whose heart is set on rebuilding their lives in Israel. In this great task you and we are engaged in a close partnership. Without the readiness for sacrifice of the people of Israel and without the help of America this urgent task can hardly be achieved.

It is most unfortunate that since our State came into being some confusion and misunderstanding should have arisen as regards the relationship between Israel and the Jewish communities abroad, in particular that of the United States. These misunderstandings are likely to alienate sympathies and create disharmony where friendship and close understanding are of vital necessity. To my mind, the position is perfectly clear. The Jews of the United States, as a community and as individuals, have only one political attachment and that is to the United States of America. They owe no political allegiance to Israel. In the first statement which the representative of Israel made before the United Nations after her admission to that international organization, he clearly stated, without any reservation, that the State of Israel represents and speaks only on behalf of its own citizens and in no way presumes to represent or speak in the name of the Jews who are citizens of any other country. We, the people of Israel, have no desire and no intention to interfere in any way with the internal affairs of Jewish communities abroad. The Government and the people of Israel fully respect the right and integrity of the Jewish communities in other countries to develop their own mode of life and their indigenous social, economic and cultural institutions in accordance with their own needs and aspirations. Any weakening of American Jewry, any disruption of its communal life, any lowering of its sense of security, any diminution of its status, is a definite loss to Jews everywhere and to Israel in particular.

We are happy to know of the deep and growing interest which American Jews of all shades and convictions take in what it has fallen to us to achieve in this country. Were we, God forbid, to fail in what we have undertaken on our own behalf and on behalf of our suffering brethren, that failure would cause grievous pain to Jews everywhere and nowhere more than in your community. Our success or failure depends in a large measure on our cooperation with, and on the strength of, the great Jewish community of the United States, and we, therefore, are anxious that nothing should be said or done which could in the slightest degree undermine the sense of security and stability of American Jewry.

In this connection let me say a word about immigration. We should like to see American Jews come and take part in our effort. We need their technical knowledge, their unrivalled experience, their spirit of enterprise, their bold vision, their "know-how." We need engineers, chemists, builders, work managers and technicians. The tasks which face us in this country are eminently such as would appeal to the American genius for technical development and social progress. But the decision as to whether they wish to come — permanently or temporarily — rests with the free discretion of each American Jew himself. It is entirely a matter of his own volition. We need *halutzim*, pioneers, too. *Halutzim* have come to us — and we believe more will come, not only from those countries where the Jews are oppressed and in "exile" but also from countries where the Jews live a life of freedom and are equal in status to all other citizens in their country. But the essence of *halutzit* is free choice. They will come from among those who believe that their

aspirations as human beings and as Jews can best be fulfilled by life and work in Israel.

I believe I know something of the spirit of American Jewry among whom I lived for some years. I am convinced that it will continue to make a major contribution towards our great effort of reconstruction, and I hope that the talks we have had with you during these last few days will make for even closer cooperation between our two communities.

MR. BLAUSTEIN:

I am very happy, Mr. Prime Minister, to have come here at your invitation and to have discussed with you and other leaders of Israel the various important problems of mutual interest.

This is the second time I have been here since the State of Israel was created. A year and a half ago my colleagues and I, of the American Jewish Committee, saw evidence of the valor that had been displayed, and felt the hopes and aspirations that had inspired the people to win a war against terrific odds. This time, I have witnessed the great achievements that have taken place in the interval and have discussed the plans which point the road upon which the present-day Israel intends to travel.

I find that tremendous progress has been made under your great leadership; but also, as you well know, tremendous problems loom ahead. The nation is confronted with gigantic tasks of reconstruction and rehabilitation, and with large economic and other problems, as is to be expected in so young a state.

I am sure that with your rare combination of idealism and realism, you will continue to tackle these matters vigorously; and that with your usual energy, resourcefulness and common sense, you will be able to overcome them.

Traveling over the country and visiting both old and newly established settlements, it has been a thrill to observe how you are conquering the desert of the Negev and the rocks of Galilee and are thus displaying the same pioneering spirit that opened up the great West of my own country. It has been satisfying to see right on the scene, how well and to what good advantage you are utilizing the support from the American Jewish community. I am sure, too, that the American tractors and other machinery and equipment acquired through the loan granted by the Export-Import Bank will further contribute to the technological development of your country.

But more than that, what you are doing and creating in this corner of the Middle East is of vital importance not only to you and to Jews, but to humanity in general. For I believe that the free and peace-loving peoples in the world can look upon Israel as a stronghold of democracy in an area where liberal democracy is practically unknown and where the prevailing social and political conditions may be potential dangers to the security and stability of the world. What President Truman is intending to do under his Four Point Program, in assisting underdeveloped peoples

to improve their conditions and raise their standards of living, you here to a large extent have been doing right along under most difficult conditions and at great sacrifice.

Important to your future, as you recognize, is the United States of America and American Jewry. Israel, of course, is also important to them.

In this connection, I am pleased that Mr. Elath has been here during our stay. As your Ambassador to the United States, he has rendered invaluable service in bringing our two countries and communities closer together.

I thought I knew it even before I came to this country on this trip, but my visit has made it still more clear to me — and as an American citizen and a Jew I am gratified — that the Israeli people want democracy and, in my opinion, will not accept any dictatorship or totalitarianism from within or from without.

Democracy, like all other human institutions, has its faults; and abuses are possible. But the strength of a democratic regime is that these faults and these abuses can be corrected without the destruction of human rights and freedoms which alone make life worth living.

There is no question in my mind that a Jew who wants to remain loyal to the fundamental basis of Judaism and his cultural heritage, will be in the forefront of the struggle for democracy against totalitarianism.

The American Jewish community sees its fortunes tied to the fate of liberal democracy in the United States, sustained by its heritage, as Americans and as Jews. We seek to strengthen both of these vital links to the past and to all humanity by enhancing the American democratic and political system, American cultural diversity and American well-being.

As to Israel, the vast majority of American Jewry recognizes the necessity and desirability of helping to make it a strong, viable, self-supporting state. This, for the sake of Israel itself, and the good of the world.

The American Jewish Committee has been active, as have other Jewish organizations in the United States, in rendering, within the framework of their American citizenship, every possible support to Israel; and I am sure that this support will continue and that we shall do all we can to increase further our share in the great historic task of helping Israel to solve its problems and develop as a free, independent and flourishing democracy.

While Israel has naturally placed some burdens on Jews elsewhere, particularly in America, it has, in turn, meant much to Jews throughout the world. For hundreds of thousands in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, it has provided a home in which they can attain their full stature of human dignity for the first time. In all Jews, it has inspired pride and admiration, even though in some instances, it has created passing headaches.

Israel's rebirth and progress, coming after the tragedy of European Jewry in the 1930's and in World War II, has done much to raise Jewish

morale. Jews in America and everywhere can be more proud than ever of their Jewishness.

But we must, in a true spirit of friendliness, sound a note of caution to Israel and its leaders. Now that the birth pains are over, and even though Israel is undergoing growing pains, it must recognize that the matter of good will between its citizens and those of other countries is a two-way street: that Israel also has a responsibility in this situation — a responsibility in terms of not affecting adversely the sensibilities of Jews who are citizens of other states by what it says or does.

In this connection, you are realists and want facts and I would be less than frank if I did not point out to you that American Jews vigorously repudiate any suggestion or implication that they are in exile. American Jews — young and old alike, Zionists and non-Zionists alike — are profoundly attached to America. America welcomed their immigrant parents in their need. Under America's free institutions, they and their children have achieved that freedom and sense of security unknown for long centuries of travail. American Jews have truly become Americans; just as have all other oppressed groups that have ever come to America's shores.

To American Jews, America is home. There, exist their thriving roots; there, is the country which they have helped to build; and there, they share its fruits and its destiny. They believe in the future of a democratic society in the United States under which all citizens, irrespective of creed or race, can live on terms of equality. They further believe that, if democracy should fail in America, there would be no future for democracy anywhere in the world, and that the very existence of an independent State of Israel would be problematic. Further, they feel that a world in which it would be possible for Jews to be driven by persecution from America would not be a world safe for Israel either; indeed it is hard to conceive how it would be a world safe for any human being.

The American Jewish community, as you, Mr. Prime Minister, have so eloquently pointed out, has assumed a major part of the responsibility of securing equality of rights and providing generous material help to Jews in other countries. American Jews feel themselves bound to Jews the world over by ties of religion, common historical traditions and in certain respects, by a sense of common destiny. We fully realize that persecution and discrimination against Jews in any country will sooner or later have its impact on the situation of the Jews in other countries, but these problems must be dealt with by each Jewish community itself in accordance with its own wishes, traditions, needs and aspirations.

Jewish communities, particularly American Jewry in view of its influence and its strength, can offer advice, cooperation and help, but should not attempt to speak in the name of other communities or in any way interfere in their internal affairs.

I am happy to note from your statement, Mr. Prime Minister, that the State of Israel takes a similar position. Any other position on the

part of the State of Israel would only weaken the American and other Jewish communities of the free, democratic countries and be contrary to the basic interests of Israel itself. The future development of Israel, spiritual, social as well as economic, will largely depend upon a strong and healthy Jewish community in the United States and other free democracies.

We have been greatly distressed that at the very hour when so much has been achieved, harmful and futile discussions and misunderstandings have arisen as to the relations between the people and the State of Israel and the Jews in other countries, particularly in the United States. Harm has been done to the morale and to some extent to the sense of security of the American Jewish community through unwise and unwarranted statements and appeals which ignore the feelings and aspirations of American Jewry.

Even greater harm has been done to the State of Israel itself by weakening the readiness of American Jews to do their full share in the rebuilding of Israel which faces such enormous political, social and economic problems.

Your statement today Mr. Prime Minister will, I trust, be followed by unmistakable evidence that the responsible leaders of Israel, and the organizations connected with it, fully understand that future relations between the American Jewish community and the State of Israel must be based on mutual respect for one another's feelings and needs, and on the preservation of the integrity of the two communities and their institutions.

I believe that in your statement today, you have taken a fundamental and historic position which will redound to the best interest not only of Israel, but of the Jews of America and of the world. I am confident that this statement and the spirit in which it has been made, by eliminating the misunderstandings and futile discussions between our two communities, will strengthen them both and will lay the foundation for even closer cooperation.

In closing, permit me to express my deep gratitude for the magnificent reception you and your colleagues have afforded my colleague and me during our stay in this country.

**JOINT STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER BEN-GURION
AND MR. BLAUSTEIN ON THE RELATIONSHIP
OF ISRAEL TO JEWS IN OTHER FREE DEMOCRACIES
APRIL 23, 1961**

Mr. Jacob Blaustein came to Israel with the purpose of talking over with the Prime Minister, Mr. David Ben-Gurion, some matters relative to the relationship between Israel and the Jewish communities abroad, and in particular that of the United States. As is well known, Mr. Blaustein had in August 1950 reached an agreement with Mr. Ben-Gurion

on these matters, after having had at that time exhaustive and detailed conversations with him on all aspects of these problems.

Of late some elements in the American Jewish community had, it appears, felt some doubts as to whether that agreement still had its full validity as far as Mr. Ben-Gurion and the Israel Government are concerned. Inasmuch as these doubts had been entertained, they had been based on certain pronouncements made and actions taken by Mr. Ben-Gurion and by other members of the Israel Government at various times during the last few years, in relation to matters which had been covered by the Agreement.

Certain circles of American Jewish leadership and of the American Jewish public felt that some of these pronouncements and actions were in contradiction to the Agreement.

In the course of this visit, Mr. Blaustein had a number of detailed conversations with Mr. Ben-Gurion, who warmly welcomed the opportunity to talk these matters over once more with Mr. Blaustein, as he had done in 1950 and a number of times since. The conversations were held in the spirit of candor and friendship, which had characterized the relationship of many years' standing between Mr. Jacob Blaustein and Mr. David Ben-Gurion as well as between the Government of Israel and those important groups of American Jews with whom Mr. Blaustein is eminently associated.

The result of these conversations has been a re-affirmation on the part of both Mr. Ben-Gurion and Mr. Blaustein of the spirit and the content of the 1950 Agreement. It was agreed that it is perfectly natural for differences of view to exist on the essence and the meaning of Judaism and Jewishness, both inside American Jewry and between various Jewish communities, in various parts of the world, and in particular between the Jews who live in the independent State of Israel and Jews living in other countries. It was emphasized, however, in this connection, that it would be improper for those holding these different views to act in violation of this Agreement. It was admitted that some misunderstandings might have arisen owing to the fact that Mr. Ben-Gurion now and then takes the liberty of expressing views on a variety of topics that are his own rather than those of the Government of Israel. It was agreed that everything should be done on both sides in order to obviate such misunderstandings in the future, so that it would be entirely clear to everybody concerned that the 1950 Agreement had lost none of its force and validity as far as either side is concerned. In particular Mr. Ben-Gurion undertook to do everything within his power to see to it that the Agreement is in future kept in spirit and in letter, and to draw the attention of members of the Cabinet and other responsible officers of the Government of Israel to his desire that the spirit and content of the Agreement be fully respected. (*Salient points of the 1950 Statements, which appear on pp. 64-69, were incorporated in the original text of this joint statement.*)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE ON ISRAEL AND THE MIDDLE EAST

IN PEACE AND DIGNITY. 1946. 62 pp.

Testimony by Judge Joseph M. Proskauer Before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine.

PALESTINE, YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED: An AJC Discussion Guide. 1946. 14 pp.

STATEMENT BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE SUBMITTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO PALESTINE. May 31, 1947. 12 pp.

PROPOSED AMERICAN ACTION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL RELATIVE TO PALESTINE. Feb. 5, 1948. 5 pp.

A memorandum by AJC officers to the President of the United States.

ISRAEL THROUGH AMERICAN EYES, by Jacob Blaustein. 1949. 11 pp.

Mr. Blaustein's observations as head of an AJC delegation to Israel.

JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST, by S. Landshut. 1950. 102 pp.

A survey prepared for the American Jewish Committee and the Anglo-Jewish Association.

THE VOICE OF REASON, by Jacob Blaustein. 1950. 18 pp.

An address to the AJC's Executive Committee on the relationship of American Jews to Israel.

ARAB-ISRAEL TENSIONS: An AJC Fact Sheet. 1954. 15 pp.

Background information on Middle East issues.

THE ARAB REFUGEE DILEMMA: An AJC Fact Sheet. 1956. 20 pp.

The plight of the Palestine Arabs, and some proposals for dealing with the problem.

THE ASSAULT ON AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP: An AJC Brief. 1956. 16 pp.

Discriminatory measures by Arab governments against American citizens of the Jewish faith.

✓ LETTER TO SECRETARY OF STATE JOHN FOSTER DULLES, by Irving M. Engel, Jacob Blaustein and Joseph M. Proskauer. November 3, 1956. 4 pp.

AJC's President and two Honorary Presidents offer recommendations for a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

THE MIDDLE EAST FERMENT: An AJC Fact Sheet. 1956. 28 pp.

✓ The major issues in the Middle East conflict, and suggestions for dealing with them.

✓ STEPS TO MIDDLE EAST PEACE. July 1956. 19 pp.

Analysis and recommendations for U.S. policy.

VIOLATIONS OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS, by Irving M. Engel. 1956. 16 pp.

The AJC's President reports on discriminations by Arab countries against Americans, and calls for action by the U.S. Government.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE CONSULTATIVE MISSION TO EUROPE, NORTH AFRICA, MIDDLE EAST. 1957. 20 pp.

Text of delegation's report, and excerpts of statement by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN ISRAEL: An AJC Fact Sheet. 1957. 20 pp.

The status of Christian groups and institutions in Israel.

THE PLIGHT OF THE JEWS IN EGYPT: An AJC Fact Sheet. 1957. 16 pp.

The Nasser Government's drive against Egyptian Jews.

POCKET GUIDE TO MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS. 1957. 52 pp.

Questions and answers for handy reference.

REFLECTIONS ON THE AMERICAN SCENE, by Abba Eban. 1959. 24 pp.

An address by Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. at the AJC's 52nd Annual Meeting.

INVASION OF AMERICAN RIGHTS ON THE PART OF ARAB LEAGUE NATIONS. 1961. 20 pp.

How Arab countries discriminate against American Jews.

REPORT FROM ISRAEL. 1947 to date.

A monthly commentary by an Israeli observer.



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