A DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

The Text of the Palestine Resolution Adopted at the American Jewish Conference—September 1, 1943

On September 1, 1943 a democratically elected body of delegates representing every segment of American Jewry adopted by an overwhelming majority a resolution expressing the will of the Jews of the United States with regard to the status and future of Jewish Palestine.

We, Jewish citizens of the United States dwelling in security in this our beloved land, which, because of its democratic institutions and just laws "gives to bigotry no sanction and to persecution no assistance," and dedicated in undivided loyalty to the noble spirit of our country, are gathered here as an American Jewish Conference, a democratically elected body representative of American Jewry, to cope with the tragic problems of our fellow-Jews all over the world. We make the following declaration of principles as to the relation between the Jewish people, the Homeland in Palestine and the world need for post-war reconstruction.

The Jewish problem has been made one of the central elements in the present assault on civilization. In a world-wide Nazi-Fascist conspiracy its exploitation has constituted the initial phase of the assault. Its solution is an integral part of the conditions needed for an enduring peace.

In the first World War, the civilized nations pointed to a solution of the Jewish problem through the reconstruction of the Jewish Homeland in Palestine with which the Jewish people has been bound up historically and religiously throughout the centuries. This was expressed in the Balfour Declaration issued by the British Government, after consultation between the Allied and Associated Powers, on Nov. 2, 1917, and in the Mandate for Palestine accorded to Great Britain in 1922, with the consent of the fifty-one member nations of the League of Nations and with the unanimous approval of the Congress of the United States.

On the basis of this international covenant the Jewish people set itself to the task of recreating its historic Homeland in Palestine. In the course of twenty-five years it has demonstrated a constructive capacity which has already had a profound effect both on the hopes and outlook of the Jewish people, and on a country which had for centuries been regarded as one of the derelict areas of the world. The progress of all sections of Palestine, Arab as well as Jewish, under the stimulus of the developing Jewish Homeland is one of the most notable phenomena of our time; the contribution of democratic Jewish Palestine to the victories of the armies of the United Nations in the Near East has been a significant vindication of the policy initiated by world opinion and carried out in the labors and sacrifices of the Jewish people.

This period of reconstruction, however, has coincided with a general deterioration of world order and international morality. Chief among the victims of this deterioration have been the millions of Jews in Europe. Yet despite the fact that the conditions which made imperative the reestablishment of the Jewish Homeland a quarter of a century ago have been intensified beyond the darkest forebodings, the Trusteeship internationally guaranteed to the Jewish people with respect to Palestine have been progressively whittled down on grounds of administrative and political expediency until, with the promulgation of the White Paper of May, 1939, the solemn promise made to the Jewish people was virtually nullified and the last hope of millions of homeless Jews threatened with extinction.

The American Jewish Conference, meeting at a time when the policies of the peace are in the making, and conscious of its historic responsibility and of its position as representative of American Jewry and spokesman for the silenced Jewish communities of Europe, calls for the loyal and faithful fulfillment of the covenant entered into between the nations of the world and the Jewish people.

We call for the fulfillment of the Balfour Declaration and of the Mandate for Palestine whose intent and underlying purpose, based on the "historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine," was to constitute Palestine as the Jewish Commonwealth.

We demand the immediate withdrawal in its entirety of the Palestine White Paper of May, 1939, with its unwarranted restrictions on Jewish immigration and land settlement. The White Paper is a violation of the rights accorded to the Jewish people under the Mandate for Palestine. It was characterized by Mr. Winston Churchill in the House of Commons as "a breach and a repudiation of the Balfour Declaration."

The Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations refused to recognize its legality or its moral validity.

The Conference demands that the gates of Palestine be opened to Jewish immigration, and that the Jewish Agency, recognized under the Mandate as the authorized representative of the Jewish people, be vested with authority to direct and regulate immigration into Palestine, to develop to the maximum the agricultural and industrial possibilities and the natural resources of the country, and to utilize its uncultivated and unoccupied lands for Jewish colonization and for the benefit of the country as a whole.

The measures here urged constitute the essential prerequisites for the attainment of a Jewish majority and for the re-creation of the Jewish Commonwealth.

In the pursuit of its objective of a Jewish Commonwealth, the Jewish people has steadfastly held before it the ideals which shall integrate the Jewish Palestine within the new democratic world structure. The Jewish people pledges itself to scrupulous regard for and preservation of the religious, linguistic and cultural rights of the Arab population of Palestine, and to the civil and religious equality of all its inhabitants before the law. The inviolability of the Holy Places of the various religions shall be guaranteed.

The Jewish people reaffirms its readiness and desire for full cooperation with its Arab neighbors in Palestine, and, in the work of its own national redemption, welcomes the economic and political development of the Arab peoples of the Near East.

On the basis both of the part it has played in the history of civilization, and of its present achievement in Palestine, the Jewish people believes that the Jewish Commonwealth to be established will represent another fundamental contribution to the social and political ideals of the world. It will finally answer the agonized cry of the most martyred of peoples, and enable it to take its rightful place in that progressive order of mankind which, we pray, may issue from the present struggle.