

~~1948~~ ^{U.S. - The Jewish Agency May 14, 1948} The eyes of the World tonight have been directed on a far off tiny country where (a little less than an hour ago, the minute hand of the clock came around to a point that marked a decision in history.) Six o'clock eastern standard time - ~~at~~ midnight in Jerusalem. At that moment, the British ^{Palestine} mandate legally expired - and British High Commissioner Sir Alan Cunningham was on his way home aboard a cruiser, officially terminating British control.

At that ~~the~~ same moment, (the Jewish state began its formal existence - after having been proclaimed ^{earlier} ~~in~~ the afternoon.) At that ~~the~~ hour likewise martial law went into effect in Egypt, King Farouk naming a military governor.

This last ~~the~~ item, martial law in Egypt, points to the world suspense - as (everybody waits to see what the ^{various Moslem states} ~~states~~ will do. Push into Palestine they will. But what are their ultimate plans? Will they be content with merely occupying ^{the so-called} Arab areas of the Holy Land? Or will they invade Jewish sections -- thereby bringing about immediate war with the New Jewish state?)

At this hour, we don't know. It is only clear that the ~~mim~~ military power of the Arab League is intervening. The dispatch from Cairo tells us that thirty thousand trained troops from the Arab states are on three frontiers of Palestine - the Syria-Lebanon border, the River Jordan facing Trans-Jordania, and Egypt on the south.

(We continue to hear ^{that} the mechanized Arab Legion of King Abdullah of Trans-Jordania is already in Palestine - and that other military units of that monarch ^{at this moment} are crossing the River Jordan.)

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PALESTINE BORDERS

Much attention tonight is directed towards those borders of Palestine -- the frontiers across which invading forces must make their drive. Your mental picture of the landscape may be one of deserts, mostly. We think of Palestine ^{as} next door to the burning sands of Arabia. And, so it is -- in part, ^{— south and East of ancient Sodom} But let's take a further look as this new day of history opens.

I've travelled over much of that historic corridor, ^{at} different seasons, and I know it as a land of contrasts. In the north, beyond Galilee, the frontier is mountainous - in the springtime a region of green valleys and ~~sparkling~~ sparkling streams -- not desert at all. Right now, that border between Palestine and Syria and Lebanon, is carpeted with flowers, hillsides aglow with blossoms.

To the East, along the Jordan, and the Dead Sea, the frontier with Trans-Jordania ~~is~~ is wild, - a fierce rocky country, the land of Essau, ^{and} ~~where~~ ^{mountain and} ^{tempted him,} where ~~the~~ John the Baptist lived on locusts and wild honey, ^{— and where Satan took Jesus to the top of the} Ravines, dry water courses, bleak and forbidding, ^{usually it is ~~is~~ with some of it ~~is~~ below sea level.} ~~most of the time,~~ Although there too, at

this time of year, Spring works its magic, and there are flowers in profusion.

To the south, beyond Beersheba and Gaza, there you do enter the region of eternal sands, the wilderness of Sin, where Moses and the Israelites wandered for those forty years - where the army of Egypt is tonight. But even there - in this month of May, it's like it is in our own ~~own~~ western deserts, flowers everywhere. For the desert ~~is~~ in springtime, is a place of extreme beauty.

Having spent many months in the desert regions in and around Palestine one thing that strikes me at this moment is the dramatic fact that this day of history comes to that ancient land at a time when even the burning sands, when even the wilderness of Sinai and Arabia Petrea is fair.

JEWISH STATE - proclamation

The official proclamation of the Jewish state was made at four o'clock ~~in~~ ^{to} the afternoon - Palestine time. The ceremony ~~was~~ held in the Tel Aviv Museum, on Rothschild Boulevard - an avenue named after the Rothschild dynasty of bankers, which contributed much to the development of Zionism.

Four hundred people were gathered, men and women. Some ~~of them~~ were aged veterans who ^{had} attended the first Zionist Congress held in Switzerland fifty years ago. That was when Theodore Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, brought together the first gathering of Jewish representatives to launch a campaign for the resurrection of the long lost Jewish state. Others in ^{today's} ~~the~~ assembly at the Tel Aviv Museum had suffered in pogroms under the Russians, Czars, ~~in~~ and still others were survivors of Nazi concentration camps.

~~He~~ The speaker was David Ben Gurion, ~~the~~ white-haired sixty-six year old Polish Jew, who now becomes the first Prime Minister of the Jewish state. He read the proclamation a legally worded document, the

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gist of which was ^{the following} ~~in the~~ declaration: "We hereby proclaim the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, to be called ~~the~~ Israel".

The response of the audience was intensely emotional. Many wept, others prayed.

Among the people of Tel Aviv, the proclamation was greeted with almost hysterical joy. The city was blazoned with the new Jewish flag - blue and white stripes and the Gold Star of David. In the streets emotion was displayed without restraint - weeping, praying, singing.

United Press correspondent ^{Eliav} ~~Simon~~ tells of a wrinkled-faced cleaning-woman in a Tel Aviv hotel - a Jewish woman from southern Arabia who still prefers to go barefoot than to wear shoes. To the newsman she said: "this is the coming of the Messiah for which I set out from the Yemen twenty-five years ago."

JEWISH STATE - HISTORY

Today's news of course emphasizes the angle - of a Jewish state, once again, after nearly two thousand years. It all puts a focus of history on events of today - history which as it happens, is not buried deep in libraries, but may be found in almost any American home; in the book with the greatest circulation of all ~~books~~ --- the Bible. ~~For the story of the Jews is, as all men know, a part of the religion of the Christians -- and of the Moslem Koran too. So, many of us tonight, wanting to look up some historical background for this day's headline news, will go back to the old family Bible - and find it there.~~

The biblical account gives us the most powerful of sacred literature, though the ~~historical~~ thread ~~is~~ is sometimes hard to follow ~~through these masses of ancient custom and tremendous moral exhortation.~~ *Of course we all* ~~so, it may be well to consider a quick, simple outline.~~ We know the familiar story of how Moses led the Children of Israel from bondage in Egypt to the border of the Promised Land, and how Palestine was then conquered by the tribes of Israel, led by

mighty warriors like Joshua, who leveled the walls of Jericho. And then, ~~came~~ the period of the Kings, [^]Saul, David, Solomon - who built a powerful Jewish state, with a glorious temple at Jerusalem, the site of which ~~is~~ today ^{is} occupied by a great Moslem Mosque -- the Mosque of Omar.

For the average Bible reader, things become confused in the complexities of trouble that followed the days of "Solomon in all his glory." But, briefly, ~~this is what happened.~~ Under the son and successor of Solomon, there was rebellion and ~~and~~ secession. The Jewish nation broke ⁱⁿ two: the northern kingdom - Israel; the southern kingdom - Judah. In the turmoil of the centuries, the northern kingdom was crushed by the Assyrians, and the people were carried away, never to return - The Lost Tribes of ^{Israel} ~~Israel~~, with some of whom I may have ^{encountered} ~~visited~~ when I ^{visited colonies} ~~encountered~~ ^{of} Jews in southern India, and In China.

The southern Kingdom, with its capital at Jerusalem, lingered on -- and then was overthrown by

Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian, its people carried off. But they survived in exile, and after forty years of Babylonian captivity, Cyrus the Persian let them go home, there to re-establish the Jewish nation at Jerusalem. It was then that The Temple was rebuilt.

This revival of the Jewish State went through complications of turmoil and oppression, until those great warriors, the Macabees, made it powerful once again. By then the might of Rome was rising, rising, and the Jewish State became a Roman tributary. The Saviour, the Child Jesus, was born during the rule of Caesar Augustus.

Then came the Jewish rebellions which led to the final catastrophe in ^{the} year of Seventy A.D., [^] the time of ^{the} destruction of Jerusalem - and - the - Temple by the Roman General Titus, who left "not one stone upon another." This was the day of exile and dispersion of the Jewish people - a day that has gone on and on, for nearly two thousand years ~~eighteen hundred and seventy eight~~ ~~years, to be precise.~~ And now, today, after that great length of time, a Jewish state is once again proclaimed,

formally and officially ^{the} in this atomic era.

~~And~~ Many are wondering tonight ~~just~~ what does Destiny hold in store for the new Israel, after that background of history?

Being neither a major nor a minor prophet, nor the son of one, I wouldn't venture a guess. But, history tells us that more wars have ~~been~~ been fought in that tiny land, across that corridor between Asia, and Africa, than anywhere in the world. Jerusalem, the city of Peace, where the people rarely have known the meaning of the word peace.

RABBI SILVER

~~The hope of Jewish leaders is that Washington will immediately recognize the new Jewish state. Rabbi~~

Rabbi
Aba Hillel Silver, leader of the Jewish group ^{that has been} fighting for Palestine before the United Nations, tells me that

~~in his opinion such recognition, now, by the United States, would do more than any one thing to bring about a peaceful settlement of the whole problem.~~

~~Then he went on to say that~~ the Jews are not ~~at all~~ fearful of the outcome even if full scale war does develop, ^{that the} ~~His opinion, which reflects the view of other Jewish leaders, is, that the fighting power of the Moslems, — that is of Syria and~~

TransJordan, ^{modern} has been ~~greatly~~ over-rated. ^{That the} ~~Jews have a modern army and the Arabs not~~

^{modern.} If I asked him about the population of Palestine, how many ^{more people} he thinks it can ^{accomodate} ~~take~~ since it's a tiny country, ^{about} ~~over~~ ^{not quite} as big as Vermont. Rabbi Silver

told me that in round numbers there are now seven hundred thousand Jews, ~~there~~, and that he believes it will accommodate a million more. I reminded him of how, at the end of Allenby's campaign in Nineteen

Seventeen, when I was with the Army of Liberation that drove out the Turks ^{those} thirty years ago; ~~at that~~ ^{then} there were less than thirty-five thousand Jews in the Holy Land. ~~"Now," added Rabbi Silver, "there are over a hundred thousand in Jerusalem alone, and two hundred thousand more in the new city of Tel Aviv, which a few years ago was just a mere ^{small} seaside suburb of Jaffa.~~

As for the present Moslem population, ^{Rabbi Silver} ~~he~~ spoke of the exodus that has been taking place, large number^s of Moslems in fleeing from such cities as Jaffa and Haifa; ~~going to other~~ ^{fleeing to those nearby} countries, ~~such as~~ Syria, Trans-Jordania, and Iraq. The latter two ^{with} ~~very~~ small populations, and probably ^{capable of accommodating far more} ~~could accommodate no more~~ ^{additional citizens than they are ever} ~~endless number of newcomers~~ likely to get in our time.

I then asked Rabbi Silver whether he thought it might not be possible to make Jerusalem, and nearby Bethlehem, an international religious center - under no flag. To which he replied, enthusiastically, that he thought Jerusalem should be made international - neither under the rule of the Jews or the Arabs.

END

Here's the latest drama in the Palestine story, just off the wire:

With the British mandate expired legally at six o'clock, and the new Jewish state announced, and a Moslem invasion of Palestine launched -- with all this happening, the General Assembly was taking a vote on that question of a U.N. regime for Jerusalem. It seemed to matter little, because the march of events, the dictates of reality, were settling matters. But the vote went on -- and this was shortly after six.

Then there was a sound of shouting. People broke in with jubilant outcries. They were Jews at the U.N. who had just heard the bulletin flashed from Washington, and now they shouted the news -- American recognition of the new Jewish state. (A few minutes after the six o'clock deadline, President Truman had taken action, the White House announcing that the United States recognizes the new nation, Israel.)