

Israel + Amer. J. / B-G (ab) 1950

# NEWS

## AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

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ISRAELI PREMIER'S FIRST OFFICIAL DECLARATION CLARIFYING RELATIONSHIPS  
BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JEWS IN UNITED STATES AND OTHER FREE DEMOCRACIES  
HAILED BY BLAUSTEIN AS "DOCUMENT OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE"

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Israeli President CHAIM WEIZMANN Concurs Wholeheartedly, Says Blaustein

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Jacob Blaustein, industrialist and President of the American Jewish Committee, who returned today from his latest mission to Israel at the invitation of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, hailed "as a document of historic significance" the Prime Minister's first official declaration clarifying the relationship between Israel and the Jews in the other free democracies, especially in the United States.

"The Prime Minister's statement makes it clear, among other things, that without any reservations the State of Israel speaks only on behalf of its own citizens and in no way presumes to represent or speak in the name of Jews who are citizens of any other country; and that the Jews of the United States, as a community and as individuals, have no political attachment to Israel. This

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means that the allegiance of American Jews is to America and America alone, and should put an end to any idea or allegation that there is any such thing as 'dual loyalty' on the part of American Jewry."

Israeli President Chaim Weizmann, who is convalescing in Berne, Switzerland, where Mr. Blaustein conferred with him by arrangement through the Prime Minister, authorized Mr. Blaustein to say that he whole-heartedly concurs in the clarification by the Prime Minister and the philosophy on which it is based.

Mr. Blaustein, who was invited to visit Israel by Mr. Ben-Gurion to confer on matters of mutual interest and to continue in personal touch with developments in the country, flew there on August 11th, accompanied by Dr. Simon Segal, director of the central office of the American Jewish Committee's Foreign Affairs Department. This was Mr. Blaustein's second visit to Israel on the invitation of the Premier since the new State was founded, the first having taken place in April, 1949 when he and colleagues of the American Jewish Committee conferred with Mr. Ben-Gurion and members of his cabinet and surveyed Israel's physical, economic and social conditions.

"Ever since the State of Israel came into being," Mr. Blaustein declared, "there has been confusion and misunderstanding as to the relationship of Israel to Jews in other countries, particularly those in the free democracies and especially in America. Part of this confusion has been due to various comments that have been made; and part to the difficulty of adjusting the idealism of a movement with the realism of an accomplished fact -- to fitting into certain concepts of the past, a realistic pattern based on actual conditions of the present. This confusion was harmful, and a source of concern and apprehension; and it was of prime importance that a definitive clarification by the responsible authorities in Israel be no longer delayed. My colleagues and I had been discussing this situation, and corresponding about it, with Israeli officials for many months; and we therefore welcomed the opportunity to go to Israel to confer with the Prime Minister regarding it and other matters of mutual interest."

"The formal statement made by the Prime Minister at the luncheon he tendered to me in Jerusalem, attended by a number of his cabinet members, the chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, United Nations Chief of Staff General William Riley and other dignitaries, lays the foundation for better understanding, based on full respect by each community of the integrity and institutions of the others."

"The Prime Minister's statement goes further. He specifically states that Israel has no desire and no intention to interfere in any way with the internal affairs of Jewish communities in other countries and that the latter's indigenous social, economic and cultural institutions are and will be respected by the Israeli Government and the Israeli people.

"The preservation of the integrity of the communities in the United States and other free democratic countries is declared to be in the best interests both of the communities themselves and of Israel."

With reference to immigration from the United States and other free democracies, the Prime Minister stated that Israel needs technicians with American know-how, and he hopes some will come, "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."

Mr. Blaustein returned from Israel convinced that that country "is the best friend America ever had in the Near East."

"Probably the most overwhelming and satisfying impression that one gains in Israel is that the people there are building a real democracy," Mr. Blaustein stated. "For America and the other free democracies, it is of enormous significance to have in Israel not only a democratic form of government but a way of life that is based on democratic and humane values. This, in a strategic part of the world where liberal democracy is otherwise practically unknown and where the prevailing social and political conditions may be potential dangers to international security and stability.

"As an American 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. I believe our country will continue to encourage this newest democracy and I am confident that the vast majority of American Jewry will continue to recognize the necessity and desirability of helping to make Israel a strong, viable, self-supporting state and will do its full part toward that objective. This for the sake of Israel itself and the good of the world."

In addition to a series of private conferences with the Prime Minister while in Israel, Mr. Blaustein also conferred with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Moshe Sharett, Minister of Labor Mrs. Golda Meyerson, former Israeli Ambassador to the United States (now Minister to Great Britain) Eliahu Elath; and also met with leading Israeli officials (including Minister of Supply and Rationing Dov Joseph and Minister of Justice Pinchus F. Rosen) and with leaders of finance, industry and labor.

As a leading American industrialist, Mr. Blaustein counselled with Finance Minister Kaplan and Director-General of the Treasury David Horowitz regarding the many economic, rehabilitation and reconstruction problems facing Israel.

Mr. Blaustein declared he found himself profoundly impressed by the progress which has been made in Israel since his last visit eighteen months ago.

"During the last year 40,000 new small houses were built for the new immigrants alone. Agricultural production has increased since the establishment of the State by nearly 70%, and we were informed that nearly as many agricultural settlements have been set up in the last two years as during all the years under the British Mandate."

"Jerusalem, which I last visited in April 1949 after the siege which had almost reduced the city to starvation, has lost its ghost-town appearance. Today, 35,000 new immigrants have been settled in Jerusalem and the city is active and

dynamic. New industries have been created and the Exposition of Jerusalem's Handicrafts and Industries which took place during my stay there showed an almost unbelievable picture of ingenuity and enterprise on the part of hundreds of small business men and manufacturers who have brought their knowledge and skill from the four corners of the earth.

"With great pioneering tenacity and skill the Israelis are making the Negev bloom. Fresh water wells have been located in this former desert area, and an outlet to the Red Sea has been created at the new town of Elath, where the first ships ever to reach there in recorded history have already arrived with cargo and settlers."

Mr. Blaustein asserted that the incredible increase in population -- over 70% since the establishment of the State-is largely responsible for the enormous economic problems facing the nation.

"However, the greatest wealth of Israel is its people. Jews are streaming into that little country from places where they have been discriminated against and persecuted. They are coming by the thousands from the countries behind the Iron Curtain whenever they are permitted to leave. In the last few months the largest number have come from Roumania."

In addition to conferring with Israeli Government officials and leaders of finance, industry and labor, Mr. Blaustein held conferences with U.S. Ambassador James G. MacDonald; U.S. Charge d'Affairs Richard Ford and other members of the American Embassy, and Hon. Ely Palmer, U.S. member of the United Nations Palestine Conciliation Commission.

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