

FOR RELEASE A.M. PAPERS
Tuesday, May 13, 1947

AN ADDRESS

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Prepared for Delivery

Before the

NATIONAL CONVENTION DINNER

of

B'NAI B'RITH

STATLER HOTEL

Washington, D. C.

Monday, May 12, 1947

9:15 P. M.

HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS

May I add my compliments to Mr. Justice Jackson, to Secretary of State Marshall, and to Secretary of War Patterson on their receiving the Humanitarianism and Justice awards. They so well merit them.

It is in the mood of sadness, coupled with deep respect, that I come here tonight to greet the triennial convention of the Supreme Lodge of B'nai B'rith. I, too, miss Henry Monsky. I miss his smile, his warm hand-clasp, his kindly, brotherly greeting. Tonight his heart would be filled with deep satisfaction at this distinguished gathering.

Henry Monsky's untimely passing is not only a great loss to his people, but also to the entire Nation. It is a personal loss to me, for I knew him well, worked with him often, and loved and admired him for his work. His accomplishments for humanity were many. He recognized no racial barriers. He loved mankind. Tonight I think of him as being here with us, for in the words of James Whitcomb Riley, "I cannot say and I will not say that he is dead - he is just away."

He leaves behind him in the flesh the oldest and the largest Jewish fraternal organization in the world's history.

Nobody knows what freedom is so well as those who do not have it. No Americans are better equipped to cherish and guard their heritage than those who have once known what it is to endure oppression, to live in the shadow of persecution and under the handicap of unequal opportunity.

American Jewry is versed in the meaning of these injustices, these inhumanities to man. You, the Jews of America, are members of a free society, citizens of a democratic country. But your forebears lived in the house of bondage.

Yes, you know, you understand well. And that is why your forebears, 103 years ago, founded the B'nai B'rith. They founded it "to re-affirm

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faith in fundamental human rights." Those fundamental precepts of democracy today live in the United Nations Organization.

Yes, like Henry Monsky, Henry Jones and his eleven associates back on October 13, 1843, when they founded your Order, built it on a solid foundation of faith and service, and as their adopted country, America, expanded to the limits of its geographical frontiers, so has your Organization extended its services until the delegates here tonight represent more than 300,000 men, women and young people throughout the world.

I need not recount to you, its active leaders and workers, the superb record of your Order as a cross-section of Americans of Jewish faith in every patriotic national endeavor since your inception. You are familiar, too, with the Organization's participation in every field of activity in the recent war. That record, to which President Truman, the War and Navy Departments, the American Red Cross and other government and civilian agencies have paid merited tribute, needs no embellishment from me. It is written in the pages of history, as are the names of the more than 500 members of your Organization who gave their lives in World War II for our peace and security.

Under our democratic form of government we have grown from thirteen colonies, with their sparse population scattered along the Atlantic seaboard, into the world's greatest nation. We owe this to no one faith, to no one color, to no one race. The quest for freedom, for the inalienable right to enjoy the civil and human rights of man, has brought immigrants of every creed from every part of the globe to our shores. They and their children were the pioneers who forged our Nation; they and their children are the citizens who brought us safely through two world conflicts in our own generation.

Every faith has played an important part in our history. There is not a single one which has not made a vital contribution to the building of our America. It is gratifying to you, I am sure, to know that none exceeded the people of your own faith, and that none has striven more diligently for the principles of unity and humanity without which there would have been no United States of America.

The history of the Jewish people in America goes back to our founding.

One of the most important figures of the War for Independence was Haym Salomon who came to New York from Poland in 1772. Who will forget Haym Salomon? Some historians estimate that Salomon poured a tremendous sum into the Revolution, and he died impoverished in 1785 at the age of 45. His reward, like many, delayed over 150 years, came on December 15, 1941, with the unveiling of a monument in Chicago as a joint memorial to George Washington, Robert Morris and Haym Salomon, the funds having been contributed by Americans of all religions and ancestries.

In every period of our history, whether peace or war, prosperity or adversity, members of your faith have played a leading part. When our future as a united people hung by a thread in Civil War days, they served with distinction on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line. One of the greatest men on the side of the South was Judah P. Benjamin - United States Senator - while on the North was Mayer Lehman. It was he who arranged for the shipment of food through the blockade of the South.

It is hardly necessary to recall the familiar names of those who, since the turn of the twentieth century, have labored so unceasingly and so well in the cause of Americanism and the brotherhood of man.

It is no secret that for twenty years or more we have been the target of an adroit, a subtle, but a wholly vicious campaign designed to lull us

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into a false sense of security - to blind us to the dangers from totalitarian forces bent upon conquest of the world and subjugation of all its peoples.

It was Goebbels who said, "No other country has so many social and racial tensions. We shall be able to play on many strings there." We fooled him - and his kind.

The military threat from without we met squarely and turned back. But, it is true internal dangers of this nature are still with us - they never cease.

One fact cannot be hurdled by any clear-thinking American today: For a strong nation, a safe nation, loyalty to our government is of the very essence. When asked the question - How many subversives can the United States Government afford to harbor? Our answer is: Not a single one. It is my purpose to make this a living reality.

This can - and it will - be done. We shall eliminate the abuses of freedom, but in so doing we shall not destroy freedom itself. There will be no whitewash. There will be no witch-hunt. There will be an America safe from the fifth column and equally safe from the gestapo. That is the only kind of America that true Americans want.

No law is better or worse than the personnel administering it. And because we are men and women, and not robots or stones, we rightly try to humanize our law rather than legalize the human soul.

But, my friends - all of the armament, legal or otherwise, in the world cannot prevail against ideals. It was an ideal - the flaming zeal to make democracy a living fact - which carried our ancestors safely through the trying times of the War for Independence. But there is another type, the insidious infiltration of propaganda by the Communist Party, by bigoted fascist-minded groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the Columbians, and by

other nefarious organizations which would destroy our unity and with it our way of life. I am very proud that your Organization is in the forefront fighting against communism in this country, as so forcefully stated in a recent issue of the National Jewish Monthly:

"We are opposed to communism in the United States. We are opposed to it because it would substitute for our present social freedoms the dictatorship that would mean the end of free speech, free press, free religious assemblage. There is nothing wrong with democracy that more democracy won't cure."

Oh - how true - let me repeat - "There is nothing wrong with democracy that more democracy won't cure."

America today is proof positive that democracy works. It works for peoples of different races, religions and nationality backgrounds. Here all classes live together in harmony under the laws of God and the government of their fellow man. In this connection I voice the hope that President Truman's plea for us to accept a fair share of those homeless victims of world cataclysm be promptly heeded. As the descendants of immigrants we cannot now lock the doors of our beloved land to our fair share of these worthy souls seeking legal entry.

Our country today is the only hope of the world. For democracy to live and work, its peoples must have hope. They must have that same hope that fired the enthusiasm of our ancestors, the hope of peace, the hope of a tomorrow, that hope that kindles love, thrusts out fear and destroys want.

The recent plea of President Truman for aid to stricken countries has done much to re-ignite that hope throughout the world. By admitting our fair share of immigrants who have a background not inimicable to our ideals, we strengthen the hope of democracy throughout the world.

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All of us - hand in hand - will march on - side by side, contributing each in his own way, not only to the advancement of our own country but to the advancement of the world. In so doing we have the hope of eliminating want and fear and bringing about a permanent peace among all peoples everywhere on the face of the earth - for God intended it so to be.