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For a Cooperation Between Jews and Arabs

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Both Arab and Jewish extremists are today recklessly pushing Palestine into a futile war. While believing in the defense of legitimate claims, these extremists on each side play into each other's hands. In this reign of terror the needs and desires of the common man in Palestine are being ignored.

We believe that in such a situation of national conflict it is vitally important that each group and particularly its leaders uphold standards of morality and reason in their own ranks rather than confine themselves to accuse their opponents of the violation of these standards. Hence we feel it to be our duty to declare emphatically that we do not condone methods of terrorism and of fanatical nationalism any more if practiced by Jews than if practiced by Arabs. We hope that responsible Arabs will appeal to their people as we do to the Jews.

Were war to occur, the peace would still leave the necessity of the two peoples working together, unless one or the other were exterminated or enslaved. Short of such a calamity, a decisive victory by either would yield a corroding bitterness. Common sense dictates joint efforts to prevent war and to foster cooperation now.

Jewish-Arab cooperation has been for many years the aim of far-sighted Jewish groups opposed to any form of terror. Recently a declaration of such a group was published in the American press under the dateline Jerusalem. March 28, 1948, to which we want to draw attention. We quote here some of the key sentences:

> »An understanding between the two peoples is possible, despite the constant refrain that Jewish and Arab aspirations are irreconcilable. The claims of their extremists are indeed irreconcilable, but the common Jew and the common Arab are not extremists. They yearn for the opportunity of building up their common country, the Holy Land, through labor and cooperation.«

The signers of the statement represent various groups in Palestine Jewry. Besides

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Dr. Magnes, the chairman, those who signed were Dr. Martin Buber, Professor of Jewish Philosophy at Hebrew University; Dr. David Senator, administrator of the university; Dr. Kurt Wilhelm, rabbi of Emeth Ve'Emunah, liberal congregation in Jerusalem; Simon Shereshevsky, a surgeon, who belongs to the Mizrachi Zionist religious group, and Isaa Molho of the Spanish Jewish community.

Those who signed this declaration represent at the moment only a minority. However, besides the fact that they speak for a much wider circle of inarticulate people, they speak in the name of principles which have been the most significant contribution of the Jewish people to humanity.

We appeal to the Jews in this country and in Palestine not to permit themselves to be driven into a mood of despair or false heroism which eventually results in suicidal measures. While such a mood is undoubtedly understandable as a reaction to the wanton destruction of six million Jewish lives in the last decade, it is nevertheless destructive morally as well as practically.

We believe that any constructive solution is possible only if it is based on the concern for the welfare and cooperation of both Jews and Arabs in Palestine. We believe that it is the unquestionable right of the Jewish community in Palestine to protect its life and work, and that Jewish immigration into Palestine must be permitted to the optimal degree.

The undersigned plead with all Jews to focus on the one important goal: the survival and permanent development of the Jewish settlement in Palestine on a peaceful and democratic basis, the single one which secures its future in accordance with the fundamental spiritual and moral principles inherent in the Jewish tradition and essential for Jewish hope.

New York, April 12, 1948
Leo Baeck – Albert Einstein.