

REPRINTED FROM:

THE COLLECTED PAPERS OF

Albert Einstein

VOLUME 7

THE BERLIN YEARS:
WRITINGS, 1918–1921

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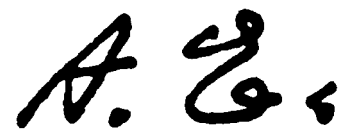
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DOC. 59

On a Jewish Palestine. First Version

(pp. 434–437)



Princeton University Press

2002

59. On a Jewish Palestine. First Version

[before 27 June 1921]^[1]

[p. 1] Meine Damen und Herren!

Seit zweitausend Jahren < ruhte > bestand das < Erbe > gemeinsame Gut^[2] des jüdischen Volkes nur in seiner Vergangenheit. Gemeinsam war unserem über die Welt zerstreuten Volke nichts als die sorgsam gehütete Tradition. Wohl haben einzelne Juden grosse Kulturwerte geschaffen, aber das jüdische Volk als Ganzes schien nicht mehr die Kraft zu grossen Kollektiv-Leistungen zu haben.^[3]

Dies ist nun anders geworden. Die Geschichte hat uns eine grosse und edle Aufgabe zugewiesen in Gestalt der thätigen Mitarbeit an dem Aufbau Palästinas. Hervorragende Stammesgenossen arbeiten bereits mit allen Kräften an der Verwirklichung dieses Zieles. Es ist uns Gelegenheit dazu geboten Kulturstätten zu errichten, die das ganze jüdische Volk als sein < Eigentum > Werk betrachten kann. Wir hegen die Hoffnung, in Palästina eine Heimstätte eigener nationaler Kultur zu schaffen, die dazu beitragen soll, den nahen Orient zu neuem wirtschaftlichem und geistigem Leben zu wecken.^[4]

Das Ziel, das den Führern des Zionismus vorschwebt, ist kein politisches, sondern ein soziales u. kulturelles. Das Gemeinwesen in Palestina soll sich dem sozialen Ideal unserer Vorfahren nähern, so wie es in der Bibel niedergelegt ist und gleichzeitig eine Stätte modernen geistigen Lebens werden. Ein geistiges Centrum für die Juden der ganzen Welt.^[5] Dieser Auffassung entsprechend bildet die Errichtung einer jüdischen Universität in Jerusalem eines der wichtigsten Ziele der zionistischen Organisation. Ich bin in den letzten Monaten in Amerika gewesen, um dort die materielle Basis für diese Universität schaffen zu helfen.^[6] Der Erfolg dieser Bestrebung war ein vorzüglicher. Dank der unermüdlichen Tätigkeit und der hervorragenden Opferwilligkeit der jüdischen Aerzte Amerikas ist es uns gelungen, genügend Mittel für die < Realisierung > Schaffung einer medizinischen Fakultät zusammen zu bringen u. es wird mit den vorbereitenden Arbeiten zur Realisierung derselben sofort begonnen.^[7] Nach den bisherigen Erfolgen hege ich keine Zweifel, daß sich die materielle Basis für die übrigen Fakultäten in kurzer Zeit wird schaffen lassen. Die med. Fakultät soll zunächst im Wesentlichen als Forschungsinstitut ausgebildet werden u. für die für < die > den < Kolonisierung des Landes > Aufbau besonders wichtige Sanierung des Landes tätig sein. Unterrichtstätigkeit in größerem Stiele wird erst später von Wichtigkeit werden.^[8] Da sich eine Reihe tüchtiger Forscher bereits gefunden hat, die einem Ruf an die Universität zu folgen bereit sind, erscheint die Errichtung einer med. Fakultät als vollkommen gesichert.^[9] Ich bemerke noch, daß für d. Universität ein besonderer Fonds gegründet

[p. 2]

worden ist, der von dem allgemeinen Fonds für den Aufbau des Landes vollkommen getrennt ist.^[10] Für den letzteren sind in diesen Monaten dank der unermüdlischen Arbeit Prof. Weizmanns u. anderer zionistischer Führer in Amerika bedeutende Summen zusammengebracht worden, insbesondere vermöge der grossen Opferwilligkeit des Mittelstandes.^[11] Ich schließe mit einem warmen Apell an die Juden Deutschlands trotz der gegenwärtigen schweren wirtschaftlichen Situation,^[12] nach besten Kräften für den Aufbau der jüd. Heimstätte in Palestina beizutragen: Es handelt sich nicht um einen Akt der Wohltätigkeit, sondern um eine alle Juden angehende Unternehmung, deren Gelingen für alle eine Quelle edelster Befriedigung zu werden verspricht.

AD. [28 008]. The document consists of two unnumbered pages. Page numbers are here provided in the margin in square brackets. The first two paragraphs are in Einstein's hand. The remaining text is in Ilse Einstein's hand and bears her notation of Einstein's name, title, dateline, and address at the head of the first page, as well as an emendation in her hand in the first paragraph. A frame has been drawn around the salutation and the salutation has been deleted, presumably also by Ilse Einstein. An incomplete typescript [73 165] incorporating the emendation and adding another one in Ilse Einstein's hand is preserved. It bears the title "Rede, gehalten auf der zionistischen Versammlung am 27. Juni 1921." The text of the typescript is published in *Einstein 1934a*, pp. 97–99.

^[1]This document is dated on the assumption that it is a draft for a speech that was held on 27 June (see the following document, note 1).

^[2]Ilse Einstein has deleted "Erbe" and interlineated "gemeinsame Gut."

^[3]In the typescript, Ilse Einstein has interlineated the phrase "zu großen Kollektiv-Leistungen schien" between "aber" and "das jüdische Volk," and deleted its occurrence further on in the sentence. The clear text is: "aber zu großen Kollektiv-Leistungen schien das jüdische Volk als Ganzes nicht mehr die Kraft zu haben."

^[4]From this point on, the text is in Ilse Einstein's hand. For a summary of efforts to create a national home for the Jews in Palestine after the Balfour Declaration, issued November 1917, until the end of World War I a year later, see *Vital 1987*, pp. 303–376; for a documentary account of these efforts after the war, see *Klieman 1987*.

^[5]Einstein's emphasis on the cultural aspects of settlement in Palestine indicates his position in the acrimonious debate between cultural and political Zionists that had emerged since the Balfour Declaration. Arguing that the British mandate over Palestine marked the end of the political struggle of the Jews, most cultural Zionists sought relatively modest funding for individual enterprises aimed at creating and maintaining a Jewish cultural presence in Palestine. The politically committed wing of Zionism, by contrast, pointed out that the political struggle had only begun and stressed the importance of mass colonization and ambitious supporting budgets to advance the Jewish cause there (see *Weizmann, Ch. 1977*, pp. xiii–xiv, and Chaim Weizmann to Executive, Zionist Organization of America, 6 January 1921, in *Klieman 1987*, p. 126). While stressing the cultural elements of Zionism, Einstein had lent his name to the ambitious fund-raising efforts of the political Zionists, whom he accompanied to the United States in spring 1921. For further discussion of the debate between cultural and political Zionists, see the editorial note, "Einstein and the Jewish Question," p. 233.

^[6]Although Einstein himself was not a Zionist, plans for a Jewish university in Jerusalem lay at the heart of his sympathy with cultural Zionism (see Kurt Blumenfeld to Chaim Weizmann, 15 March 1921, in *Blumenfeld 1976*, p. 66). If the American trip, which Einstein undertook from 2 April until 30 May 1921 at the urging of the Zionist leadership, had been precipitated in large part by its financial crisis in Palestine (see *Ruppin 1985*, p. 320), Einstein's motivation in joining the delegation was an opportunity to correct a "deficient spiritual balance" among the large number of Jewish students who were unable to gain access to higher education. Creating a Jewish university was "not a question of taste but of necessity." See article on his speech to the Manchester University Jewish Students'

Society in *Manchester Guardian*, 10 June 1921, p. 8.

The American tour was arranged by the international Zionist Organization (ZO) to serve as the fund-raising debut of its Palestine Foundation Fund (Keren Hayesod), which had been established in July 1920. Designated an immigration and colonization fund, the Keren Hayesod was to serve as a centralized institution for collecting and administering on a worldwide basis “a fixed and annual self-imposed tax on every Jew for the upbuilding of the National Home”; *Ulitzur 1940*, p. 9. Some of those funds were earmarked for the establishment of a Jewish university, a prospect that filled Einstein with a delight such as no other public event had afforded him (see his interview, *New York Times*, 3 April 1921, p. 13). For Einstein’s further thoughts on the university, see *Einstein 1921j* (Doc. 62).

^[7]Officially, Einstein was invited to the United States by the President of the American Jewish Physicians’ Committee (see Dr. Nathan Ratnoff to Einstein, 27 February 1921), a group of one hundred members dedicated to raising one million dollars for the university. The committee functioned “as an independent body but in harmony and co-operation with the Zionist Organization”; *Proposed HU 1924*, p. [3]. By mid-May more than \$100,000 had been subscribed by New York physicians alone (see *New York Call*, 16 May 1921, p. 7). Another \$250,000, earmarked specifically for the medical faculty of the university, was pledged by eight hundred doctors attending a banquet at the Waldorf-Astoria on 21 May. Einstein was quoted in his after-dinner speech as stating that “[t]he Medical College will undoubtedly be the most important department of the University, as we Jews have always excelled in this particular branch of science.” *New York Times*, 22 May 1921, p. 21. About the same time, he estimated with satisfaction that altogether “ca. 6000” Jewish physicians had pledged their support (see Einstein to Michele Besso, second half of May 1921 [SzGB]) [7 335]). Of this number, one whom Einstein had approached personally was Carl Beck of Chicago (see Einstein to Carl Beck, 8 April 1921), who was also involved in efforts to raise money for German and Austrian universities (see *Einstein 1920b* [Doc. 36], note 2).

^[8]In late 1920, the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) had placed the “Medical Unit and Sanitation” at the head of its list of priorities to receive contributions to the Keren Hayesod (see “Resolutions Adopted by the Zionist Organization of America in Convention at Buffalo on November 28, 1920,” no. II, *Weizmann, Ch. 1977*, p. xxvi). Special attention was paid to the creation of a research institute of microbiology to deal with “the medical and public health problems of Palestine” (*Proposed HU 1924*, p. [4]), of which malaria was the most critical. All institutes were to be “transformed in the course of a few years into teaching departments”; *Jewish Correspondence Bureau* (London), 18 January 1921, p. 2. See *Einstein 1921j* (Doc. 62), note 1, for a brief account of the planned structure of the university.

^[9]In order to ensure the success of the medical faculty, a subcommittee for medical research of the University Advisory Committee was formed in England under the direction of Redcliffe N. Salaman (1874–1955). Its first research appointment was that of Saul Adler (1895–1966), a young English parasitologist (see *Bentwich 1961*, p. 20).

^[10]At the beginning of 1921, the office of the Keren Hayesod announced the creation of a special University Fund under its auspices. “The money for that fund will be applied solely for purposes for the University expenditure.” An initial outlay of ca. 100,000 pounds with an annual budget of ca. 50,000 pounds was contemplated. “The first donations, amounting to several thousands, have already been received, and a house and estate have been purchased on the selected site for the University, on the Mount Scopus.” *Jewish Correspondence Bureau* (London), 18 January 1921, pp. [1]–2.

Einstein was careful to distinguish between the University Fund and the Keren Hayesod in general, as the issue of not mingling funds had become a major bone of contention between the international ZO and the ZOA. For a discussion of the conflicts that pitted the world organization against the American leadership, see the editorial note, “Einstein and the Jewish Question,” pp. 233–234.

^[11]A large number of small contributions characterized the fund-raising in America. Taking to task the “small oligarchy of men” who had only been able to collect \$28,000 in Boston the previous year, Chaim Weizmann, President of the ZO, compared that with the \$20,000 that had been raised at one dinner the previous evening. “We don’t get big contributions, but the masses are giving in smaller sums, but in large quantities.” Chaim Weizmann to Sir Alfred Mond, 18 May 1921, in *Weizmann, Ch. 1977*, p. 193. Einstein confirmed this in an interview that he gave in late June, in which he boasted that “the money for our cause flowed in, and much more will follow. Whether it was mostly the rich

who contributed? No, mainly the middle class—that is where it came from, in fact. Well you see, the American millionaire prefers of course to buy power with his wealth, and this he accomplishes mainly by getting public opinion on his side, but what is it to public opinion whether he also donates a large sum to the Zionist University fund, even though perhaps in Jerusalem a chair will be named after him?" See Appendix D, sec. 2.

In emphasizing that the reservoir of funds and of goodwill lay with the "middle class," Einstein touched on a sensitive issue that was rooted in part in the debate between cultural and political Zionists (see note 5). The cultural wing was strongly identified with the leadership of the ZOA, while the political wing was represented by the international ZO leadership and its allies within the American organization. In addressing the mass of Zionist supporters in the United States, the European Zionists, including Einstein, were appealing over the heads of the cautious, more gradualist American leadership.

¹²The German cost-of-living index—including food, clothing, housing, heat, and light—had risen to 11.67 in June 1921, compared to its prewar level (see *Feldman 1993*, p. 216). The ZO's dependence on American contributions to the Keren Hayesod is illustrated by the fact that, in the period between April and September 1921, the fund's net income from all of Europe (excluding England) was less than \$66,000, while American donations exceeded \$115,000 (see *Ulitzur 1940*, p. 14).