



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

Series I: General Correspondence, 1914-1969, undated.

Sub-series A: Alphabetical, 1914-1965, undated.

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4

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209

American Zionist Emergency Council, Aviation - Palestine,  
undated.



## MEMORANDUM

### Palestine's Interest in International Aviation

1. The following are Palestine's interests, with respect to post-war international air service:
  - (a) To secure the greatest practicable volume of passenger and cargo service, at competitive prices.
  - (b) To establish Palestinian airports as main trunk stops on as many international services as feasible.
  - (c) To assure efficient shuttle connections with main international airline trunk stations in those cases where it proves impossible to have a main line stop in Palestine.
  - (d) To provide the competitive framework for reasonable prices and efficient service by securing connections with several international lines flying more than one flag.
  - (e) To facilitate competition and improvement of service by favoring public policies looking towards the formation of many small air transport companies rather than a few large ones.
2. Palestine's case for being made a main trunk stop on any international airline running through the Middle East is a strong one.
  - (a) Her international trade is 4 times as great per capita as that of Syria and Iraq and 3 times as great per capita as that of Egypt.
  - (b) She has the only large population of European origin in the Middle East, and her international communications are correspondingly extensive.
  - (c) She has several products of high value and little bulk -- particularly diamonds, special early and late fruits and vegetables, and pharmaceuticals -- which could take advantage of air transport.
  - (d) Her airport facilities are adequate both for land and sea planes.
  - (e) Her interest to tourists is unrivalled in the Middle East. As a world center for three religions, she has great potentialities for developing a large tourist trade.



(f) Palestine has had, in the past twenty-five years, by far the greatest percentage growth of population of any country in the world. With the reopening of immigration, that growth will continue, with a rapidly expanding demand for air services of all kinds.

3. The plans of the United States Civil Aeronautics Board (as indicated by its releases of June 14 and June 22) do not provide for authorizing American companies to make stops in Palestine. Their great centers in the Middle East are now indicated to be Cairo and Basra.

Palestine is interested in any modifications of these plans that might assure her more direct service.

4. There have been no public announcements of British or other plans for post-war air service in the Middle East. It is most important that Palestine have direct air service to Europe and to the United Kingdom.

Palestine is interested in assuring that, when these other countries do establish their main international air routes, she will not be omitted, as she has been from present United States plans.





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PRESENT STATUS OF PALESTINIAN AVIATION

AIRPORTS

In 1939, air services in Palestine made use of three aerodromes at Lydda, Haifa, and Tel Aviv; and two seaplane stations at Haifa (emergency seaplane landing) and Tiberias. There was also a landing ground for local flights at Ashdot-Yaakov in the Jordan Valley. The Gaza aerodrome, for which figures are available in 1937-38, was apparently a mail station.

The data in the attached table demonstrate how passengers arriving from and proceeding abroad and mail carried from the individual airports increased from 1937 to 1939.

Tel Aviv aerodrome was small and of limited use. It was closed recently. Other airports in use now are at Atarot, north of Jerusalem, which is of limited use, and a training field at Galilee.<sup>1</sup> Basrah airport on Shatt el Arab was officially inaugurated in March 1938. It included a seaplane port and the most modern equipment.<sup>2</sup> There is no mention of it since.

AIR TRANSPORT

Before the war, there had been a great increase in the frequency of air service to Palestine.

In 1938, five international air services provided regular service between Palestine and Europe, Africa, Australia, and Asia. The companies were British, Egyptian, Dutch, Polish, and Italian. One local company, the Palestine Airways, created in 1937, provided local service between Palestine and Beirut, and Tel Aviv and Haifa.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of the Jewish Transportation census in 1938, Palestine Airways Ltd. owned 4 airplanes and employed 26 persons, two of whom were

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1. Corporal Hurewitz, O.S.S.
  2. Palestine and Middle East, April 1938, p.60.
  3. Blue Book 1938, p.411.



pilots and 15 of whom were clerks.<sup>1</sup> Civilian airline service to Palestine has been cut down since the beginning of the war. The following air services for civilian traffic were operating to and from Palestine at the end of 1942.<sup>2</sup> Apparently Palestine Airways Ltd. has stepped out of the picture.

1) Service of the British Overseas Airways, from Durban to Calcutta

Operates twice weekly from flying boats from the Dead Sea. East-bound service on Sundays and Thursdays and west-bound service on Tuesdays and Fridays.

2) Misr Airlines Daily Service Between Egypt and Palestine  
Daily service from Lydda airport. Service to and from Cairo via Port Said.

3) Misr Airlines Between Cairo, Lydda and Beirut  
Four days a week from Lydda Airport. Now scheduled for Mondays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays starting from Cairo with return on same day. Stop-over at Port Said.

4) Misr Airlines Weekly Service, Cairo, Lydda, Beirut, Cyprus  
Now scheduled to start on Tuesdays from Cairo. Runs on that day as follows: Cairo-Lydda-Cyprus-Beirut. After night's stop at Beirut, returns next day, Wednesdays. Usually uses DeHaviland four-motor machines.

Aviron Ltd.

In 1936 Aviron Ltd., the air transport company of the Histadruth, was formed to further air transport and manage air lines. By means of an agreement with the Jewish Agency, it was able to bring 11 planes and six gliders from Poland against frozen funds. Aviron Ltd. owns an aerodrome near Kibbutz Afikim. In 1942 it was still not self-supporting. It was being supported by the Jewish Agency and the Histadruth.<sup>3</sup>

Where the services of Aviron fit into the commercial aviation scheme it is hard to make out from other data available.

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1. Jewish Census of Motor Transport, 1937, p.64.

2. Consul Report, No. 55, January 26, 1943.

3. G. Muensner, Jewish Labour Economy in Palestine, Jerusalem-Tel Aviv, 1943, p.95.



**PASSENGER AND FREIGHT TRAFFIC AT THE AIRPORTS OF PALESTINE,  
1937-1939**

	Number of air- craft arriv- ing a/	Number of passengers b/ arriv-      pro- ing        ceed- from      ing abroad		<u>F r e i g h t</u>		<u>M a i l</u>	
				Dis- charged kgs.	Loaded kgs.	Dis- charged kgs.	Taken on kgs.
<b>Total</b>							
1939	4,627	5,240	5,421	43,882 c/	17,608 c/	54,018	44,290
1938	*	2,761	3,179	*	*	48,486	39,727
1937	*	1,912	2,229	*	*	12,336	10,417
<b>Lydda Airport</b>							
1939	1,767	2,052	2,135	32,617	4,036	21,454	20,227
1938	1,937	1,667	1,952	40,798	3,734	26,713	21,735
1937	1,323	*	*	24,500	1,419	10,444	8,513
<b>Haifa emergency d/ seaplane landings</b>							
1939	1,813	3,120	3,207	8,830	9,869	4,214	4,239
1938	157	759	952	*	*	2,947	2,172
1937	90	*	*	*	*	170	413
<b>Haifa airport</b>							
1939	28	47	48	*	*	1,123	416
1938	1,159	e/	e/	*	*	1,718	730
1937	*	*	*	*	*	580	224
<b>Gaza aerodrome</b>							
1938	*	2	1	*	*	-	6
1937	*	*	*	*	*	590	1,209
<b>Tiberias seaplane station</b>							
1939	326	21	31	2,173	191	25,380	18,778
1938	366	56	58	*	*	16,165	12,685
1937	30	*	*	*	*	552	58
<b>Tel Aviv landing ground</b>							
1939	699	b/	b/	262	3,512	1,847	630
1938	225	277	216	*	*	943	2,399

\* No information available

a/ No. of landings including aircraft arriving from an airport in Palestine and excluding trial flights.

b/ Passport control records. Passengers arrived at or left from Tel Aviv passed the passport control at Haifa airport or Lydda airport.

c/ March to December.

d/ Operated as an airport for civil aviation until the end of March 1939.

e/ Included under Haifa Emergency Seaplane landings.