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Jewish Agency, British Colonial Office, including secret minutes
held at Colonial Office, 1946-1949.

SECRET

77, GREAT RUSSELL STREET,
W.C.1.

21st October, 1946.

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver,
The Temple,
CLEVELAND, Ohio.

Dear Dr. Silver,

Benjamin

I cabled you recently that Dr. Goldmann and Mr. Weisgal would be bringing with them copies of the Minutes of the talks which had taken place at the Foreign Office and Colonial Office. I hope you will by now have seen them. I am enclosing herewith copies of the Minutes of the last two meetings.

With kindest personal regards, I am
Yours sincerely,

Benjamin

Enclosures.

SECRET

SHORT MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17th, 1946, at 3.30 p.m.

Present:

Sir George Gater,
Mr. J.M. Martin,
Mr. Trafford Smith,
Mr. Newton (Palestine)
Mr. Higham.

Mr. Looker,
Mr. Kaplan,
Mr. Sachse,
Mr. Zaslani,
Mr. Linton.

SIR GEORGE GATER said he was sorry that there had been some delay in calling this meeting; it had been due to the fact that they wanted to avoid an abortive discussion. The subject of immigration had been reserved by the Secretary of State, and would be dealt with by him at the full conference which, he would suggest, might take place the following afternoon. The object of their meeting was to find ways and means of easing the tension in Palestine and of saving lives. There was a terrible risk of loss of life, and at least they should agree to do what was possible in this direction. They could not continue the general discussion ~~and~~ unavoidably there was a certain amount of fencing, because somebody had to take the first step. He had seen the force of Mr. Sachse's request at the previous meeting when he had asked what the Government proposed to do. What was required was some contribution from both sides towards easing the tension. They could not bargain about such things, but contributions must be reciprocal. He would make some provisional, but inter-correlated suggestions. He realised the difficulty for the Jewish Agency that they could not enter upon undertakings which they would be unable to carry out. The Agency had already mentioned that it had denounced terrorism on a number of occasions, but he had pointed out that that had usually happened after some incident; what they would like would be some general statement of policy to the effect that the Agency would be prepared to use its best endeavours to prevent terrorism and other forms of violence, and would co-operate with the Palestine Administration to that end. Secondly, they would wish the Agency to withdraw the measures of non-co-operation between the Jewish Community and the Palestine Administration which had been taken since the 29th of June, and to resume active co-operation to the fullest possible extent. As regards the intentions of the Government, they would release the detained Jewish leaders and such other detainees as it might be possible to release after review by the Palestine Authorities, it being understood that this would not include persons suspected of connection with Irgun and Stern. Secondly, as regards the searches, the policy of the High Commissioner for the past few weeks had been to stop the searches except after incidents; that was now the policy of the Palestine Civil Administration. Thirdly, with regard to the Palestine Defence Regulations, he would like to say that these were not new; Defence Regulations had had to be put into operation against Arab terrorism. The Government would undertake that the Defence Regulations would be reconsidered with a view to possible relaxation as soon as it was apparent that terrorism was under effective control.

Mr. LOCKER said that the procedure adopted made it difficult to discuss matters because immigration had been left out. He would like a few minutes to consider, with his colleagues, what Sir George had said.

(The meeting adjourned from 4 to 4.30 p.m.)

On resumption

Mr. LOCKER said that they had carefully considered what Sir George had said. As immigration had been excluded what they would say would also be of a preliminary character. Even what they would have to say tomorrow would be subject to the meeting of the Actions Committee which was to take place on Wednesday. Mr. Kaplan hoped to leave at the week-end and would report in Jerusalem. As regards non-co-operation, that was of course a matter for the decision of the Va'ad Leumi. As regards terrorism, they were as anxious as the opposite side to prevent loss of life, British, Jewish or Arab. Personally he would have thought that such a statement as was suggested by the Government was not necessary, because they might be suspected of having struck a bargain. But if they insisted on a statement, then they would make it, as they had anyhow intended to issue such a statement if the results of these talks had proved to be negative, (though he hoped they would not). But he would ask them to leave the timing of such a statement to them. They would make things much easier if in the meantime the Government took some steps. One thing however he must make clear: that was that they could not undertake to say that they would co-operate with the Administration. They would have to act in their own way till the situation in Palestine had changed. After all, they had had to do many unpopular things in the past.

Sir GEORGE GATER asked whether the intention was to do good by stealth?

Mr. KAPLAN replied in the negative and said they would act publicly.

Sir GEORGE GATER asked whether Mr. Newton would like to say something on the question of co-operation?

Mr. NEWTON said that it depended upon what form of co-operation they had in mind. In the past there had been breaking of the law, and things had been done to embarrass them. What they wanted from them now was that if they knew terrorists they should hand them over to the authorities.

Mr. LINTON asked whether Mr. Newton thought there were Jews who would be prepared to hand over other Jews to the tender mercies of General Barker?

Mr. NEWTON said it was not only a question of General Barker.

Mr. LINTON said that, be that as it might, the Kishuv regarded the set-up in Palestine to-day as being General Barker.

Mr. NEWTON said he saw no difference between physical action and handing over terrorists.

Mr. SACHS said that there was a fundamental difference between their own activities, which would be accepted, and co-operation with the Administration, which would not.

Mr. KAPLAN said that they had no intention of kidnapping people nor of acting as informers, nor yet of creating their own "intelligence". They were /not

not the Government of Palestine. They would appeal to the Yishuv to help in preventing terrorism. They had informed them of dangers in the past.

Sir GEORGE GATER: Would that exclude such action now?

Mr. KAPLAN replied in the negative. But as long as the Mandate was not re-established, there should not be proper co-operation.

Sir GEORGE GATER asked what kind of statement they had in mind?

Mr. LOCKER said condemnation of terror and a call to the Yishuv to withhold help and assistance - food, shelter, etc - from terrorists.

Mr. MARTIN asked whether the villagers would help if the trail of terrorists led to them?

Mr. SACHSE thought that they should not go into too great detail.

Mr. NEWTON said that such statements had been made in the past.

Mr. LOCKER said he had already mentioned that.

Sir GEORGE GATER said that such statements had been made after incidents, but this was to be a general declaration.

Mr. LOCKER said that as regards the question of Civil non-co-operation, that depended upon what they would hear the following day. If the expulsions were stopped and there was a change as regards immigration, then no doubt the Yishuv would take that line. As regards the releases, he took it that this decision would also cover those who were subject to detention but were out of Palestine at the time?

Sir GEORGE GATER said that that was so.

Mr. KAPLAN said that Sir George had mentioned that the releases of other detainees would be subject to review. He pointed out that some of the people had been detained for months without review. That might have happened because there was an intention of punishing these men, or it might be due to the fact that the Administration was over-burdened. In any case, if the action was to be effective, it must be done quickly, and with grace.

Sir GEORGE GATER said that what had happened at the King David Hotel might have something to do with the delay.

Mr. KAPLAN said that there were many labour people being held in detention who could have had nothing to do with the King David.

Sir GEORGE GATER said that the Jewish Agency had asked for time, and such requests must be reciprocal.

Mr. SACHSE said that in Palestine every police officer or soldier had the right to detain anyone, whereas in England it would only be done by direction of the Home Secretary. In England there was an independent Committee which
/reviewed

reviewed all these cases. In Palestine he understood that there was a committee consisting of the C.I.D. and other officials.

Mr. NEWTON said that this was out of date. There was now a committee under a Judge.

Mr. SACHER then gave an example of one case in which it had taken about eighteen months to get a detention order reviewed, and when it was discovered that there was nothing in the dossier to justify detention, it took a further nine months before the person was released.

Sir GEORGE GATER said he was at a disadvantage because he did not know the particular case. From his experience in such matters there was nearly always another side to such questions - something to be said on behalf of the Administration.

Mr. ZASLANI said that from his experience in these matters of co-operation against terror, he must say that the relevant authorities in Palestine were much more inclined to deal with the shadier elements rather than with them.

Mr. NEWTON said that this statement was nowhere near the truth.

Sir GEORGE GATER said that they should not make such allegations when the Palestine Government was not in a position to repudiate them. Such matters should be raised in Palestine. As regards review, he would like to assure them that they wanted to hasten matters and he would go into the question.

Mr. LOCKER said that Sir George Gater had mentioned what he had said about the searches, and had told them what was the present line of the Administration. He had had a talk with the High Commissioner about the searches in Dorot and Ruhama about four weeks ago, and the High Commissioner had thought that some incidents had taken place there. But Mr. Locker had not been able to find any record of any such incident.

Sir GEORGE GATER said that that was the policy now, and that they must take it from him that it was so.

Mr. LOCKER asked whether they could tell their people this?

Mr. Locker Sir GEORGE GATER said that they would have to discuss this matter in Palestine, because there were military considerations to be taken into account. As regards the relaxation of the Defence Regulations, perhaps they might appoint two people, one from the Colonial Office, and perhaps Mr. Sachar, who might go through them and see what could be done at once regarding the most undesirable and unpleasant features of the Regulations? ~~But generally~~ they must leave this till they saw what effective steps ~~would be~~ taken against terrorism.

Mr. LINTON said that here again they had a vicious circle, because these Regulations undoubtedly poisoned the atmosphere. On both occasions when he had read these Regulations - and he had done so again just recently - he had been horrified. The Regulations were not only bad in themselves, but they were not being applied equally to all sections of the population. For instance, it ~~was~~

was a punishable offence to drill or wear uniform, rendering people liable to long terms of imprisonment, or even death. But two Arab organisations of a para-military character were drilling in public and no action had been taken against them. That was discrimination.

Mr. NEWTON said that they had taken action against the Arabs in 1936-38 - during the troubles.

Mr. LINTON: ^{said that they had} But you also took it against ~~the~~ ^{the} boys in 1940, when some of them were found drilling, and were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. When they were afterwards released, some of them joined the British Forces.

Mr. SACHER said that he saw the difficulty of the Government, particularly as they were dealing here only with a certain limited period. But if the Government themselves were to look into these Regulations and decide which of them should not be put into practice, that would be helpful. He personally had such a disgust at the Regulations that he would not like to be called in ~~on any discussion of them.~~

Mr. KAPLAN said that there were many things in these Regulations which had nothing to do with combatting terrorism.

Sir GEORGE GATER said that perhaps the best course would be for both sides to report to the full meeting which would take place the following day at 3.30 p.m.

London,
18.10.48.

SECRET

SHORT MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER
18th, 1946, at 3.30 p.m.

Present:

The Rt. Hon. A. Creech-Jones,
Sir George Gater,
Mr. J.M. Martin,
Mr. Newton,
Mr. Beeley,
Fl/Lt. A. Crawley, M.P.,
Mr. Trafford Smith,
Mr. Higham.

Dr. Ch. Weigmann,
Mr. E. Kaplan,
Mr. B. Locker,
Mr. H. Sacher,
Mr. I.J. Linton.

Mr. CREECH-JONES apologised for the delay in calling the meeting. They had had to make enquiries about some of the points raised. He appreciated the importance which they attached to the problem of immigration; also that unless this problem were solved they would not be able to get in Palestine that tranquillity which they all wished to see. But he feared that from their point of view he could not give them a very satisfactory answer. The Government appreciated, and was fully alive to, the bearing which this subject had on law and order, but practical difficulties made it impossible to give them the assurance they wanted. The Jewish Agency had asked for an increased quota, for the opening of the gates so that a larger number could come in right away. But the Government was in the middle of a Conference, and they would not be able to sustain that conference if such a concession were made now. It would have embarrassing effects on the conference, and on the Arab delegations, and from the point of view of the Government it was not practicable nor wise, as this was one of the major issues and could not be dealt with aside from the Conference. Apart from these reasons, this was a part of the Middle Eastern problem, and the implications of immigration could not be lost sight of. The Government view was that until this matter had been settled at the Conference, they could not make the gesture which had been suggested here. But even if this major matter could not be settled, they could deal with the ~~point~~ points which had been raised. They had received a report from the sub-committee on what was practicable and what was not. They would consider the suggestions which had emerged and the removal of some of the difficulties which prevented the Jews from taking part in the Conference. They were anxious that some of these difficulties should be removed, and that some of the people who were detained should be freed so that they might again take part in the work for their people. If the Agency would give expression to its feeling against the campaign of violence, and if they were willing to co-operate in the restoration of law and order with the Palestine Administration, then it was certain that the Government would make its contribution to some of the problems raised on the Jewish side. After consultation with the Palestine Government they could get the release of some of the detainees. Sir George had already said that some steps had been taken by the Palestine Administration, in order to adjust things so as to get tranquillity and order into the country. He would like them to help, and to make a gesture which would assist the Government to restore law and order.

/Dr.

Dr. WEIZMANN expressed his regret that the Government was unable to meet them on this problem. Certain consequences would have flowed from such a decision as they had asked for. First, it would have helped to establish law and order in the country. Secondly, if they could come to the Zionist Congress which would meet in December with a definite improvement in immigration, and some indication that the White Paper was more or less finished, then they would have had an orderly Congress and an Executive would have emerged of much the same kind as they had now. But he was not asking for assistance in regard to Congress - he personally was entirely disinterested. ~~It~~ It might be that he was flogging a dead horse, but if they could not get new immigration, what about dealing at least with Cyprus, which was a running sore? They could perhaps agree to bring the people over from Cyprus to Athlit and other places in Palestine. That suggestion was, of course a second - or third or fourth - best. He appreciated that there were some things that could not be done, and that the Government would do what they could in regard to others, but the reply which they had heard about immigration was making things very difficult for them.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that they appreciated the difficulties, and knew about Cyprus. ~~But~~ Unless there was a definite improvement there would also be difficulties for them. He ~~regretted that~~ the question of Cyprus was regarded as coming within the scope of the work of the Palestine Administration, but the point made by Dr. Weizmann would be noted and would be fully looked into. But he could not commit the Government at this stage.

Sir GEORGE GATZERT asked whether in regard to Cyprus Dr. Weizmann meant new immigration certificates?

Dr. WEIZMANN replied in the affirmative, but said that these were not really new people; they had been in Cyprus for some time now. The grant of immigration certificates to cover the people in Cyprus would not set the Jordan on fire. The Government always said that the Arabs would oppose this or that, but they never put these matters to the test. If everything that had had to be done for the Jewish National Home had been subject to Arab consent, then the Government had better give up the ghost. The Government should tell the Arabs quite firmly, as they had sometimes told the Jews, that they could not have everything their own way, and must compromise.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that such ideas had not escaped their minds, and that some of these suggestions might conceivably have been tested. Immigration policy was not a question of the consent of the Arabs in the way in which Dr. Weizmann had used the term. It was because the Government had summoned this Conference at which the problem of immigration had been foremost, and not because Arab consent had to be obtained. They wanted the Conference to succeed, and it would be unfortunate for the Government if it precipitated a problem which would make the Conference impossible. The Arabs would regard it as a breach of faith.

Mr. SACHSE said that perhaps the suggestion with regard to Cyprus was not a question of immigration certificates. Instead of keeping them in Cyprus, they could be kept in Palestine. That was a real distinction.

/Mr.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that the Government was up against a real practical problem which they could not ignore. Cyprus was the only practical way of dealing with that problem.

Mr. LOCKER said that he saw no reason for the new departure which had been announced at the time when the Conference had already been summoned. Perhaps they were flogging a dead horse. The Government position was that they could not give them immigration because the Arabs would not like it and it might jeopardize the Conference. Well, that might cut both ways. They would have to report to their people and see what could be done.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that if they could make some general contribution along the lines suggested, then some of the difficulties would be lessened. If they could associate themselves in some sort of statement - he did not mean to suggest that they had not already made statements against terrorism. (Mr. Creech-Jones here read a few sentences from a draft statement which was later circulated - copy attached to this note).

Mr. LOCKER said that it would not be right for them to express any opinion about the text which had been prepared. They expressed the will of the Jewish people. If they were to issue a statement prepared by the Government it would be regarded as a bargain, and would not help them with their community. They would continue to combat terrorism in their own way, and he asked them to leave it to them. He felt hurt that they had been given the text of a statement. It was the first time that had happened in their relationship. He asked them to accept it from them that they would fight against terrorism. ~~If they were to accept this formulation, it would become known and would only do harm~~

Sir GEORGE GATER said that they had tried faithfully to repeat what the other side had said with regard to the statement; they had left out the reference to co-operation etc. He himself felt hurt that the thing had been misunderstood.

Mr. LOCKER said that he certainly had no intention of hurting anyone, but he begged them to leave this question to them.

[At this stage, as previously advised, Dr. Weizmann left the meeting]

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that he felt there would be some virtue in the Jews' saying something of the sort so as to resolve the difficulty. He had his eye on the Conference.

Mr. KAPLAN said that if Mr. Shertek were to be asked whether a statement should be made so that he could be released, he felt sure that the reply would be in the negative. Terrorism was becoming more dangerous than ever to them, and they would see in Palestine what could be done. If a statement would help, then they would consider it.

/Mr.

Mr. LOCKER said that they might have to add something to the statement. After all, there was a background. But they would continue to combat terror. They should release the leaders as quickly as possible, and they (the J.A.) would independently do all they could. Some of the leaders now detained would have a great deal to do with combating terrorism.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that they appreciated that on such questions one could not bargain. They also appreciated Mr. Locker's request for a gesture from the Government. But there were difficulties in the way of the Government doing that. Most of them desired to see these people released and restored to normal life, but it would help very much if a further demonstration on the part of the Agency were forthcoming. It was not just a simple problem between them and the Jewish Agency. If the Government were to act as they suggested, then anything the Agency was going to say, and any contribution they were going to make, should come as early as possible.

Mr. SACHNER said that he agreed that it was not a bargain, but it was also not a gesture. They were not asking for the releases.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said he appreciated that, but one of the difficulties was the detention, and they wanted to make co-operation possible.

two Mr. SACHNER said that if there was to be a Conference, it must be between the parties. So long as some of the people were detained, one of the parties was not a party but a Rump. One of the conditions surely was that the Agency should be there as an entity and not as a fraction. The problem was not one for them but for H.M.G.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that these meetings had been called for the purpose of lessening tension. They knew that the releases would help. That was the narrower problem, and was not concerned with the Conference. It was a question of raising friendly feelings and co-operation, and if the Jewish Agency could contribute to that, other things would also happen.

Mr. KAPLAN said he had one or two questions to ask:

- (i) Did it mean that so long as the Jewish Agency and the National Institutions did not make a statement, the people would not be released?
- (ii) What did they mean by "some" of the detainees?

Sir GEORGE GATER said that by "leaders" they had meant to cover all the leaders, and not only members of the Executive of the Jewish Agency. Of course, the releases would be subject to review.

Mr. KAPLAN: Does that mean that the release of Mr. Shertok and Mr. Ben-Gurion would be subject to review?

Sir GEORGE GATER said that they would be quickly dealt with. The intention was to release all the leaders.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that he ought to make it clear that there was no /decision

decision to release the leaders. If the Government were to make any contribution to that problem it would be easier if the mind of the Jewish Agency could be made clear.

Mr. SACHER said that it would not be easy for Mr. Kaplan at the meeting of the Actions Committee.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that he had said enough to show what was in the Government's mind, but he could not give them a categorical reply.

Mr. SACHER said that they had indicated that whatever the Government did it was their intention to take action against terrorism. It was they (the C.O.) who had indicated why there should be a time-limit.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that the other side had brought in the question of time by pointing out the urgency. They, for their part, would act as quickly as possible.

Sir GEORGE CATER said that the Government had declared what they intended to do, but they had only a hazy notion of what the other side meant to do.

Mr. KAPLAN said that they had mentioned yesterday what they wanted to do, and what they could not do. They would act not only for the sake of law and order - because the concept of law and order was constantly changing - but they would act in the interests of the Jewish people, and he would like to say that there was a great deal of common ground.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that it had been said that certain leaders of the Jewish community had not dissociated themselves from terrorism, and that some had even condoned it. Jewish leaders had attended the funerals of terrorists and as a consequence there was a tendency to make heroes of them. Such an attitude was not helpful, and he thought that it should receive some attention while they were considering their line of action.

Mr. LOCKER said that he was glad that that had been mentioned. That was probably why one of the leaders was now in Latrun. Had he been in Palestine, he also would have attended that funeral - not as a mark of respect to young Weitz, but as a mark of sympathy for his father. No conclusions should have been drawn from such an incident. It was wrong, and had they been asked about it, they would have been able to explain it.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that as a result of these talks, he knew now what was in their minds, and hoped that they knew what was in his. He looked forward to the next weeks securing better times in Palestine. He thought they should agree on a statement for the press.

Mr. KAPLAN said that they were grateful for the facilities granted to them to come to London. He must, however, say that he was going back with a certain amount of discouragement. It was not only the problem of immigration; they had wanted to know what were the intentions of the Government.

/They

They had been told to come to the Conference. He did not know what would result from the Conference. Then they had asked about immigration, and had again been told to come to the Conference. He thought he ought to draw attention to the fact that they were dealing with a very delicate problem, and with a sensitive people who were ready to fight for their freedom.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said that they should not be too discouraged.

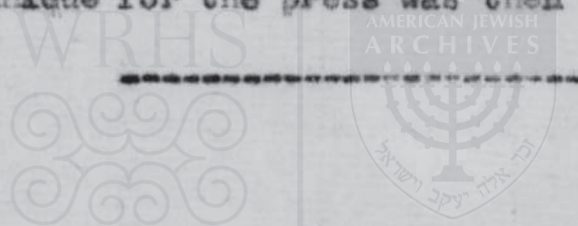
Mr. LOCKER said that the Inner Zionist Council would meet on Wednesday, while on Thursday there would be elections in Palestine for the Zionist Congress. If the Government could make some gesture before that, it would ease the situation. It was not a bargain. But people looked at actions, not words. Whatever the Government might desire to do they should do it quickly.

Mr. CREECH-JONES said he would ask them to do the same.

Mr. SACHER thanked Mr. Creech-Jones and the other representatives of the Government for the full and courteous hearing given to the Agency's representatives.

A short communique for the press was then approved.

London,
20.10.48.



DRAFT PREPARED BY
COLONIAL OFFICE -
18.10.46.

Declaration by the Jewish Agency

The Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, in conjunction with the National Institutions of the Yishuv, call upon the Yishuv to dissociate themselves by every practicable means from the acts of violence, murder, and sabotage committed in the name of Zionism. It must be recognised that terrorist activities have brought death and suffering to innocent members of all communities in Palestine, and engender an atmosphere of hate and bitterness which precludes any agreed solution of the Palestine problem.

The Executive and the Vaad Leumi, therefore, declare that it is the duty of all members of the Yishuv to show their abhorrence and condemnation of these criminal acts by the complete cessation of all intercourse with members of terrorist organisations. No terrorist should receive food, funds, shelter or assistance of any kind whatsoever from any law abiding member of the community. It must be made clear beyond any doubt that the deeds of violence which have shattered the peace of Palestine in the past bring dishonour on the ideals of Zionism and can no longer be tolerated.

Minutes of a Meeting held on Monday, 5th May, 1947, at 77 Great Russell Street,
London W. C. 1.

Present:

Mr. B. Locker,
Mr. S. Z. Shragai
Prof. S. Brodetsky
Mr. J. Linton
Mr. A. Eban
Mr. J. Hodess
Mr. L. Bakstansky
Mr. S. Rowson

(1) Professor Brodetsky congratulated Mr. Locker on his sixtieth birthday on behalf of himself and all members of the staff.

(2) REPORTS

Mr. Locker reported that he had had a telephone conversation last night with Dr. Goldmann who had expressed the opinion that there was a possibility that they would be invited to appear before the Political Committee of the United Nations Assembly, which in fact was the Assembly itself under another name. Regarding the attitude of the U.S. Government, Dr. Goldmann referred to his previous report on this subject. The American Government was afraid of establishing a precedent which might be used on behalf of the World Federation of Trade Unions and that might be a reason why the Russian representative was supporting their request. Mr. Eban's presence was required in America for a few weeks in order to assist in the preparation of the Memorandum which could be delivered early in June. Dr. Goldmann thought that it was doubtful if the Actions Committee meeting could take place in New York but that it would probably take place in Paris or Jerusalem.

Mr. Eban reported on his visits to France, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. After referring to Dr. Goldmann's report of the conversation at the Quai d'Orsay he continued that in Paris the view of the French delegate to the Special Assembly (M. Boussanger) was that if there was to be a general debate in the Assembly, justice demanded Jewish representation, but it would be better to strive that there should be no debate at all at this session which had no authority to discuss any matters of substance. In discussions on French policy towards the Arabs, several French diplomats had expressed anxiety over the penetration of the Arab League into North Africa and Morocco and indeed it was to counter that pressure that M. Auriol had undertaken his journey to French North Africa. Quai d'Orsay representatives explained that French policy was clear - namely to oppose the Arab League's attempt to detach North Africa from France and they inquired if it would be possible for the Jewish community in Algeria to assist along these lines. Mr. Eban explained that such a policy gave ground for common action with them but that it required free access for their representatives to reach Algeria. The French view was that behind the efforts of the Arab League in North Africa stood the British Government. Mr. Eban also saw the Lebanese friends of Emil Edde who thought that with the impending elections in the Lebanon the time was ripe for Edde to return to power. He had learned that Dr. Goldmann had made a favourable impression on M. Benot with the moderation of his demands. His general impression was that there was a possibility of more constructive political work in France in view of the element of anxiety about Arab expansion. Mr. Bevin's letter on the question of illegal immigration had caused some disapproval and the Government appeared to have decided to do no more than to send a formal answer. The press had given publicity to the execution of Dov Gruner without going into the political aspects of the

matter, but stressing the element of "Resistance".

In Belgium the local Zionist circles had few contacts with the Government. Details of Mr. Eban's talks were contained in a separate memorandum. M. Spaak examined the problem in great detail and appeared displeased with the Arab tactics at U.N.O. Instructions had been sent to the Belgium delegate to avoid an extended debate. M. Spaak's view was that the Jewish procedural demands were reasonable but that they should strive to limit the Agenda of the Assembly to the setting up of a Commission. He pointed out that Mr. Trygve Lie's invocation of the precedent of the World Federation of Trade Unions was not a parallel one. Turning to the substance of the issue he asked what were their views as to the future of Palestine. Mr. Eban explained that there were two trends of thought, one leading to independence, which implied partition, and the other looking for a continuation of the Mandate system but with free immigration etc. Mr. Spaak, speaking personally, thought that the former was more likely to be successful at U.N.O. which did not like Trusteeship in general but which favoured the idea of independence and the establishment of small states. This latter in particular was attractive to the small states themselves.

In conclusion M. Spaak said that without going into the moral aspects of terrorism, he wished to make it clear that its presence was making it difficult for European socialists to help the Jewish cause because it meant that supporting the Jewish cause implied support of a revolt against England. Mr. Eban had also had a talk with M. Camillo Huysmass who had evinced a very robust Zionist sympathy.

Finally he had made contact with two members of the Belgian Parliament, M. Buset and Senator Motz, who were ready to invite Parliamentary friends to hear the Jewish point of view, although not to undertake any actual organisation of responsibility. A meeting had been suggested for May 20th. It was agreed that Professor Brodetsky would address this meeting and try and arrange for either Mr. Crossman or Mr. Foot to join in sponsoring it.

Mr. Eban continued that there was no office of the Jewish Agency in Belgium, except a small immigration office and there were certain dangers of this office undertaking political work. The Executive would have to decide the exact limits of its authority.

Mr. Linton said that Dr. Sneh was coming to London next week and the matter could be discussed then.

Continuing, Mr. Eban said that M. Spaak had asked for written material and said he would be prepared to consider the problem in greater detail before September.

In Holland, the situation was the opposite to that in Belgium, as the Dutch Zionists have close contact with their Government, and, in fact, had already submitted a memorandum based on documents received from New York. Nevertheless he had seen the Foreign Minister for a ceremonial talk and had then seen Professor Francoi, Head of the Dutch Foreign Office U.N.O. Department. Prof. Francois said that his instructions would be that their delegation must oppose the Arab demand for an extended Agenda. Although the Dutch were very interested in England's policy, they had consideration of international law and were concerned to see that the law was not broken. He pointed out that the members of the Permanent Mandates Committee had been elected *ad personam* and not as official representatives of their governments, and asked what would be their reaction to similar appointments to the U.N. Commission. He also asked

for a memorandum dealing particularly with the legal aspects of the situation and suggested that their representatives in New York should maintain contact with the Dutch representatives.

Mr. Eban had also spoken to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Ministers of Luxembourg, M. Dujong and M. Beck, who were not opposed to the idea of the establishment of small State. In general, their foreign policy was close to that of Belgium. They asked for our procedural demands in writing, which Mr. Eban was arranging.

The meeting terminated



July 7, 1949

Dr. Emanuel Neumann
521 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York

My dear Emanuel:

I am sending you herewith the minutes of the meetings which were held at the Colonial Office beginning January 29, 1947. Please return them to me as soon as you are through with them.

It is most interesting to read them against the background of the events of the last two years, and it is interesting to note how time and again our good friends buckled under and gave way.

With all good wishes, I remain

Most cordially yours,

ABBA HILLEL SILVER

AHS:er
Encs.

Via Registered Mail

הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל

The Jewish Agency for Palestine

MEMORANDUM August 5, 1947

To: American Section of the Executive

FROM: Arthur Lourie

I am enclosing herewith copy of "Short Minutes of Interview
at the Colonial Office, July 24, 1947."

AL:NK
Encl.

SECRET

SHORT MINUTES OF INTERVIEW AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE, JULY 24th, 1947, at 4 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. Ivor Thomas
Mr. Trafford Smith

Professor S. Brodetsky
Mr. Shragai
Mr. Rowson

Professor Brodetsky, after apologising for asking for the interview at such short notice, said that the reason why they had come a third time was as follows: On Monday, he had asked for information, and had been disappointed not to see the Colonial Secretary. From Mr. Martin he had received the impression that the Government had some idea as to the future of these refugees. From the statement made in the House of Commons, however, he had received a different impression, and for that reason he had asked for a second interview with Mr. Martin yesterday. At that interview, he had made it clear that the Jewish Agency thought that the ships should be returned to Haifa. They did not accept the view that the British Government were entitled to introduce legislation about the immigration in defiance of the Mandate, and for that reason they felt that these people, having fought their way to Palestine, should not be given the worst possible punishment, which was implied in sending them back to Europe. That was the reason for asking for their return to Haifa. The reply had been that the Authorities were acting in accordance with the law.

Dr. Brodetsky then said, at the end of the interview, that sending them back to Europe was infinitely worse than even the policy of Cyprus, which the Jewish Agency did not accept. In Cyprus at least there was some hope.

Now he had received some further information which he felt it his duty to bring to the notice of the Secretary of State. He had learnt that the French Government would only allow to land those who left the ships voluntarily. He was therefore asking the Government if they proposed to use force against those who refused to leave the ships? To do so in the territorial waters of a friendly power would be an act against the international practice. He thought it necessary to place this before the Minister. The situation was one of some difficulty; he was not given to making wild statements, but thought that an international scandal might arise. The British wireless had highly recommended the step which His Majesty's Government had taken as a way of stopping illegal immigration. He doubted if it would do that; but it had certainly produced another situation which, in turn, might give rise to other difficulties which the British Government might not have foreseen. He would be glad to have any information.

Mr. Ivor Thomas said that the matter had had the closest attention of Mr. Creech-Jones, and also of the Foreign Secretary and the Government as a whole. He could not say anything further about the general question of immigration, except that he could not accept the premises of the Jewish Agency. The British Government had carried out the Mandate and had created a National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine. They could not neglect Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which was a part of the Mandate (sic!). The problem could be solved if it were treated solely as a humanitarian one, but it was bound up with the whole question of a Jewish State. The Zionist Organisation ought to think itself fortunate that the policy of returning illegal immigrants to the country from which they came had not been carried out before. That would have been the proper thing to have done, but it was not done for other reasons. Now the situation had become urgent; there was limited accommodation in Cyprus.

Professor Brodetsky said that the Jews had not chosen Cyprus; Palestine was their land.

Mr. Ivor Thomas said that in a sense it was true that Palestine was the Jewish land. But the Arabs were taking a different view, and that created a fundamental conflict with which the British had to deal. The Cyprus policy was an inducement to illegal immigration. They could do nothing else but return illegal immigrants to the countries from which they came. Under international law nothing else would be legal. Once in French territorial waters, the people would become the responsibility of the French Government.

Mr. Trafford Smith said that the Colombia story could be killed, and that the people would be kept in France.

Professor Brodetsky said that to be specific, the problem was the gap between the ships and the shore in French territorial waters. What would happen to those who refused to land?

Mr. Shragai pointed out that although these people were being returned to France they were not French citizens, and the Government's legal argument had no basis. They had left through France in order to save their lives, but France was not their place of origin. He asked why it was necessary to send them so far away from Palestine, if it were necessary to send them away from Palestine at all?

Mr. Ivor Thomas said that accommodation in Cyprus was practically full, and the policy of Cyprus encouraged the traffic.

Professor Brodetsky asked whether they were going to use force inside French territorial waters?

Mr. Ivor Thomas replied in the negative; their responsibility would end inside French territorial waters.

Professor Brodetsky asked what would happen if the passengers refused to leave the ship?

Mr. Trafford Smith said that the complicated legal questions were being studied by the legal experts of the Foreign Office, from whom no final decision had yet been received.

Professor Brodetsky pointed out that this policy might have very serious international consequences.

Mr. Ivor Thomas said that to admit these people to Palestine would also have serious international consequences.

Professor Brodetsky said that the Arab opposition had been deliberately encouraged by the whole of the Government's policy in the last 30 years. But the position of France and in France raised entirely different questions of international law.

Mr. Trafford Smith said that it was clear that the French would accept those who were willing to land.

Professor Brodetsky understood that there was some opposition in many French circles to the whole procedure adopted by the French Government. He felt that he must put this side directly to those who made policy. The Government's latest step was punitive to the individuals concerned, and to the Jews generally, but it also raised issues of an entirely different character. The Jewish Agency was an international Jewish body, and the latest developments introduced complications which might affect

hundreds of thousands of Jews.

Mr. Ivor Thomas agreed that the tragedy had a long history. The British Government wanted to help to solve it, and believed it could do so if it were treated as a humanitarian problem. But it was Zionist aspirations which gave rise to trouble, and conflict with the Arabs.

Professor Brodetsky said he was not there to discuss Zionist aims, except to say that Zionism wanted to reverse the historic process of dispersion, which always led to anti-Semitism.

Mr. Ivor Thomas said that the same process which led to anti-Semitism was now taking place in Palestine. There was no anti-Semitism in Great Britain; and he thought that other countries would be the same as Great Britain.

Professor Brodetsky pointed out that unfortunately this was not so in fact. Mr. Bevin's dispersion policy had no justification. The British Government must not say that Zionism was creating the problem.

Mr. Ivor Thomas thought that the Arabs of Palestine would be more kindly disposed towards Jewish immigration if not for the fear of a Zionist State.

Professor Brodetsky said that if the Jews remained a minority in Palestine, then the whole problem would remain.

Mr. Ivor Thomas said that that was precisely what the Arabs feared.

Professor Brodetsky said that that was not what he had come to discuss.

Mr. Shragai said that there was no other country opening its doors to these Jews, who had to save themselves. They should not be punished like this merely for political reasons; no-one wanted them; Cyprus itself was a severe punishment, but at least it left them some hope.

Mr. Ivor Thomas said that Cyprus had its own problems.

Professor Brodetsky again reminded him that the Jews had not chosen Cyprus, but Palestine, and that the problem had to be solved.

Mr. Ivor Thomas explained that this was the reason why the British Government had referred the question to UNO. He should have thought that this was the worst possible time to conduct illegal immigration. Those responsible for it might have refrained.

Professor Brodetsky said that as the British Government had stopped carrying out its obligations under the Mandate, he could not feel much opposition to the policy of illegal immigration.

Mr. Ivor Thomas said that the Mandate did not provide for unlimited Jewish immigration. H.M. Government had given the closest attention to the problem, and thought that the Jewish organisations were very wrong in encouraging such a reprehensible policy when the matter was in the hands of UNO.

Professor Brodetsky said that during the war when Great Britain was in danger, Britons had done many similarly "responsible things". The Jews were now in the same danger. He sincerely hoped that there would be no attempt to use force on the ships. There was still time for a change. There had already been evil effects in Palestine. He therefore asked them to turn the ships round and send them back to Palestine, or at least to Cyprus. He hoped nothing would happen now to create new complications.

The meeting terminated at 4.30 p.m.

London, 25.7.47