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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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United Jewish Appeal, United Palestine Appeal, Emergency  
Committee for Palestine, 1939-1940.

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REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN PALESTINE, OCTOBER, 1939,  
DELIVERED BY MR. M. SHERTOK ON HIS ARRIVAL IN LONDON  
9.10.39

What we have to face in Palestine today is the very severe impact of the war situation upon the economic life of the country, even though militarily Palestine is still unaffected by the War and may remain so for a considerable time, or even throughout the duration of the conflict. We have before us to-day in Palestine a picture bearing all the marks and peculiarities of a country containing on the one hand (on the Jewish side) a fairly complex and sensitive mechanism, and on the other hand primitive elements of population - Jewish as well as Arab - with a Government trying to hold the balance between modernity and primitive conditions, and finding itself - though imbued with the desire to control the emergency - absolutely unequipped with effective means of doing so.

Perhaps the main trouble we have to face at once is that of the drastic curtailment of credit. In the very first few days of the panic following the outbreak of war, we had a run on the banks, resulting in the withdrawal of between three and four million pounds of deposits, and creating a very acute banking crisis. The Government stepped in immediately (prompted by us and our banking committee), but stepped in only, as in many other spheres, with restrictive and not constructive measures. It closed the banks for several days, and then allowed them to re-open on condition that every depositor should be allowed to withdraw only up to 15 per cent. of his deposit. This provided a breathing-space during which measures could be devised for dealing with the situation. Naturally, this situation, governed by rigid restrictions, could only be a very brief transitional stage towards something more regular, and the question to be settled was what relief could be made available for the weaker banks. The idea was that the three major factors operating in this sphere - the Government, Barclay's Bank and the Anglo-Palestine Bank - should get together and provide a joint fund for this purpose.

But the Government bluntly refused to take a hand in this joint venture. They said they could only use their regulating authority, and that they would not pledge one pound of their financial resources for this emergency. This greatly irritated the directors of Barclay's Bank, both in Palestine and in London, and they decided to wash their hands of the whole business, their line being that the Government was more responsible than they were, and if the Government could afford to do nothing about it, it was not for them to risk their clients' money. As a result, the Anglo-Palestine Bank was left alone in the field, and had to consider very seriously the question whether or not it should take action entirely unaided, or with such assistance as was forthcoming from Lloyd's Bank, or whether it should throw the whole responsibility on the Government, and risk seeing a large number of second and third rate Jewish banks going to rack and ruin. Time for the taking of effective action at this end to change the decision of the Palestine Government was extremely limited; and it was a question of "take it or leave it". And we decided to take the plunge. I say "we" because the Executive was very directly implicated; we were consulted by the Bank, and we had to take the responsibility for the ultimate decision. That decision was that the Bank should create, with the help of £250,000 provided by Lloyd's Bank, a fund of some £600,000, including £350,000 of its own money, to be placed at the disposal of the smaller banks, so that they could, if the run continued after the re-opening of the banks, draw upon it to meet claims. The hope was that this amount would prove sufficient to enable them to meet the immediate emergency. In any case, the Anglo-Palestine Bank felt that this was the limit of what it could risk. A list of banks was drawn up for relief under this scheme, and that list did not include the most important of the secondary banks - the Ashrai - because to normalize the position of the Ashrai Bank alone would have taken hundreds of thousands of pounds, and this was beyond the means of the Anglo-Palestine Bank. Nor did the Anglo-Palestine Bank feel

that, with its inadequate resources to aid all Jewish banks, and unaided as it was by the Government, it was called upon to save the two Arab banks, which also found themselves in a very bad position.

The step taken was a very risky one. I can quite understand its being criticized - as I understand it has been criticized - in banking quarters in London. We are, after all, only at the beginning of this crisis, and may yet have still more serious storms to weather; if the Anglo-Palestine Bank begins by appropriating money on this scale, and people get accustomed to look to the Bank and not to the Government for help, we may find ourselves in a very serious position. For the time being, however, the experiment has succeeded. The action of the Anglo-Palestine Bank was much appreciated by the Government as a patriotic gesture, and made a profound impression on the country. It steadied people's nerves, and when the limitation on the withdrawal of deposits was removed from that list of banks (which includes the vast majority of the smaller banks, with only very few exceptions), £180,000 were withdrawn the first day, £60,000 the second day, hardly anything on the third day, while on the fourth and subsequent days money began to trickle back into the banks. For the time being, then, we have succeeded. But we have still to worry about the future, and also about the present. For though this risky step on the part of the Anglo-Palestine Bank has for the time being saved the banks themselves, it has not solved the problem of credit. The banks have now to be very cautious and have to do their utmost to get back to the degree of liquidity which was theirs before the crisis. They have to accumulate reserves and deny credit. Credit thus remains very severely restricted and this has a deadening effect on the country's economic life. There is an all-round insistence on cash payments, and this has intensified the state of stagnation which set in with the declaration of war, and caused very acute suffering.

So the problem which we still have to face is the building up of some

resources which will not only save the banks from ruin, but will enable them to revert so far as possible to normal conditions of operation, and this raises the question of a re-discounting fund. I have already had an opportunity of discussing this problem with Mr. Istorik, who thinks that something might be done. In Palestine we have discussed it with the Treasurer and the High Commissioner. All I can say at the moment is that certain suggestions which we put to them were not turned down, and the Treasurer agreed to accept a memorandum on the subject from us. I will not go into detail here - it can be a matter of interest only to people with specialized knowledge - but I will say this, that if we do not get what we need in this direction, I am very much afraid that Palestine will continue economically in a strait jacket.

A branch of our economy which has been particularly hard hit by the restriction of credit is the orange industry. Restricted credits are not the only factor operating, but they are the most important. Orange-growing in general was in a fairly bad way before the crisis arose. In addition, it now had to face a further sharp curtailment of the usual seasonal advances made to orange-growers on the security of their crops. Moreover, there was the uncertainty of shipping this year's crop. The cumulative effect of all these was disastrous. People became extremely nervous, and work was cut down to the barest minimum. Cultivation is barely sufficient to keep the trees alive, and nothing like what is necessary for the well being of the groves. Some people have not even felt able to continue with the minimum - and there are even cases, though exceptional ones, of groves being abandoned. But generally, as little work as possible is being done on the orange-groves. People say it is a Jewish characteristic to do as much as possible for one's children, and not as little; and Jewish orange-growers generally took the same view about their groves. The change over to a minimum programme is therefore all the more violent. The result has been that between 6000 and 7000 workers

were thrown out of work in the orange colonies almost overnight, and this, with the general effects of the crisis, has deprived even larger numbers of people in the colonies of their livelihood. The question now is how best to help the orange-trade through this critical period. A committee of bankers is now sitting, and is giving serious consideration to this problem. Their main object is to provide funds for the conversion of the debts which weigh down the orange industry - mainly short term obligations at high rates of interest. In the opinion of our experts the situation is by no means without hope; on the contrary, they see great prospects for the orange trade. It is mainly a question of the successful carrying through of this conversion operation, which they believe will only be possible if a fund of some £500,000 can be provided by the Jewish Agency at a very low rate of interest.

But you know how we, the Agency, stand financially; you know we are not in a position to do this. All we could include in our present emergency budget for credits to the orange-growers is a niggardly amount of £10,000 - a mere earnest of the Agency's goodwill, and no more than a nominal contribution.

Another branch of our economic structure which has been severely affected by the crisis is the building industry. It is interesting to note that in the weeks immediately preceding the crisis, one began to notice symptoms of a new wave of "prosperity" in Palestine - at all events of a new upward trend. Building was beginning to pick up, capital was being more freely made available for investment in this and other spheres, and generally things were looking more hopeful. As a result of the crisis and its effects on credit, as well as of the dearth of building materials, the difficulty of imports, and the general lack of confidence in the future, private building activities have completely ceased, and this has aggravated unemployment in the towns, where the numbers of unemployed were already fairly considerable even before the crisis.

To sum up on the employment, the fact is that we have got now to look

after some 16,000 to 18,000 unemployed (some say up to 20,000); we have either to create relief works for them - works necessary in themselves, but particularly urgent now in view of the unemployment situation - or stimulate employment in some other way, or if neither of these is practicable, to provide direct relief in order to save them and their families from starvation. The last method, though cheaper today, is terribly wasteful in the long run, both financially and humanly. I am speaking here of "proletarian" unemployment; these figures do not include those of the middle classes, small traders, etc., who have also lost their livelihood through the crisis. Members of the staff of our Economic Research Institute estimate the total number of people for whom some provision has to be made at 100,000 souls - over 20 per cent. of the total Jewish population. All these people call for help.

Plans have been worked out for dealing with this situation. There is a comprehensive national building scheme comprising 2000 two-roomed houses, of which 1000 houses, or their equivalent in rooms, are to be put up in our settlements, 500 in orange colonies and 500 in workers' quarters in the towns. A great deal of the money is to come from local sources, but a contribution from outside is indispensable. We are also working on a scheme of relieving unemployment in the colonies by a large-scale transfer of workers to the settlements, and to reclamation camps in the areas of Jewish National Fund land in the hills. This again calls for extraordinary means. The works to be done are very important in themselves, and they can now be done much more cheaply than under normal conditions. But the means are not yet there, and in the meantime, the unemployment situation is growing daily more acute.

Yet this extremely - almost desperately - difficult situation is not without its hopeful features. If some avenues are closed others are opening. The very difficulty of imports from abroad provides new opportunities for other branches of our economy, notably for industry and mixed farming. But again we must have substantial means in order to take advantage of the opportunities of

expansion which are presenting themselves.

Industry has on the whole been less affected than building and orange-growing, and some industries are already making progress just because of the general depression. If the war should be prolonged we may find ourselves in a position where there is a good solid natural protection for our industries, allowing both of the expansion of existing undertakings and the establishment of new ones. We all know that during the last war, certain centres in India became industrialized - in fact India and some other Dominions achieved their present degree of industrialization chiefly as a result of the war. I am not saying that Palestine is now in exactly the same position, but some of the elements of that situation are certainly present in Palestine today. The internal market for manufactured goods will now be secure against competition from abroad, and there is bound to be a great hunger for goods in all the neighboring countries, and possibly in countries further afield, as production passes from a peace-time to a war-time basis in the main exporting countries, imports from Germany shrink or cease, and imports even from allied and neutral countries have to contend with great transport difficulties and war risks. A situation is thus bound to arise in which whatever we can produce we will certainly find a market for. Already there has been a semi-official approach to us from Turkey; they have asked us whether we can cover in Palestine at least a part of their pharmaceutical requirements (which normally they get, as to 90 per cent. or so, from Germany). A small delegation - half scientific and half commercial - is just now in Ankara to explore these possibilities with representatives of the Turkish Government, with a view to finding out what Turkey needs, and how far Palestine can supply it. Other such opportunities exist, and no doubt more will materialize as time goes on. But first and foremost we have the local market. The Ata Textile Works are now regularly working three shifts a day, and barely managing to cover the local demand. And similar hopeful signs are visible elsewhere.

But for industry too the problem of credits is a serious one. There is the very difficult problem of financing imports of raw materials, which calls for the establishment of some central agency. There is, above all, the need for considerable new investment - new investment which will certainly not be entirely taken care of by private capital. If we really want to make the most of the opportunities created by this crisis, we shall have to consider industry as we have hitherto considered agriculture: not as the almost exclusive domain of private capital, with minor help for research and some assistance during infancy from the national funds, but as the proper domain of national capital, with such help as may be forthcoming from private sources. A great deal can, of course, still be obtained in Palestine itself from private investors, provided there were at any rate a partial guarantee from public funds against risk of losses, which are, of course, greatly increased by reason of the war, and long term investments content with low returns. A plan has already been worked out for war-time industrial expansion. It is embodied in a voluminous document which goes into a good deal of detail with regard to individual branches. The gist is that what is required is national investment on a considerable scale, which would drag in some private capital in its train.

Turning now to agriculture generally, again the internal market is now fairly secure, particularly since the neighboring countries are still in a state of panic, and have placed a practical embargo on all sorts of exports. Even so the problem of food-stuffs is not insoluble, though it remains serious. Local productions will naturally have priority in war-time, and the question arises here, too, of fresh capital in order to permit of expansion of production. We must not forget that at least 50 of our settlements are still in their infancy; they were established during the last three years, and still require initial investment on a fairly substantial scale in order to become fully productive and self-supporting. A scheme has been worked out for increasing agricultural production which calls for expenditure on the sinking of wells,

erection of irrigation plants, and other initial works and equipment.

I have indicated these two possibilities of "making hay while the sun shines". But we cannot make hay with our ten fingers; we have to have the wherewithal.

But there are other prospects of a real advance which would enormously strengthen our position, and enable us to find ourselves at the end of the War in a totally different and much stronger position than we are now. I refer to the possibilities of land purchase. Offers of land are now coming in from all parts of the country - north, south, east and west. Of course you know that no purchase of land in Palestine can be made effective in 24 hours from the moment the offer is made. It always takes a very long time to negotiate and settle matters. The Keren Kayemeth, limited as are its financial resources, must perforce concentrate upon the most important acquisitions - important from the point of view of colonization and of strategy. The K.K.L. must be, things being what they are, selective and restrictive in its policy; it cannot entertain any and every offer made to it. The question of creating funds sufficient for us to take advantage of all the possibilities of land purchase which offer themselves is a very pressing one. And we must not forget that it is never enough to buy land; we must occupy it immediately. If there should be a danger of certain legislation now under discussion becoming retroactive, that danger will be much greater in the case of land bought and not occupied than it can be in the case of land inhabited and under cultivation. Apart from this major danger of the land law, there is a permanent danger involved in holding land which is unoccupied and untilled - it is liable to be encroached upon by neighbors. Land robbery upon unoccupied lands is always taking place in broad daylight in Palestine.

Thus we have always to bear in mind that land purchase means finding not only the money for the land itself, but also money for occupation and development. And you cannot occupy land by merely putting up a military post; that

impresses neither the Government nor the Arabs, and is demoralizing for our own people. Occupying land means giving people the opportunity to do real work on it, to dig a well, build a house, plant trees. While tilling and planting they will also set up a military post, naturally, but it is no use just sitting on an empty stretch of land with a rifle in your hand. And even this last costs money.

Then we have to face the cost of continuing our immigration. In the Jewish year just concluded, we had a total immigration of some 35,000, which is a very respectable figure even by comparison with our record figures. Rather more than half of it was "illegal", rather less than half "legal". At present immigration, both "legal" and "illegal" is continuing. Boats are arriving. You all know that after a great many ups and downs (London has been very active, and finally successful in the negotiations) we have now got leave to take in a further 2900 refugees from Germany. It is a great achievement, but what a financial liability it means for us. We have to charter ships, pay travelling expenses, and take care of the immigrants on arrival, and to do all this much more directly and on a larger scale than we have done in the past. The problem of the Maapilim is now more acute than ever. We used to count on launching a Maapil into Palestinian life with a grant of roughly £2. This included £1.250 for bedding, equipment, etc., and 650 mils for the first subscription to the Kupath Holim. But this is no longer possible in view of the labor situation. Special labor camps have to be set up at considerable cost, or if the immigrants go to a Kibbutz, the Kibbutz has to be helped to take care of them.

You may ask: Should we not stop "illegal" immigration? The reply is two-fold: (a) We cannot stop it while Jews can still escape from Germany via neutral countries, and we cannot stop it because of the collapse of Polish Jewry which has created a new refugee problem of serious dimensions. Jews are fleeing from Roumania, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania. In Roumania they flee from concentration camps set up for refugees from Poland - at least that is our

impression - and you can imagine what those camps are like in Roumania; they flee from starvation. If the responsible agencies do not look after them, irresponsible agencies will step in; but by hook or by crook these people will try to get into the one country which can offer at least a kind-hearted welcome. Besides many of these people have already relatives in Palestine. So the thing will go on, whether we try to stop it or not. (b) We believe that it should go on; we ought not to try and stop it. If we want to come to America, to England, to South Africa, and ask for exceptional exertions on behalf of Palestine, we cannot do it only with the explanation that we have got to put our industries on a sound basis, we have got to help the orange-growers, to provide work for the unemployed, etc., etc. When the terrible cry of Polish Jewry is going out into the Jewish world, these arguments will not cut much ice with ordinary people. They may appeal to responsible Zionists - well educated Zionists - but not to the mass of the Jews. Let us beware of getting into the position where an appeal on behalf of Palestine would compete with that of Polish Jewry. The two must be linked up, and should be linked up, for there is no real solution for Polish refugees other than by taking them into Palestine. If we can show that Palestine, though suffering itself, is none the less taking in these refugees, and can give them at any rate a lodging and a crust, and a friendly reception, and can eventually provide for them a lasting home - then we have an appeal which can be made into something very powerful in Jewish life.

So at least as far as the Executive is concerned, there can be no question of "trying to stop it". On the contrary, every effort has to be made to bring in as many people as possible. Mind you, we all thought that when war broke out it would immediately involve Italy, and thereby the Mediterranean would be closed at once, so that there would be no way of taking over people from Europe to Palestine. Happily from this point of view, - perhaps happily altogether - Italy has not become involved in the war, and for

the time being shows no signs of any such intention. Transport between Europe and Palestine thus remains available, and we can still bring over immigrants. For the time being the problem is to receive them on arrival, and we must be prepared for this.

You may say this sounds like a vicious circle: in order to have money you must have immigration; in order to have immigration you must have money. But if you look at it more closely, you will see that we have always been in this vicious circle - if it is one. In order to get money you always had to have some concrete achievement - colonization for instance. But in order to have colonization, we had to have money. But I do not think that - whatever it may be logically - this is a "vicious circle" in practice. You naturally claim money on the basis of what can be done with it, while in order to do anything at all, you must have some money. These things arrange themselves in practice.

As an illustration of our financial position: in the month of September last, we spent £10,000 on direct relief grants, which helped to maintain a population of some 30,000 souls. We spent some £5000 on Maapilim, another £3500 on security (outside our budget for the supernumerary police); and all we received during that month was £24,000, of which £13,000 came from South Africa, and £11,000 from all other countries, including the U.S.A. We had thus to spend some £19,000 on extraordinary needs. Where were our funds for colonization for education, for the financing of works, for the upkeep of our institutions, for administration, for political work?

It is quite clear to us in Palestine that an extraordinary effort must now be undertaken in America, and also in other countries the needs of Palestine must now be measured on an entirely different scale, and the urgency of the need for assistance cannot be overemphasized. Our friends in Palestine are waiting anxiously to hear the views of our friends here as to the possibility of some exceptional and very speedy effort being made here in England. Even a smaller sum raised quickly would achieve more than a larger sum later on, and

would also have a great moral effect in encouraging those who have to bear the burden in Palestine.

For more than ever before the Executive is now the Mecca of all needs and claims. Everything converges on them: Tel-Aviv Municipality, the Local Councils, all sorts of private and public enterprises and activities affected by the war - everyone appeals to us, to our Treasurer, Mr. Kaplan, who is at his wits' end trying to cope with the situation.

I have already indicated that there are hopes of progress in certain directions. Generally it is a question of adjustment to very severe restrictions, which the Yishuv, with its proven adaptability, may yet to a large extent achieve. Things may become better after a few months; they may, and of course they may not; it depends on the world situation. We are operating with a great many unknown factors. But the main question now is that of immediate assistance.

We have established a Central Economic Council, both in order to assist us in the working out of plans and devising of measures of relief, and also in order to create unity and co-ordination among the bodies and persons concerned. The Council consists of Mr. Kaplan, Dr. Ruppin and Mr. Schmorak for the Executive, Mr. Rutenberg, both as a peer in his own right and as head of the Vaad Leumi, Mr. Hoofien for the Anglo-Palestine Bank, Mr. Julius Simon for the Palestine Economic Corporation, Mr. Shenkar for the manufacturers, Mr. Smilansky for the farmers, Mr. Shkolnik for mixed farming, another representative of the Histadruth, and one or two others. We have also set up a number of other special committees on various subjects, e.g. banking, supplies, transport, etc.

The election of Mr. Rutenberg as President of the Vaad Leumi is a development for which the Executive itself is very largely responsible. It may have created problems of co-ordination between ourselves and the Vaad Leumi, because it introduces a new driving force into that body. But these are

minor difficulties, and there can be no doubt that his election means an accession of strength, and is a step towards greater cohesion in the Yishuv.

Another very gratifying development in this field of internal relations is the desire expressed by the Agudah to join the Jewish Agency and even the Knesseth Israel. They came to Mr. Ben Gurion with an offer of complete cooperation; not what we had hitherto had - some sort of coordination of effort with occasional meetings for discussion - but a complete fusion with the Agency and eventually with the Knesseth Israel. They made this offer tentatively, subject to the approval of the World Agudah authorities. They first wanted to get our reaction, and only if that reaction was favorable would they approach their world authorities and ask their approval. We had some discussion over it, because it is not without its problems, but quite naturally there was a unanimous decision on the part of the Executive to welcome this approach of the Agudah; we decided to put forward only one condition: complete and unreserved allegiance to the Zionist funds, and active help. We are going to make this the acid test of the earnestness of their intentions. The matter is now between them and their world authorities, and we are awaiting their definite reply. They got a completely favorable reaction from us, subject to this one condition.

All these efforts towards greater cohesion and unity have not failed to impress the Government, and generally to strengthen our position vis a vis the Government. But Jewish internal relations are not, of course, what is mainly worrying us in our relations with the Administration. First of all in this field, comes the question of the measure of Government assistance which we may expect in the economic tasks which we have now to undertake, owing to the war situation. I have already told you how we fared with the Government in regard to the banks: actual assistance - nil; merely some restrictive action, necessary enough, but obviously only a make-shift expedient. With regard to supplies, the Government, fairly early in the day, set up a Committee, to which we were invited to send representatives. We

cooperated very actively, though it was at a time when the battle over the White Paper was in full swing. But we decided that our non-co-operation was strictly ad hoc - confined to the matters forming the subject of the White Paper - so we co-operated. The Committee worked out some good proposals on the important problem of securing supplies of foodstuffs in time of war. There were two alternatives which they might have recommended to the Government: either that the Government should itself undertake the purchase of supplies - as is being done in England - and thus control the market, or alternatively, the more modest method of recommending the Government to provide some amount of guarantee against losses for the banks, so that they might be able to lend money in spite of the war risks involved to private buyers, against a guarantee that they would not exploit the market. The Committee was presided over by an official who is the "High Tory" of the Palestine Administration, not only from the point of view of his attitude towards ourselves, but also as regards his general mental make-up. Nevertheless, it unanimously adopted the latter proposal. But even this more modest proposal was turned down by the Treasury; they have no money and they can't do it. The Palestine Government is making feeble, ineffectual, and sometimes definitely harmful, attempts to control prices. I say sometimes harmful, because they have, for instance, put a complete embargo on the sale of things which the military do not require. For instance, timber: you remember that tragic collision between a train and a bus; the victims had to be buried in Tel-Aviv, and although coffins are not normally used in Palestine, in this case they were necessary. Well, in order to get the few planks required, people had to run round from office to office for hours on end. On certain commodities quite unduly high prices were imposed, making the rate of profit exorbitant. These and similar restrictions were imposed by the officials acting without any consultation with the public. They are minor matters, and no doubt capable of adjustment. The main thing is that the Government insists on remaining negative so far as the direct organization of supplies

is concerned; the burden therefore falls largely on us, and it is again a problem of credit.

As regards the problem itself: objectively no insuperable difficulty exists in getting an adequate supply of foodstuffs for Palestine. Plenty of wheat and other staple foods grow in the neighboring countries. There is a temporary embargo, but this is bound to be removed before long, because the countries concerned will have to resume their exports. There are also plentiful supplies of sugar in Egypt. There is a problem of the potato supply, but it can be dealt with by planting more in Palestine. But the need for a central buying agency, able to control the market, and to sell at reduced prices to the needy, is paramount.

In Palestine you have all the marks of a primitive society - hoarding, cornering, withholding of supplies.. There is a story - well-advertized by the Palestine Broadcasting Company - of a certain lady who decided to lay in a stock of petrol. She had so much that at last the only place she had to keep it in was the bath.. Hearing the cry of the vendor in the street, she ran down to fill just one more can. While she was gone, her young son took the plug out of the bath, and the store disappeared! (Spiteful people say that it was the neighbors who took advantage of her temporary absence!) But for the time being, petrol is a formidable problem; shortly it will not be a problem at all, because the refineries have changed their plans as a result of the war, and instead of building a big plant (which might take three years or so) have concentrated on a small unit with which they are pushing ahead as quickly as possible, and which will be able in a few months to supply Palestine's requirements in refined petrol. Then, unless the Arabs blow up the pipe line somewhere, there will be no petrol problem at all.

To continue with the questions outstanding between ourselves and the Government. The Government has also set up a Committee on the local production of foodstuffs, and on this, too, we were invited to cooperate, and managed to

get our proposals adopted by the Committee. They included facilities for increased irrigation, the provision of seeds, compulsory powers to make agriculturists grow the things required. If the Government is for any reason reluctant to do all this for the whole country, they should at least delegate powers to us so far as the Jews are concerned. At present the only thing on which action has been taken is that the Government is trying to obtain potato seeds for local distribution. One major point in our discussions with the Government is the problem of the orange trade, as regards both its general condition, and the facilities to be provided for shipping this year's crop. There is also the problem of working up by the by-products of the oranges, which it will be impossible to ship. There are some very hopeful experiments in this regard, but means are required for exploitation on a commercial scale, and here again the Government was asked to help. But both the High Commissioner and the Treasurer say that financial assistance is out of the question. All they are prepared to do is to help with the shipping of the crop, on condition that Jewish and Arab growers should get together and form a joint body with which the Government could deal.

I would like to mention that this is not a purely economic move on the part of the Government; it is also political. The High Commissioner's idea is that the White Paper remains the policy for Palestine, and that his business is to create as many points of contact as possible between Jew and Arab, not ostensibly on the basis of the White Paper, but actually so. When the time comes to resume the working of the White Paper and go full steam ahead with that policy, he hopes that a situation will have been created that will enable him quietly to brush aside the Jewish Agency, Vaad Leumi, etc., and rely upon a whole structure of co-operation between Jews and Arabs, beneath which he will be able to shove, as a basis, the White Paper policy itself.

Nevertheless, the line we took when the orange-growers consulted us on the subject before my departure was that they should judge the proposition purely

on its economic merits; if it were advantageous economically, they should go into it in spite of political apprehensions; if it were not advantageous economically, they should stay out, and not consider themselves bound to make sacrifices in the interests of Arab-Jewish cooperation.

When I suggest that the scheme might be economically disadvantageous, I mean that, had the Government said they were prepared to help with loans or grants for certain purposes, then Jewish-Arab cooperation would certainly have been worth while. But they are not doing anything of the sort, but merely making vague promises about assisting with the shipping of the crop. It was quite possible that the Jews might be able to organize their shipping arrangements without Governmental assistance, if they remained alone, and had not to carry the Arabs on their shoulders. Their market is well organized, they have good commercial contacts, and they might well get better returns for themselves than they would together with the Arabs. Another point is that the Jews have managed to accumulate a considerable stock of wood for orange boxes and packing material - enough for eight million boxes. The Arabs have nothing at all; the Government has nothing. If resources are pooled, it means robbing Peter to pay Paul. In a crisis like the present, when the Jews have quite exceptional burdens to carry, one could not afford to be too altruistic. I am drawing no conclusions, but merely indicating certain considerations which must be present to the minds of the orange-growers. In principle, of course, there is everything to be said for Jewish-Arab cooperation, provided it is not exploited in the interests of the White Paper policy.

We had hoped that at least the things on which the Government had definitely decided before the War would be carried out - e.g. the Tel-Aviv Loan of £600,000, the Haifa Municipal Loan, and the appropriation of £250,000 for the Huleh Concession. But our latest information is that the Government intends to take all these things back. The explanation given is that these moneys were to come from the Imperial Exchequer, and not from the Palestine Government; the

Imperial Exchequer, however, has now no money for anything but the prosecution of the War. I will not go into too much detail: the Tel-Aviv Loan is a Loan and not a grant; the Haifa grant is not at all intended to be paid at once - the money would have to be paid over the next six or seven years. I believe that even the High Commissioner is putting up some resistance to the idea of going back on these promises. But when we questioned him about it, he told us to prepare for disappointment.

All these things form part of the agenda which will have to be discussed with the Departments here. But there may be also other matters of a serious political character.

I have already said that for the Palestine Government - very naturally - the White Paper remains the unalterable basis of policy. But it is one thing to accept the White Paper as a basis; it is quite a different thing to use it as an active instrument of policy. Though it remains the basis, as an active instrument it may be temporarily in abeyance, in view of the war situation.

When the War broke out, Mr. Ben-Gurion and Mr. Kaplan had managed to get back to Jerusalem the night before. (I had stayed in Egypt to see the Commander-in-Chief). Other members of the Executive were yet on their way back to Palestine. The Executive was thus in a position to act at once. They came out at once with a statement, which coincided with Dr. Weizmann's letter (about which we only got to know a few days later). We proclaimed our solidarity with Great Britain, making no conditions, and asking for nothing in return. We did refer to the White Paper controversy, just as the Prime Minister had referred to the fact that there were differences between the Government and the Agency. We had no illusions about the Government taking the White Paper back under stress of War, nor about their altering one jot of their immigration policy, because these were accomplished facts which it would be too difficult for them to change; but what we assumed, and certain hints thrown out by Government officials justified this assumption, was that these parts of the

White Paper which had not yet been implemented would not be implemented at a time like the present. After all, these were by no means things of the utmost importance for Great Britain in the War. There was no visible pressure on the part of the Arabs, and it was natural to expect that the Arabs would fully realize that H.M. Government had their hands full now with more serious preoccupations, and would be unable to spare attention for land laws in Palestine, or the appointment of X Effendi as Head of some Department. We thought, therefore, that we would be able to co-operate militarily with the Government more or less as if there were no White Paper.

But I am deeply distressed to have to report that this assumption is apparently not proving correct in one fundamental respect. It is proving correct with regard to the constitutional part of the White Paper; about this we have a clear statement from the High Commissioner that nothing is now further from his thought than tackling this business of admitting Arabs to the counsels of the Government. This is a time when British control in Palestine has got to be strengthened and tightened up, and constitutional reforms can wait.

But things do not appear to be going the same way with regard to the land law, and this is one of our chief worries at the moment. It appears that the High Commissioner would not be averse - to put it no higher - to going through now with the new land legislation, and the matter is now under discussion between him and the Colonial Office here, which would seem to imply that neither party is averse. Now if this went through it would be a major disaster, not only on its merits, but also from the point of view of Anglo-Jewish relations in Palestine in spite of the War. Imagine the effect on Jewish feeling in Palestine and abroad if this measure goes through. We have to take every possible preventive action, so as not to let things come to such a pass. It is quite clear that were the measure to go through, we would have to oppose it with all our might, as if there was no War. But we must warn the Government that they would be simply asking for trouble.

There is another complication which we have to face at present - this

time a military one. You know that the general attitude of the military chiefs, at all events in the Middle East and Jerusalem, is that, for the time being, they do not want Jewish military units. There is the political difficulty, and also the fact that there is no real necessity for them as yet in Palestine; Palestine is not affected by the War. But they seem to be rather anxious to get some help from us by way of recruiting men for certain auxiliary services - Royal Engineers, Royal Army Service Corps, etc., and we are naturally willing to supply good men to be trained in Palestine or Egypt, and to serve in both countries and possibly elsewhere. The proposals made bristled with difficulties as regards pay, conditions of service, etc., but none of them insoluble. Quite suddenly, however, a further, and a very serious, problem arose. All along it had been assumed on both sides that these would be Jewish units; they need not be called Jewish units, but they would be units consisting entirely of Jews, except in so far as a few Jews might be used to bring English units up to strength. Suddenly it was made clear to us that the decision was to make the units mixed Arab and Jewish. We had known that the Government also meant to enroll some Arabs, and naturally raised no objection, but we had taken it for granted that the companies would be separate. But the High Commissioner has now decided that the units are to be mixed ones. It seems to be quite clear to some of the responsible military officers in Palestine that purely military interests are being subordinated in this case to political interests bound up with the White Paper. We have decided to make a stand on this point, and to refuse to supply the men. We do this, first on the ground of principle. We offered our help, not as casual inhabitants of Palestine, but as the Jewish people, for the formation of Jewish units. To serve in mixed units means, for the Palestine Jews, to be treated not as Jews but merely as Palestinians, the way Jews in France are treated as Frenchmen and Jews in Poland as Poles. It means forcing the Jewish National Home into the position of any diaspora community. There are also practical grounds which tell definitely against the proposal: to form a Jewish-Arab unit now, in the present state of relations,

is to ask for endless trouble, mutual sabotage, and recrimination. There would be no possibility for us to maintain a proper spirit and national discipline among our men if they had to be mixed with Arabs. The decision of the Jerusalem Executive is to make no concession on this point. Let them see how they fare with their purely Arab units. This again is a question for discussion in London.

But we are not at all downhearted over the fact that our military assistance is as yet required only on a very small scale or not at all. The War is still only beginning, - it may be a long struggle and a situation may yet arise in which our help will be indispensable and therefore our value as allies fully acknowledged. We have made it our business to be ready for such an eventuality. The National Registration which we have just carried through - it was Mr. Ben-Gurion's initiative and it had all his driving power behind it - was a great political act of national importance, which made a profound impression. The Yishuv responded magnificently. The meaning of the Registration was not only to ensure that Jews are ready to assist the British when called upon. It was primarily a stock-taking on the part of the Yishuv of its own resources. It was a very thorough affair. The material is now being sifted and classified so that we shall know exactly what men and of what qualifications we have at our disposal in an emergency. The idea is that some permanent framework should emerge from this Registration - a kind of reserve formation. The men are to receive regular training - light, or more intensive according to their age and aptitudes. In short, it is to form the basis of a mass organization of the Yishuv to cope with any emergency.

I have not touched - perhaps I should have touched - on the Arab problem, and the possibility of Arab-Jewish contacts at the present time. It is a very difficult and delicate question and hard to generalize about. Do not believe that there is no security problem for us in Palestine now; it is true that Arab terrorism has been considerably weakened, and that no section of the population now has its heart in the disturbances. But there still remain some definite

centres of turbulence; we have had losses even in the last month, and we have had to increase our vigilance in certain areas - with good results, but at some cost.

The paramount fact here is that the Mufti has not called the thing off. He came out the other day with a declaration that he would do nothing to embarrass France. The omission is significant. And there have lately been casualties among British troops and civilians. So it is clearly not true that the disturbances are over. Terrorism is declining, but so far the War has not stopped it. Nor can the British say that the Arab population is now solidly behind them; it is not. The Administration admits that a great many Arabs still "sit on the fence." The Governments of the neighboring countries were very severely criticized<sup>ed</sup> by the Mufti and his circle for coming out with declarations of support of Great Britain before making sure what the Arabs would get out of this War, and without waiting to see whether Italy was coming in or not, and what course the War would take. Of course, the Mufti is not in a position to reprimand the other Governments, but he and his friends have made their personal views very clear in private conversations, and the British Government is well aware of it. It is also aware of the fact that this attitude is shared by certain Arabs in Palestine. And even in the neighboring countries things are not of the best. According to one source, some pressure was brought to bear on Egypt to follow up her severance of relations with Germany with an actual declaration of war. This suggestion was turned down by the Egyptian Government. According to another source, a controversy arose as to what would happen in the event of Italy coming in, after all, on the wrong side, without, however, declaring war on Egypt? Would the British then be within their rights in attacking Libya from the Egyptian side. The Egyptian Government was inclined to the view that they would not. The question also is stated to have made bad blood between British and Egyptians. But all this need not work out necessarily in our favor; it may even be used as a further argument for

going ahead with the White Paper in order to "appease" the Arabs. Still, it is important to know.

Now, as regards political contacts with the Arabs. The Arab body politic in Palestine is in a state of complete disorientation, and there is hardly anyone with whom one can talk seriously. The Mufti group is out of the question. The Nashashibis have no intrinsic value - they are ready to be moulded by the Government. Anyhow, they stand by the White Paper, which makes political cooperation with them impossible. But there are many people, in town, and country, equally disgruntled with the Government, the Mufti and the Nashashibis, who come to us with their complaints and offers of cooperation. Before the War broke out, we threw out feelers in all sorts of directions in Palestine and the neighboring countries (Syria and Lebanon), and some contacts seemed hopeful, though it was by no means clear whether they would lead to any concrete results. The people we were in touch with in Syria are all "ex"-something or other - France having scrapped all her constitutional arrangements in Syria and the Lebanon, disbanded Chambers and Councils, and instituted direct French rule thinly camouflaged by "local Government". Even Edde has been sent home to rest till the War is over.

I talked to two ex-premiers, and to some other people, and there were also conversations in Palestine in regard to the question of a "federal solution" which we all have in mind. We got all sorts of responses - positive, negative, and indifferent. But now the position is more difficult. If we have not to declare our "War Aims" as a start we have to make a higher bid. We are facing a revolutionary situation. The Arabs are certainly going to make the highest bid imaginable. We have our chances, and we should not sell them cheaply, however uncertain we are of getting what we want. To come to the Arabs with our highest bid means that we dispose from the outset of any chance of negotiations with them. We are none the less pursuing our contacts in Palestine, and trying to explore the ground also in Syria, for a peace programme between Jews and Arabs, but we shall have to proceed very cautiously.

I propose to conclude with a brief analysis of the general prospects, as we in Jerusalem see them. I have to some extent forestalled it by saying that politically we must make a high bid, but all the same we must try to remain alive to the possible dire necessity of having to defend what we already have - that is to say the end of the War may find us on the defensive. For we cannot close our eyes to certain developments which are anything but conducive to optimism. We believe that the War will end in the defeat of Hitlerism. But as to what that will exactly mean, for the Jews, we are not quite sure. But even assuming that it will mean the defeat of violent anti-semitism, this will not in itself bring about victory, or even success, for Zionism. Historically speaking, there is no divergence between the interests of the Jewish people and the interests of Zionism, but for certain periods of history, and in regard to certain aspects, these things may diverge. At one meeting (not of the Executive) which I recently attended in Palestine, one of my younger friends said he thought it should be clearly realized that what is at stake in this War really is the future of the Jewish people; that the inner historical meaning of this War lies in the fact that it is a War to rehabilitate the Jews - to restore to the Jewish people the rights wrested from them. In antiquity there was once a war between Persia and Babylon - no doubt a war for good reasons of Persian and Babylonian Imperial policy. But what does the world remember today of the reasons which brought Cyrus into conflict with Babylon? Only that, as a result of the war, the Jews were allowed to go back to Palestine. It may well be, he said, that the world will forget the clashes of interest between France and Britain on the one hand, and Germany on the other, which led to the present War; and remember only that as a result the Jews came into their own again as a respected people.

Well, even assuming this to be so, it does not follow that the result of the War will be a victory for Zionism. We shall have to face both internal and external changes of a grave nature. One grave internal problem which awaits us is that there is bound to be something in the nature of a backwash, physical

and mental - physical from Palestine to Germany, mental from Zionism back to all sorts of Galuth doctrines. There will be people who will lose no time in saying that the Zionist thesis - that their diagnosis of the problem has been proved right - is mistaken, and that the Hitler terror has been only a brief and painful interlude in world history.

Externally, we shall have to face even more serious development. We do not know what will yet come, but what has come already is the complete submergence of Polish Jewry - half of it in a German concentration camp and the other half in a Soviet prison - not a physical prison for the individual Jew, but a spiritual prison for the whole Jewish community. Tens of hundreds of thousands of Jews fleeing from the German armies have been happy to find themselves on Soviet territory - but the passing of over a million and a half Jews to Soviet rule means a complete imprisonment of their Jewish spirit. Just as after the last war we lost Russian Jewry, so now, unless there be a definite change of heart on the part of Russia, which is very difficult to expect, we will have to write off another million and a half Jews from Poland. And the mass of these are Zionist Jews - there were between 40 and 50 Hechaluz camps in the part of Poland now occupied by Russia; the Zionist Central Council of Poland now appears to be in Bialystok. The whole of this Jewry is a nett loss in our national balance-sheet.

What was the part played by Polish Jewry in Zionism? It was not only the main reservoir of Zionist energy, the chief recruiting ground of Halutz Aliyah, and for a long period the main source of capital for Palestine. Above all, it was that piece of solid reality in Jewish life which exerted the greatest pressure on the world for the realization of Zionism. The plight of Polish Jewry, the fact that it was adjudged as "superfluous" in its own country, that its younger generation was considered doomed, was a standing claim on the world to let the Jews go back to Palestine. Now, at least to the extent of one million and a half or so, that pressure will disappear. The Polish Jews will be behind the Chinese Wall of the Soviet Union; their existence will no longer

translate itself into a pressure effective on the civilized world.

As to what will be the fate of the other half of Polish Jewry, worse yet may befall them. The end of the War may find that section of our people crushed into dust, possibly massacred en masse, but certainly ruined socially and economically - quite possibly an acute refugee problem, a liability and not an asset for the upbuilding of Palestine.

On the other hand, so far all that is happening is in the direction of a reversal of the Versailles settlement - e.g. the Russian invasion of Poland, the drawing of the Baltic States within the Russian sphere of influence, and other things. The Jewish National Home is a part of the Versailles settlement, and it is quite possible that we also shall have to pay the price. But we have already paid, in a sense, in the form of the White Paper. This is a policy which perhaps owed something, indirectly, to the Hitler menace, and the lifting of that incubus may possibly ease matters for the British Government, and so far as that menace played its part in bringing the Government to its present policy, its disappearance may make things better. Perhaps, and perhaps not. For the policy also came into existence for entirely different reasons - there was always the question of Anglo-Arab relations. We do not know in what position, after the War, Great Britain may find herself vis a vis the Arab peoples. It may well be that she will consider herself heavily indebted to them. In any case, she may well find that there is nothing in the results of the War to justify a retreat from the White Paper and a reversion to the Balfour Declaration.

We should certainly make every possible political offensive, exert every possible effort to take advantage of the war situation in order to put Zionism again on the map as the solution of the Jewish problem; to make use of the masses of refugees, of the very destruction of Polish Jewry, in order to press the Zionist solution. But engaged in the political offensive, we must never forget that we may have to face a very hard defensive struggle.

From the point of view of that struggle it is of absolutely vital importance to us that we should not only preserve intact our positions in Palestine, but that we should make the greatest possible practical headway there during the War. Not a single opportunity can be neglected in this direction. Immigration and land acquisition and settlement, and the strengthening of our defence, must go on, together with all the urgent tasks of economic consolidation. I do not think our position can in any circumstances become hopeless, just because we have the Yishuv, and also because we have American Jewry; we can count definitely on these two assets. But we have to do everything possible to strengthen the Yishuv, and to "Zionise" American Jewry. Even if we succeed in this, we shall still miss that unique pillar of strength, Polish Jewry - a mass of Jews to whom Palestine appeared a solution to the whole problem of their existence. The importance of our concrete positions in Palestine therefore increases tenfold, and calls for corresponding efforts on our part. Let us by all means hope and strive for the best, but let us be prepared for the worst. And to be prepared means to act, and without delay.

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CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDA

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DEALING WITH  
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES  
OF  
LONDON EXECUTIVE



Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs  
111 Fifth Avenue  
New York City

CONFIDENTIAL

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NOTE OF INTERVIEW WITH MR. MALCOLM MACDONALD, COLONIAL OFFICE, FRIDAY,  
OCTOBER 20th, 1939, at 3:15 P.M.  
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Present: Mr. Malcolm MacDonald,  
Mr. S.E.V. Luke,  
Mr. M. Shertok  
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I had asked to see the Secretary of State on an urgent matter this morning with the intention of taking up with him the case of the 45 young men who were found doing exercises somewhere in the Beisan Plain with illegal arms, and who were about to be tried by the Military Court in Acre on October 25th. The Private Secretary thought that it would be absolutely impossible for me to see the Secretary of State today or tomorrow since his time was fully taken up, and as I insisted that the matter was an urgent one, he suggested that I might have a talk with Mr. Luke about it, and he would transmit my observations to the Secretary of State, so that there should be no loss of time.

Accordingly, I went to see Mr. Luke, and put the facts of the case briefly before him. I said that according to my information, the 45 boys had 21 rifles between them. It was certainly a punishable offence of a serious character to carry about military rifles illegally. The boys had gone out to get some training in field exercises. They had no doubt thought that they might be called upon to perform certain duties by way of assistance to the British troops, and were anxious to get ready for the job. I had, of course, no excuse to offer for their illegal action, and to put it quite plainly I thought it extremely foolish of the boys to take the course they did. Nevertheless, in present circumstances, and in view of the war situation, I hoped that the Secretary of State, on giving the matter full consideration, would find it possible to pass on a hint that the soft pedal should be applied in this case. I was not so much worried about the individual fates of the boys concerned, though long-term imprisonment (which I presumed would be the punishment normally imposed) was by no means a rosy prospect for youngmen to contemplate. But what I was worried about was the general effect, on Jews and non-Jews alike, of the news being spread abroad that at a time like this these 45 young Jews had had to be dealt with in this manner for the possession of illegal arms. I had in mind the effect on Jewish feeling in Palestine, the effect on Jews abroad, and the effect upon the military themselves, whose present confidence in the Jewish population it would seriously undermine. I fully realised the delicacy of the matter, and would quite understand if the Secretary of State should find, on consideration, that he could not intervene. But I hoped he would take the contrary view. If he felt he could do anything, there was first the question whether the trial could not be averted. Secondly, there was the question of the punishment to be imposed - though I did not know whether it was possible to interfere with the Court's decision - and thirdly there was the question whether anything, and what, might be done to mitigate the punishment if it were too severe. It was not for me to suggest the exact course which the Secretary of State's action might take, but the obvious courses were either through the High Commissioner to the G.O.C., or through the War Office to the G.O.C.

Mr. Luke noted down the facts and said that it was not for him to offer any comment. He said he realised the importance and urgency of the matter, and would seize the earliest opportunity of communicating my representations to the Secretary of State.

By the time I got back to the office I found a telephone message asking me to come and see the Secretary of State, in connection with the matter I had dis-

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cussed with Mr. Luke, at 3:15 this afternoon.

Mr. MacDonald opened by saying that he had heard from Mr. Luke (who was present, taking notes) what I had to say "about that band."

I was rather taken aback on hearing the word "band", and said "Band? Say a group, or even a squad, if you like". Mr. MacDonald smiled, and said: "All right, let it be 'squad'". He mentioned that the young men had had some 20 rifles and 5 bombs, and several hundred rounds of ammunition. The fact that the group had had bombs in its possession was news to me and I said so. The Secretary of State said that he wanted to understand exactly what I had meant to suggest. Was it my intention to ask that the Jews should be treated more leniently than the Arabs would have been if caught in similar circumstances? Obviously, this would have been extremely difficult. Moreover, it would have been unjust. There could not be one law for the Jew and another for the Arab. Or perhaps I was suggesting that there should be leniency all round, for both Jews and Arabs? This again would be wrong. Of course the Government had to some extent relaxed the harsh measures formerly adopted; they had been releasing some of the Arabs, and were generally trying to be more lenient. But if banditry went on it had to be suppressed with all necessary force. Was it then this that I was suggesting? When he had heard my request from Mr. Luke he had found himself on the horns of a dilemma. He thought I had probably faced that dilemma myself, and he wanted to know how I had solved it. He did not think I had solved it by insisting on preferential treatment for the Jews. But may be I had solved it by sitting on the other horn of the dilemma, that is to say pleading for leniency for both parties? If that was the case he would like to know.

I said that whatever I had meant to suggest it was certainly not that there should be any relaxation in the measures designed to combat banditry. This did not mean that I shared the Secretary of State's view with regard to the other horn of the dilemma. I certainly asked that this particular group of Jews should be treated differently from a group of Arabs caught in apparently similar circumstances, - not just because these were Jews and the others Arabs, but because the intentions of the two groups must clearly be assumed to have been quite different. Such a course might well be difficult, if the Secretary of State thought that this would have to be explained to the Arabs, but it would certainly not be unjust. On the contrary, justice demanded it. The reason why I had earlier been shocked by the Secretary of State's use of the word "band" applied to these young men was that in the usual parlance of Palestine, "band" meant a group of people bent upon some mischief. I denied that the present group was bent upon any mischief at all. They had gone out to get some training in field exercise. Mr. MacDonald interjected that they had had bombs. I replied that the bombs might have been hand-grenades, and that there was such a thing as an exercise in hand-grenade throwing. Anyhow, it was absurd to suggest that the intention of this group had been to attack an Arab village, or blow up a railway bridge, or waylay a military convoy. It was criminal folly on their part to have gone out to train in the open with illegal arms; but they were not criminals. They obviously wanted to get better training for self-defence with the weapons which they had to use for such purposes. They might also have thought that their services might soon be required by the military, and they wanted to be prepared. One had to place this incident against the general background of Jewish behaviour, with regard to which terrorism was the exception and not the rule, whereas with the Arabs it was exactly the reverse. Of course, had it been the case that Jewish terrorism had developed to such an extent as to drive law-abiding Arabs to arm themselves for self-defence, and get training for that purpose, there might be an equal presumption of self-defence

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defence in favour of an Arab group. As things stood, that presumption could exist only so far as Jews were concerned. I added that I knew the area in question very well. I had done my share in bringing about the establishment of those settlements, and had taken part in the selection of the settlers. I knew the leading men in every single settlement in the Beisan Valley, and it so happened, that I knew the particular young man who had been in charge of the group caught with illegal arms. He was a very fine fellow, coming of an excellent family. The whole area was completely free from and immune against, the microbe of retaliation.

I mentioned that when the Military Courts had been set up I had gone to see General Wavell about them, and General Wavell had informed me, without any prompting on my part, that an instruction would be issued to all Courts to enquire not only into the visible circumstances of the case, but also into the possible intentions of the individual or individuals apprehended with illegal weapons, - as to whether one could presume that the weapons were intended for self-defence or for some sinister purpose.

Mr. MacDonald asked whether all I was urging was that the factor of intent should be taken into account? Surely the Court itself would do that.

I explained that what I had just said had been meant to counter Mr. MacDonald's argument that Jews and Arabs should be treated, as regards the possession of illegal arms, on a footing of complete equality. I had urged differentiation by reference to the factor of intent, but I also wanted to urge certain consideration arising from the present war situation - the effect which a case like this was bound to have on Jewish feeling in Palestine, on Jewish feeling abroad, and on other quarters. I had particularly in mind the attitude of the military. Happily the military chiefs had full confidence in the Palestine Jews. They knew where the Jews of Palestine stood in the present conflict, and that they were anxious to assist. Unfortunately, political considerations appeared to militate against full or any use being made of Jewish military assistance. But at least there were no doubts of Jewish loyalty and readiness to help in the military mind. What I was extremely anxious to prevent was the creation of an absolutely wrong impression with regard to the Jews of Palestine by the report which might spread abroad that, at a time like this, so many Jews should have to be convicted of what looked like the crime of banditry.

Mr. MacDonald said that this case was now before the Courts, and it was impossible for him to intervene. It would be dealt with in due course by the General, and possibly by the High Commissioner. He had full confidence in the High Commissioner; he had also had full confidence in General Haining, and from all he had heard of General Barker, he thought that he also could be trusted to do the right thing in all such matters. But at the same time he (Mr. MacDonald) was always accessible - ready to receive people and to hear their arguments. He had even received Mr. Jabotinsky once or twice. What he did on such occasions was to report the interview to the High Commissioner, and leave the decision to him. He would do this in the present case. He would send a cable to the High Commissioner transmitting my representations, and would formulate his answer as having been that in his view Jews and Arabs should be treated in an equal manner, but always taking the factor of intention into account. He elaborated a little on this, intimating that he thought the present Jewish "squad" had to be treated exactly as an Arab squad would have been had there been a presumption of self-defence in their favour.

I could not but thank the Secretary of State even for this.

London, 20.10.39

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October 25, 1939.

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His Excellency  
The High Commissioner for Palestine,  
Government Offices,  
Jerusalem.

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to address Your Excellency on behalf of the Jewish Agency, on the subject of the Order made under Section 5 (A) of the Immigration Ordinance which was published in the Palestine Gazette of the 19th instant.

2. The Order, as stated in the explanatory note, provides for the admission into Palestine during the period October 1939 to March 1940 of non-Jews only. In our submission this exclusion of all Jewish immigration constitutes a discrimination against Jews, a violation of the provisions of the Mandate and a cruel blow to the Jewish people.

3. Under the terms of this Order an essential qualification for entry into Palestine is that one may not be a Jew. We know of no country in the world today, with the exception of countries under Nazi rule, where there is racial discrimination against Jews qua Jews such as that now enacted in the country of the Jewish National Home. We consider it our duty to enter a vigorous protest against this introduction of anti-Jewish legislation into Palestine.

4. Even if His Majesty's Government had not pledged themselves to help the Jews to reconstitute their National Home in Palestine, such legislation would have been contrary to all established principles of British law and justice. The Jews are, however, entitled in this country not merely to equality. There is an express obligation upon the Mandatory to facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and to place the country under such conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home. The Order in question is an unwarranted violation of this basic injunction of the Mandate.

5. The Secretary of State for the Colonies made a statement in Parliament on July 12th foreshadowing the issue of such an Order in pursuance of the restrictive immigration policy set out in the White Paper of May 17, 1939. He sought to justify it as a penalty for the unauthorised entry of Jews into Palestine. Even if the policy proposed in the White Paper were in accordance with the Mandate it would have been contrary to all standards of equity for a whole nation to be penalised on account of an offence committed by some of their number. It is the less justified as the offenders were driven to enter the country of their National Home without immigration permits by inhuman persecution in their countries of origin and by the arbitrary restrictions recently imposed in Palestine. We must, however, draw attention to the fact that since the statement of the Secretary of State was made the Permanent Mandates Commission found the policy of the White Paper incompatible with the Mandate. They unanimously held that that policy was not in accordance with the interpretation which had always been placed on the Palestine Mandate by the Council of the League of Nations and by H.M.G.; while a majority of the Permanent Mandates Commission reached the conclusion that the policy of the White Paper was not in conformity with the Mandate and that any contrary conclusion was "ruled out by the very terms of the

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Mandate and the fundamental intentions of its authors". In the submission of the Jewish Agency the policy of the White Paper is thus devoid of any legal or moral authority.

6. The arbitrary discrimination inherent in the Order is being inflicted on the Jewish people at a time when the Jews are suffering so terribly from Nazi persecution and the effects of the war. More than 3,000,000 Jews who took their stand together with the Polish people as allies of Great Britain, have been completely ruined by the German invasion. Under this Order not a single one of them can escape to Palestine. While many countries with no special obligation to the Jewish people feel prompted by the call of humanity to offer an asylum to Jewish refugees, it is of all lands the country of the Jewish National Home which is being barred to the Jews by the Mandatory Power.

7. For the reasons above stated we have the honour to request that all arbitrary restrictions on Jewish immigration be removed and that the necessary measures be taken to permit Jews to enter Palestine in accordance with their internationally recognised rights. It is our contention that the only valid principle for the regulation of Jewish immigration into Palestine is that which was sanctioned by the Council of the League of Nations in 1930, namely that "Jewish immigration should be authorized to the extent allowed by the country's capacity for economic absorption." We submit that neither the Administration of Palestine nor His Majesty's Government, so long as they hold the Mandate for Palestine on behalf of the League of Nations, are entitled to depart from this principle.

8. We would respectfully ask Your Excellency to transmit our above representations to the Secretary of State for the consideration of His Majesty's Government.

I have the honour to be  
Your Excellency's  
Most obedient servant,

(sgd). D. Ben Gurion  
Chairman  
EXECUTIVE OF THE JEWISH AGENCY

C O P Y

77, GREAT RUSSIAN STREET  
LONDON, W.C. 1

27th October, 1939.

The Right Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, P.C., M.P.,  
Colonial Office,  
Downing Street, S.W. 1

Dear Mr. MacDonald,

I beg to re-capitulate briefly the representations on the subject of immigration into Palestine made by Dr. Brodetsky and myself in the interview which you were kind enough to give us on Tuesday, October 23rd. The two main points raised were (i) the question of the remnants of the undistributed certificates from the last quota; (ii) the question of immigration in the current half-year.

2. With regard to the first point, I note that it has been agreed that all permits representing the unallocated balance of the last quota should, so far as possible, be made available for Jewish immigrants, if necessary by the issue of duplicate copies instead of the originals when the latter are inaccessible, provided that there is no risk of both duplicate and original being used.

3. As to the number of such unused certificates, it now appears that the permits to which Mr. Bennett referred as having been sent to the Colonial Office are additional to those left, according to our information, in the safes of the British Consulates, which are now in the custody of the American Embassies in Berlin and Vienna. The former permits, 149 in number, were received in Berlin after the outbreak of war, and were forwarded by the American Embassy to London. In addition, there should be about 530 certificates in Berlin and Vienna, of the following categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>In Berlin</u>	<u>In Vienna</u>
A.1 <sup>x</sup>	90	60
B.3	345	--
C <sup>x</sup>	30	7
	<u>465</u>	<u>67</u>

The Figures marked with asterisks were given to our representative by Mr. Insull, formerly of the Passport Control Office in Berlin, who is now in Rome. The other figures are based on the returns of our Palestine offices.

4. With regard to the 149 certificates now at the Colonial Office, we suggested that full particulars regarding them should be communicated telegraphically to the Palestine Government, so that the Department of Migration might be in a position to re-issue, if need be, duplicate copies, on the understanding that the originals are here, cancelled, or to advise the authorities in London as to where or to whom these certificates should be sent. I would point out in this connection that in order to ensure that all these certificates may be fully used, it may be necessary to effect transfers from category to category. This, as I understood in Jerusalem, would not present any difficulty.

5. As to the permits now blocked in the safes in Berlin and Vienna, it was suggested that steps should be taken to ascertain whether it would be possible to arrange for the American Consular Authorities to gain access to them, so that in

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the first instance the exact numbers may be determined. In the event of this proving impossible, the suggestion is that all the available information may be collected at this end and passed on to Jerusalem as quickly as possible, with a view to enabling the Department of Migration, on the basis of this and other data which it may be able to obtain, to arrive at as close an estimate as possible of the outstanding permits, and that new certificates, or rather duplicates copies of the originals, should be issued accordingly. We submitted that the risk of the permits thus re-issued being found eventually to exceed the actual number of outstanding permits need not constitute an obstacle to the adoption of this procedure, as the excess, if any, might be devoted to the general refugee quota.

6. We also suggested that endeavours should similarly be made to ascertain the balance of undistributed certificates in Poland and that these, too, should be renewed.

7. On the question of the allocation of certificates already returned from Berlin to London, or yet to be retrieved from Berlin or Vienna, or re-issued on account of those blocked in Berlin and Vienna, our proposal was as follows: certificates not earmarked before the war for specified persons in Germany should now be made available for distribution outside. But in so far as any of these certificates had been so allocated before the war, their prospective holders should be treated as if they had actually received their certificates before the war - i.e. their passports should be visaed for Palestine in the ports of embarkation upon their leaving Germany. It appears to us that the risk of enemy agents being found among these emigrants is no greater in the one case than in the other.

8. In the event, however, of His Majesty's Government taking a contrary view, we pleaded that an exception should at least be made in favour of "Youth Immigration" - i.e. that of young persons to be admitted under Category B.3 - since in their case no suspicion of the above nature could arise at all. We attach the greatest importance to every opportunity however limited, of saving such young people from Germany. It should again be emphasised that the frustration of the hope of finding a secure home in Palestine held by candidates for immigration permits under the last quota is particularly harsh in the case of young immigrants under this scheme. They have nearly all spent several months in training camps on the supposition that they would proceed direct from the camps to Palestine. Some of their parents have in the meantime emigrated, being assured that their children, too, would soon leave Germany. The fathers of many others, being of Polish origin, have recently been interned in Buchenwald, and thus a large number of the children have now no homes to go back to. For all these reasons, we would renew our most earnest plea that these young people should be allowed to enter Palestine.

9. With regard to such permits, whether existing or re-issued, as could not be allocated to persons now in Germany, the natural procedure would be that they should be allotted to Jewish refugees outside Germany, in such manner as may be determined by the Department of Migration in Jerusalem, after consultation with the Jewish Agency.

10. On the second main point raised at the interview, we submitted that, while the Jewish Agency rejected the White Paper of May, 1939, and was categorically opposed to any arbitrary curtailment of Jewish immigration into Palestine, it could not but take exception to the fact that, contrary to what it believed to be the intention of the White Paper, the Government had found it possible to make the present suspension of Jewish immigration apply also to the special allowance of 25,000 certificates for refugees. The grounds on which we based this con-

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struction of the relevant section of the White Paper were fully stated at the interview, and need not be repeated here. We accordingly urge that the High Commissioner should be empowered to grant quotas for the admission of Jewish refugees in the current half-year, subject to the conditions attaching to such grants of certificates. We indicated that it was our intention once the point of principle was conceded, to submit an application for about 1,000 permits for Jewish refugees from Poland, who were now living in the neighbouring countries in conditions of great misery, and possibly for a few hundred more German refugees from the countries of Western Europe. I would emphasise, as an additional ground for the favourable consideration of our claim, that the collapse of Poland and the new refugee problem thus created, is a new factor which was not foreseen at the time when the present sweeping suspension was decided upon.

11. My colleagues and I would be grateful if early and favourable consideration could be given to these proposals.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) M. SHERTOK.



CONFIDENTIAL

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NOTE OF AN INTERVIEW WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES ON MONDAY,  
27th OCTOBER, 1939  
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PRESENT: Mr. Malcolm MacDonald  
Mr. H. F. Downie  
Mr. J. Bennett  
Dr. S. Brodetsky  
Mr. M. Shertok

Mr. Shertok opened by saying that this was the last interview of the present series, as far as the Jewish Agency was concerned, and they proposed to devote it to the subject of immigration.

Mr. MacDonald said that he would possibly want to see the representatives of the Jewish Agency some time next week in connection with certain matters arising from the previous interviews. He hoped then to be able to tell them something definite about the orange shipping question. They had been in close consultation with the Food Ministry and the Ministry of Shipping, and he thought matters were shaping rather satisfactorily. The Ministry of Shipping was anxious to help as regards transport. Further progress, however, still depended on a decision by the Food Ministry as to the quantity of oranges which might be shipped to the U.K. in the coming season.

Mr. Shertok said that the subject matter of the present interview fell into two parts: first, the question of the remnants of the last immigration quota, and secondly, the question of immigration in the present half year.

With regard to the first point, they had been much gratified by the decision of His Majesty's Government to admit to Palestine Jews at present in Germany who had been given Immigration certificates before the outbreak of the war. He believed that their transportation was now proceeding smoothly. The Palestine Government had sent four officials by air to Trieste to supervise the grant of immigration visas for entry into Palestine, and the Jewish Agency was co-operating in this through its representatives. The first ship with immigrants of this class had left Trieste a few days ago, and the next was due to leave on November 1st. But the 2,900 immigrants who would thus be able to go to Palestine would not exhaust the number of permits sent to Germany under the last quota. According to the Jewish Agency's information there were still several hundred undistributed permits left in Berlin and in Vienna, and they were quite naturally anxious that full use should be made of them before it would be too late. The figures were: 343 Youth permits (B.3) 90 A1 and 30 C in Berlin; 60 A1 and 7 C in Vienna; altogether a matter of ~~over~~ 500 certificates. There might be a small margin of error with regard to these figures but he believed that they were substantially correct. They were based on the records of the Jewish Agency's Palestine offices which were usually checking up on every permit issued by the respective Passport Control Officers, and partly upon the statement made to their representative by Mr. Insull, formerly of the British Passport Control office in Berlin, who was now in Rome. Their first question was whether it would be possible to obtain "physical possession" of those certificates. They understood that they were all kept locked and sealed among the papers left by the British Consulates with the American Embassies, and they wondered whether it would be possible to ask the Americans to find those certificates. It would then be possible to ascertain whether the certificates were earmarked for certain persons, and in that case their request would be that the

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Government should admit those persons into Palestine, if they could still leave Germany. They understood that the Government's decision had been to admit only those who had been given certificates before the war, but not to let in people nominated for admission since the war, for fear that the German Government might now send Nazi spies to personate as Jewish immigrants. Surely this fear, fully justified though, it might be, did not apply to would-be immigrants nominated before the war. But if the certificates were not found to be earmarked, or if the Government refused their request about letting in new immigrants from Germany in general, they would still urge that an exception be made in favour of the boys and girls coming under the Youth Aliyah scheme. There could be no fear of Nazi spies appearing under the guise of boys or girls aged 15 or 16, and they were particularly anxious to enable those young people to go to Palestine.

The second question was what would happen if the certificates could not be got at, as the Foreign Office might object to the Americans opening the safes. The point made by Mr. Mills in Palestine was that he was quite prepared to re-issue a certificate if officially informed that the original had been destroyed or otherwise put out of circulation, as he could not take the risk of having two persons arrive in Palestine on the strength of the same certificate. But, even if the original certificates were out of reach, it should nevertheless be possible to ascertain with a fair degree of accuracy the number of outstanding permits and issue new certificates accordingly. If, eventually, the number of persons thus admitted was found to be in excess of the number of certificates originally issued, that excess could be debited to the general refugee quota.

Mr. Shertok mentioned in this connection that the same applied also to Poland, where a considerable number of permits must have been lost on account of the war.

Mr. MacDonald said that he would like to deal with the first point on the agenda, before the representatives of the Jewish Agency passed to the second. He was glad that they had been able to arrange for the immigration of those people from Germany, but originally a different decision had been taken, viz: that only those Jews who had by then already left Germany and got into Italy should be admitted, but not more. He had taken an active part in the consultations which had led up to that decision, and had himself been fully in favour of it. When, however, the representatives of the Jewish Agency came to him to plead for a reversal of that decision, and drew his attention to certain considerations, he had frankly admitted that he had made a mistake. For one thing he had not realised that Jews were actually leaving Germany all the time, and that the German Government was prepared to let them go, so that it was hardly possible to draw a line. For another - and it was this consideration which had impressed him most - all those people had been definitely certain that they were going to Palestine, so that they had liquidated their affairs; and they were now left, so to speak, in the air. But neither of these considerations, certainly not the second, applied to those who had not yet received their permits, whereas the very serious reasons for not admitting into Palestine people from enemy countries applied to them with full force. The young people for whom Mr. Shertok had especially pleaded were surely all in their parents' homes and were not facing any special dislocation by not being able to emigrate. He did not think that it would be possible to make an exception in favour of Youth Aliyah, particularly as such considerable numbers (343) were involved.

Mr. Shertok said that the position of the candidates for Youth Aliyah was not so simple. A very elaborate organisation was at work in that branch of immigration and candidates were selected well in advance. When the figures of the last quota became known, all those hundreds of boys and girls were told to get ready to leave. They and

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their parents had made all the necessary arrangements, and now they too might well be said to be "in the air". Besides, while he fully realised that there were reasons connected with the war situation against the admission of people from enemy countries, he would urge that just because of the war it was most essential that these young people should be admitted. They did not know what fate had in store for the Jews in Germany during this war or at its end, but they were certainly justified in expecting the worst as a result of either Germany's defeat in the field or of civil war in Germany itself. Polish Jewry had already paid a terrific price for its participation in the war against Germany, but the same fate might befall even the German Jews. Every Jew brought into Palestine in time was to them one more Jew saved, and, if this could be done without any risks from the point of view of the war, as was the case with regard to these young people, they urged that it should be done.

Dr. Brodetsky added that as far as he knew a great many of the candidates for Youth Aliyah usually spent months in a training centre before they went to Palestine, and were thus cut off from their homes and families long before they left Germany. It was a great hardship to them now to find out that they had to stay on in Germany indefinitely. Another point which he thought must be considered was that, as the war was likely to be a long one, the boys in question would reach maturity before it would be over, whereupon they would be roped in as members of labour corps or for other war services and thus be of value to the enemy.

The Secretary of State said that he admitted the force of these arguments, but he still thought the difficulty which he had in mind was insuperable. It had been altogether a very difficult business to admit people from enemy countries in times of war. The line had to be drawn somewhere. They had drawn the line at those who had actually been in possession of their permits when war broke out. He was not giving an absolutely negative reply at this moment, but he saw no hope. The reason why he was not making his negative reply absolute was that he wanted still to consider whether it might not be possible to make an exception in a few individual cases of special hardship. But, as to admitting a whole category, he thought that was out of the question. After all, there might be a danger of foul play by the German authorities even with regard to youth immigration - false dates of birth might be faked, and the like. Apart from that, there were general reasons against their admission, connected with the war situation.

Mr. Shertok said that, as they intended to follow up this interview by a letter in which the various points that were raised would be set out, they would include this plea about Youth Aliyah in the letter, and would be very grateful if the Secretary of State could reconsider the point before giving his definite reply.

The matter was left at that.

The Secretary of State then turned to Mr. Downie to ask about the position with regard to the re-issue of certificates. Mr. Downie said that the High Commissioner himself had recommended that all certificates be re-issued, subject to its being made sure that the old ones would not be used. Mr. Bennett here volunteered the information that about 100 certificates had been received back from Berlin, and that they were for the most part of the A I category. Mr. Shertok said that this was very welcome news: it seemed to tally with the figure of 120 certificates given to our representative by Mr. Insull, of which 90 were A I. It was subsequently learnt that the certificates were 149 in number consisting of 20 AI with 36 dependents; 7A 4 with 5 dependents; 70 B 3; and 11 other dependents. These certificates had arrived in Germany after the outbreak of war and had been despatched to London through the American Consulates.

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Mr. Shertok urged that a cable be sent to Jerusalem notifying them of the numbers of these certificates sent to Germany, and left undistributed. Mr. Shertok mentioned that Professor Namier and himself had had a word about it with Mr. Butler at the Foreign Office, who promised to do what he could to ascertain the facts. In this connection he said that in particular with regard to the Youth Aliyah there could be no doubt at all as to the number outstanding, as the whole thing was organised extremely well, and to the Government's complete satisfaction, and those responsible knew exactly how many persons had yet to leave under the last quota. They were all leaving in batches, and none of them singly.

Mr. MacDonald finally expressed his agreement with the suggestion that all certificates, with regard to which certainty could be attained that a duplicate copy was not "wandering somewhere around the world", should be re-issued (by implication this meant that they need not necessarily wait until they get hold of the original copy and tear it up - all they had to make sure about was that the existing original copy was out of circulation). These certificates would then be available for eligible immigrants outside Germany. The Secretary of State made it clear, however, that the actual number of certificates to be renewed would have to be determined in Jerusalem. The Colonial Office on its part would try to get all the information possible and pass it on to Jerusalem, but as Jerusalem was in direct communication with the various Passport Control officers and was, moreover, in a position to keep a check on actual arrivals, it would be up to them to ascertain the exact number.

Mr. Shertok then passed to the second point on the agenda. He said that it concerned the suspension of all Jewish immigration for the current half-year - a matter which they had not yet had an opportunity of thrashing out with the Government, although it had been debated in the House, and had also been ventilated in the Press. The Secretary of State knew exactly where the Jewish Agency stood in the matter. They had rejected the White Paper; they had refused to accept any arbitrary limits to Jewish immigration, and they would never acquiesce in the idea of a global total of 75,000 after which there was to be no further Jewish immigration at all. But they realised the futility of entering into a discussion of the whole matter again with the Secretary of State. What they were however convinced of was that the present suspension was made to apply to the special allowance for refugees was not in accordance with the White Paper, and that it had not been intended at the time by the framers of the White Paper that it should so apply. The White Paper provided for five annual quotas of ordinary Jewish immigration of up to 10,000 each.

It was then laid down that if Jews continued to enter Palestine without authority, then the number of those whom the Government would detect and who could not be sent back would be deducted from those annual quotas. Apart from all that - i.e. the annual quotas and deductions from them - there was to be a special allocation of 25,000 certificates for Jewish refugees. It was clear to them that there had been no intention at all that such deductions as might be made on account of unauthorised Jewish immigration should apply to this special allowance. They would now urge that the point should be reconsidered, and that it should be made clear that the High Commissioner was not precluded from granting certificates for refugees if the Jewish Agency could show that provision has been made for their maintenance. They were not coming now with the request for a definite quota, but were only asking that the point of principle should be conceded. Once it was conceded they would approach the Palestine Government, but it was no use approaching them now as their hands were tied by the over-riding suspension. The decision on the point of principle rested with the Secretary of State. The matter was of particular urgency, in view of what had happened in Poland. Polish Jews did not come under the definition of refugees adopted in practice by the Palestine Government. Mr. MacDonald interjected that the definition in question had really

\*\* was wrong even by reference to the White Paper - unless they were quite fundamentally mistaken in their reading. It was clear to them that the fact that the suspension/

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been adopted by the Evian Conference. Mr. Shertok said that in any case he assumed it would be granted that the Jews who had escaped from the German invasion of Poland fully qualified for that description. They were unfortunately not in a position of being able to help today the masses of Polish Jews whose existence had been completely ruined and whose very homes had been destroyed, but they did have to face to-day the problem of Jewish refugees from Poland in Rumania, Hungary, and possibly in other countries.

They did not know, for instance, what was to happen to the Jews who had fled into Vilna. Their information was that the Lithuanian Government took the view that these Jews had to be treated as foreigners. In Rumania alone there were several thousand refugees, among them their own friends and comrades, trusted Zionist workers who were good material for Palestine. They were anxious to bring them over as soon as possible and they would ask for a thousand certificates for that purpose, the position of these refugees in Rumania was a desperate one. The Rumanian Government was determined to get rid of them. The Rumanian Jewish community could not support them indefinitely. Money was being wasted on their maintenance, which could be put to good productive use in Palestine. They might also ask for a few hundred certificates to be able to take over to Palestine some of the German refugees in England or in Western Europe.

The Secretary of State said that the construction which Mr. Shertok had put upon that section of the White Paper was a perfectly justifiable one, though, no doubt quite unintentionally, he had misquoted the sequence in which the provisions actually appeared in that document. The order was really as follows: first, there was the provision about annual quotas, then the reference to the special allowance for refugees, and finally the matter of deductions on account of illegal immigration. The same mistake had been made by Professor Namier in his letter to the "Times". But he fully admitted that this did not invalidate Mr. Shertok's argument; he had a perfect right, on the basis of the wording of the White Paper, to interpret that section as meaning that the deductions were not to apply to the refugees, since the deductions referred to annual quotas, and this term was not used in connection with the refugee immigration. He wanted however to assure the representatives of the Jewish Agency that it had been really his original intention - and he might describe himself as the author of the White Paper - that the deductions should apply all round. Although there was no reference to annual quotas as far as the 25,000 permits for refugees were concerned, he had assumed from the outset that these permits would be dealt out by instalments and that the instalments would be combined with the half-yearly quotas of the ordinary immigration, as had actually been the case in practice. He did not think he could accept the suggestion that this should now be changed. Illegal immigration had already amounted to some 9,000, which meant that the quota of the current half year was already exhausted.

Dr. Brodetsky pointed out that as far as he remembered from the statements made by the Government's spokesmen soon after the Palestine Conference, the intention was to issue 10,000 of these permits in the first year and 10,000 in the next so that the whole quota would be exhausted in two years or so. There was certainly no intention of spreading the 25,000 certificates over five years.

Mr. Shertok added that at the Palestine Conference the Secretary of State had himself represented this allocation of 25,000 permits as a contribution to the solution of the refugee problem. The issue of these certificates was not related to any period of time. The only condition was that the High Commissioner should be satisfied that they should be provided for; once the High Commissioner was satisfied on that point there was nothing to prevent him from issuing the whole quota at once, in the very first year.

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Mr. MacDonald said that in substance this was correct and although the refugee permits were to be issued in half-yearly quotas their issue need not have been spread over five years but they could have been disposed of in a much shorter period, subject to the condition to which Mr. Shertok had referred. They were anxious to help Jewish refugees in a proper manner. Had not the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem been told, when the quota for the last half-year had been issued, that the Palestine Government was not precluded from issuing a supplementary quota for refugees during the half-year, if they could make out a proper case?

Mr. Shertok interjected that he remembered this very well because it was in reply to his express question on this point that the statement had been made.

Mr. MacDonald continued that on the basis of this assumption the Jewish Agency had put in an application for a few thousand additional permits. That application was being considered favourably - not necessarily with a view to granting the whole figure asked for but certainly a portion of it - when the influx of illegal immigrants had increased. The idea of granting a supplementary refugee quota had then to be abandoned. He supposed he could address no appeal to the Jewish Agency to help in stopping this illegal immigration, which he thought most undesirable from the point of view of the interests of Palestine. He knew that even if this had really depended upon the Jewish Agency they would not have been able to take a hand in the matter because this would have meant for them to cooperate in the execution of the White Paper, which they were perfectly within their rights in opposing. No one was more anxious than he to get back as soon as possible to legal immigration. They might be able to do so in April, and they might not - he did not know. Transports of illegal immigrants had come in recently, and according to their information further transports were at present en route.

Dr. Brodetsky said that there had nevertheless been a decline in the movement of illegal immigrants which would appear to justify the grant of a new refugee quota. He was saying this not from the point of view of the Jewish Agency, which rejected the White Paper, but from the point of view of the Government which based itself upon it.

Mr. MacDonald again referred to the fact that about 9,000 had already gone in, which amounted to the quota which would have been granted normally.

Dr. Brodetsky said that in such matters one could form an estimate of what was likely to happen by reference to a recent trend of development.

Mr. MacDonald explained that what he was chiefly worried about was to prevent a state of things arising which would inevitably lead to the total of 75,000 immigrants being exceeded. If they were to say that the 25,000 refugee permits had to be granted in any case and only the annual quotas of 10,000 each could serve as a cover against illegal immigration, they might well find themselves facing the contingency of the total immigration being in excess of what had been intended.

Mr. Shertok said that it might well turn out to be the case that the limit of 75,000 had been reached before the end of the five years period. This would mean a crisis which would have to be faced. He did not see that 1,000 or 1,500 immigrants more could matter very much with regard to such a crisis.

Mr. Downie intervened to draw attention to the fact that there were at present 21,000 units of unemployed workers among the Jews of Palestine, and he could not see how it was possible for the Jewish Agency, which was claiming the Government's

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financial assistance on the basis of that unemployment, to ask at the same time for additional immigrants. If new funds were available for their absorption they had better be used for maintaining the unemployed who were already in the country.

Mr. Shertok said that he had anticipated this argument. It was perfectly logical for anyone who was so familiar with the Palestine situation as Mr. Downie to bring up this question of unemployment in connection with new immigration. But the position was that they might get funds earmarked for this special purpose of providing for the new refugees which they would not get for the relief of existing unemployment. Moreover, Palestine was suffering today along with many other countries from the consequence of the first impact of the war situation upon economic life. The Polish Jews in Rumania, for whom he was pleading, would be infinitely better off in Palestine even if they were unemployed than they were now in Rumania. At least they would be among their own people and in a friendly atmosphere with some help forthcoming. They could not possibly turn their backs upon these people merely because there was unemployment in Palestine. One had to take a broader view of such matters.

Mr. MacDonald said that it was perfectly fair to expect the Government to look ahead and not to take into account only the existing state of affairs, but there was another side to this picture; they themselves were trying to look ahead with regard to Palestine and figure out what its economic state was likely to be after three or four or five years, and they could not exclude from such consideration the effect of an unlimited and unselected immigration upon the economic absorptive capacity of the country.

Mr. Downie added: "Remember, the White Paper did not say that 75,000 Jews will be admitted in the next five years; all it said was that not more than that number will be admitted, but as to whether the maximum will be reached will depend on the economic absorptive capacity."

Mr. Shertok pointed out that it was not he who had raised the question of the economic absorption of immigrants at the present time. He had made it perfectly clear at the beginning of the conversation that he fully realised that it would be up to the High Commissioner to decide whether means were forthcoming for the maintenance of these immigrants. All he was urging here was that the point of principle should be conceded.

Mr. Downie said: "But surely you have had discussions on this point with the Palestine Government."

Mr. Shertok said that he had already explained that discussions with the Palestine Government on this point could only be academic. The decision of the point of principle lay with the Secretary of State. He mentioned that the new Chief Secretary of the Palestine Government had defined his own position as that of a tram car, not of a bus.

Mr. MacDonald laughed and said: "I am then the bus".

Mr. Shertok wondered whether it would not be possible for the Secretary of State to issue a refugee quota as an advance on account of the next quota? Mr. MacDonald thought that it would not. He disclosed that when taking the decision about the suspension of immigration, it had been his original intention to keep up his sleeve this possibility of granting an advance later in the half-year on account of the subsequent half-year in the event of some emergency arising. But

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after thinking it over, he had come to the conclusion that it would not do to relax, as the Government was very anxious not to raise any doubts in the minds of the Arabs as regards their determination to carry through the policy of the White Paper.

Professor Brodetsky suggested that as they would be nearing the end of the half-year, there should be no great difficulty in granting a quota a little in advance of the next half-year. Mr. MacDonald did not see why it was so essential to have an advance at all if the immigrants would only be able to arrive towards the end of the period. Did it make much difference whether they would go to Palestine at the end of this half-year or at the beginning of next? Mr. Shertok explained that if the quota were granted in November, the immigrants could begin to arrive in December and most of them would come in January, February and March, whereas if they were to get the quota only in April, the arrivals could take place only from May or June onwards, which was a very essential difference. A lot of unnecessary suffering and wasteful expenditure on mere relief would be entailed in the interim period.

Mr. MacDonald said that in general he did not understand the way the immigration arrangements of the Jewish Agency worked. Let the representatives of the Agency please not take this as a mere debating point. In the middle of the last half-year they had asked for a supplementary quota in view of the urgent need to help the refugees, and yet when the quota period had ended, it appeared that more than half of the refugees for whom permits had been issued at the beginning of the period had not yet arrived. Mr. Shertok said that he was very glad that the Secretary of State had raised this point because it gave him an opportunity of clearing up a misunderstanding which had arisen. To begin with, they had not got the permits at the beginning of the period, but much later. But the main reason was that, as a result of the present quota system, quite an absurd state of things arose in that people who had been given permits could not take their wives and children with them because the quotas for wives and children were exhausted. This produced a deadlock, which it had taken months to solve. He knew that here again the blame had been put on the Jewish Agency. He was under the impression that the Secretary of State had been informed that the deadlock had arisen because, upon the representations of the Agency, the quotas originally fixed for wives and children had been reduced. This was not the case, and Mr. Mills, with whom he had thrashed out the whole subject, had admitted that it was not the case, and that the cause of the deadlock was a different one. All the Jewish Agency had wanted changed in the distribution of the certificates had been a reduction in the number of permits set aside for elderly dependents, because they had thought that number out of proportion to the other categories. They had not touched the quota for wives and children. What had actually happened was that the Government had under-estimated the numbers of wives and children, and in addition, Mr. Mills had been called upon to provide hundreds of permits for the registration of the families of travellers already in Palestine, whereas he had originally thought that all these people would go back to their countries of origin and claim admission from there as immigrants, and that he need not make any provision for their families in the current quota. Mr. Shertok then renewed his request for an advance on the next quota.

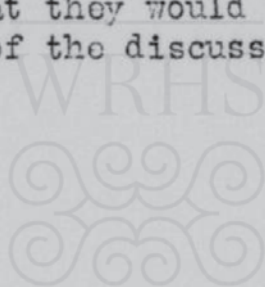
Oct. 27, 1939

Mr. MacDonald suggested to the representatives of the Jewish Agency that they should put themselves in the shoes of the Government. He for his part was trying to put himself in the shoes of the Jewish Agency, and did not expect them to help in stopping illegal immigration because he realised that they could not be called upon to cooperate in implementing the White Paper to which they were opposed. But let the Jewish Agency consider the position of His Majesty's Government, which was determined to carry this policy through, and was anxious to avoid anything that might lead the Arabs to believe that it was wavering in that determination.

Mr. Shertok wondered whether the Arabs had not been sufficiently impressed by the fact that for the first time since the introduction of the Mandatory Regime, Jewish immigration had been completely suspended. Even if some permits were now granted, it would still leave a wide margin of victory for the Arabs, with which they could well be content. A new factor has arisen as a result of the war - the collapse of Poland and the creation of a new refugee problem. Surely His Majesty's Government, with nearly 20,000 refugee certificates still on its hand, can afford to take this problem into account?

The Secretary of State ended the discussion by stating that he saw little likelihood of a change in his attitude but he would not give a definite reply at this time but that they would have to be continued. The representatives of the Jewish Agency said that they would be at the disposal of the Secretary of State for a continuation of the discussion.

London  
27.10.39



C O N F I D E N T I A L

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Colonial Office,  
Downing Street, S.W. 1

6th November, 1939.

Dear Mr. Shertok,

Thank you for your letter of the 27th October, recapitulating the points which you raised at our discussion of Palestine immigration matters on the 24th October. I have given your letter careful consideration, and in the light of all the circumstances have reached the following conclusions.

2. No Palestine immigration certificates destined for Jews in Greater Germany, but not distributed to them at the date of the outbreak of war, whether the certificates are in blank or are executed in the names of individuals, can now be distributed to the intended recipients in Germany, and these certificates (subject to the qualification mentioned in paragraph 6 below) will be regarded as withdrawn. I regret that I cannot meet your suggestion that exceptions might be made from this rule in favour of individuals or of categories of persons to whom particular hardship would result. I do not under-estimate the distress which may be caused to some of the persons concerned, but I fear that any concession of this nature would be impracticable if the general decision is to be maintained.

3. In the place of the certificates mentioned above, the High Commissioner will be authorised to issue an equivalent number of "substitute" certificates in similar categories. Jewish refugees who were already resident in Allied or neutral countries at the date of the outbreak of war will be eligible for these certificates, distribution of which will be effected by the Palestine Department of Migration, in consultation with the Jewish Agency, following the usual practice. I have given the High Commissioner my views as to certain principles in the distribution of the certificates, including the date after which refugees arriving from German ex-Polish territory would not be counted as qualifying for a certificate.

4. I am asking the High Commissioner for his view on the further suggestion, at the end of paragraph 4 of your letter, that transfers from category to category may be necessary, but there is some objection in principle to such transfers and I cannot promise that this will be possible.

5. Complete information is not yet available as to the number and description of these undistributed certificates. As you know, some have been returned to London, while others were left behind in the safes of the former British Passport Control Officers in Germany. Certain details have, however, been obtained and the Foreign Office are trying to obtain further particulars. As particulars become available, they will be passed on to the High Commissioner by telegram, so that he may proceed with the issue of "substitute" certificates. If it should prove impossible in any given case to obtain complete particulars, the information available from official sources and from sources supplied by the Jewish Agency could be compared with the object of agreeing on a total figure represent-

11/6/39

- 2 -

ing the number of certificates concerned. I am making this suggestion to the High Commissioner. I agree that if the High Commissioner were to issue a group of "substitute" certificates on this basis and any excess in the agreed estimated total was subsequently revealed, the excess could be deducted from the balance of the total of 25,000 refugees provided for in the "White Paper."

6. A further point has been raised with my Department by Dr. Rosenbluth since your letter was written. This concerns the possibility that certain individuals, in respect of whom immigration certificates were sent to Germany but not distributed before the outbreak of war, might actually have left Germany and arrived in the United Kingdom or some other allied or neutral country before the outbreak of war. Dr. Rosenbluth has been given the names of the persons whose certificates have so far been returned from Greater Germany, so that this possibility may be examined. If any of the individuals concerned can be satisfactorily shown to have entered Allied or neutral countries before the outbreak of war, I shall have no objection, if the High Commissioner agrees, to their certificates being delivered to them instead of being cancelled.

7. Enquiries are being made regarding the fate of undistributed immigration certificates intended for persons in the part of Poland which is now occupied by Germany, and I agree in principle to these certificates being treated in a similar manner.

8. As regards the present quota period I shall be glad to have a further talk with you about this, and I understand that you have arranged with my Private Secretary to call round on Tuesday at 3 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) MALCOLM MACDONALD

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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NOTE ON CONVERSATION WITH THE RIGHT HON. MALCOLM MACDONALD, P.C., M.P.,  
COLONIAL OFFICE, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH, 1939, AT 4 P.M.  
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Present: The Right Hon. Malcolm MacDonald,  
Mr. H. F. Downie,  
Mr. D. Ben-Gurion.  
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After some preliminary conversation with regard to the dates of my arrival and departure, to the general situation in Palestine, shipping, orange-prospects, etc., we embarked on the main subject of the interview.

I said I had not come to see him to plead for the 43 young men sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Worse things were happening to the Jews today than unjust imprisonment. What I wanted to discuss with him was rather the political issue arising out of this case.

On November 1st I had been to see the G.O.C. The reason I had asked for an appointment with him was this: I had read the proceedings of the trial in which the 43 young men were accused, first of breaking the law (which was a fact) and secondly of having intended to attack Arabs (which was not a fact, but was a very serious accusation to make). On the first charge they might have got a few weeks' or months' imprisonment. But as they had got ten years, it seemed that the Court must have accepted the second accusation as well. I happened to know some of these young men personally; I knew the type to which all of them belonged, and they were not the people to attack Arabs. As the G.O.C. was, to all intents and purposes, the final Court of Appeal, I had thought that I ought at least to make clear to him what kind of people these were. I had found him very courteous, and also very frank. I had understood that he did not accept the Public Prosecutor's view that the 43 had intended to attack Arabs. (Mr. MacDonald interjected: Did he say that he did not accept it? I replied: Not explicitly, but I certainly understood that he did not.) He had, however, made a still graver accusation. He told me that in his view these young people were undoubtedly part of an illegal organisation whose aim was to fight the British Government, and that he was going to smash that organisation. When I told him that these were men who had served in the police, and with the military, who had distinguished themselves in fighting against the terror, he said: "That only aggravates the offence; they went into Government service and got Government pay for the purpose of obtaining training for rebellion." As the man responsible for law and order in Palestine, he was going to smash this organisation.

I pointed out to Mr. MacDonald that these were not the only Jews serving the Government in Palestine; there were 20,000 enrolled, and some 4,000 or 5,000 on active service. These 43 were among the best of our young people; if they were accused of treason, then all the others might be similarly accused. The smashing of the organisation could only mean that all Jews would be disarmed, all those serving with police or military dismissed, and extensive searches made for hidden arms. I felt that I must give him some idea of the background of the situation; I would limit myself to the story of the last two months. I had come back from the Congress on September 2nd. I found that a day or so before, a boatload of "illegal" immigrants coming into Tel-Aviv had been fired on by a police boat, and three refugees had been killed.

This was a very serious affair, and I knew that our people would not take such a thing - the shooting down of refugees - simply lying down. But war broke out the next day. I therefore called together some of our people and told them: "You must forget it; we are at war." The same day we issued a statement on behalf of the Jewish Agency, which said in effect: "We are now at war; the White Paper was, it is true, a cruel blow to the Jews, and we have naturally to defend our rights; but now a graver issue has arisen; England has declared war on Nazi Germany, and any help we can give must be given whole-heartedly and without reservation." We further arranged for the registration of volunteers for national service and for service with the forces, and 130,000 Jews responded. I was asked by some of our people: What about the White Paper? And I had told them frankly: The White Paper still exists; perhaps it will not be carried into effect during the war, but of this I am not sure. But whether or not, a graver emergency has now arisen, and our part is to stand by England. We had gone to the civil and military authorities on the spot and had offered our services for the formation of Jewish units - we could offer thousands of young men to join the British Army. Our offer was refused. We were told first that there was no necessity, since Palestine was not yet involved in the war, and might never be; secondly that the arming of the Jews would upset the Arabs.

Then we had been asked by the military authorities to provide technicians, mechanics, etc. for British Army Field Companies in the Near East. We responded gladly, though some questions of detail as regards pay and allowance, etc. arose. These were in process of being straightened out, when we were suddenly told: No Jewish units - they must be Arab-Jewish- fifty-fifty. We said we could not serve under such conditions. It was with deep regret that we saw that the White Paper policy was being pursued even in time of war. I would define that policy as being one of complete, rule-of-thumb "equality" between Jews and Arabs, at all costs - an "equality" which meant that, when the Jews offered real and practical assistance, the fact that the Arabs had not offered similar assistance was a sufficient reason for refusing the Jewish offer. "Equality" must be preserved. (In fact, by the time I left Palestine, only nine Arabs had been enlisted.) One unfortunate fact, however, rather spoiled the picture of "equality": for years the Arabs had been fighting against the British and the Jews had not. In this case of the 43 there had been a good opportunity to equalise the position: Arabs had been rebelling against the British; here were Jews who might be accused of preparing to rebel against the British. Thus could "equality" be preserved!

But I had not come to him to complain. I had come because I felt I had a duty to perform - a duty to H.M. Government. It was perfectly possible for them to disarm the Jews, to dismiss all Jewish police; to make searches and confiscate all hidden arms. But I felt they ought to know first what would be the inevitable result. I had lived long in Palestine; I knew the country well. The Arab terror was not stopped even yet. It might have died down for a little, but any day it might break out again. If they disarmed the Jews, it would be a call to the Arabs to begin new massacres. There had already been <sup>many</sup> massacres under British rule. Not because the British had not been willing to protect us, but merely because the conditions of Palestine were such that in the first instance it was only we who could defend ourselves. Whenever we could not defend ourselves, there would be massacres. I had to tell H.M. Government that if Jewish blood were shed as a result of Jews being disarmed, that blood would be on their hands.

I asked permission to reply at once on this point. I had heard this explanation before, and I had made it my business in Palestine to make the most thorough investigation I could. The boat's crew had left it before it came into Palestine waters, and it had been actually brought in to shore by the refugees themselves. Mr MacDonald should not, of course, take my word for it, but I had made a thorough enquiry from the people who had brought the boat in, and I was absolutely satisfied that the story of trying to ram the police boat was untrue. Mr. MacDonald repeated that there were stringent orders against firing at the refugee boats, and that the report on this particular incident had come to him from responsible quarters in Palestine.

He then turned to the main question. He said: I am afraid you will be tired of hearing this argument, but I have to repeat it. We believe that there must be absolute fairness between Jews and Arabs in this matter of arms. There have been many cases of Arabs being not only imprisoned but hanged for the possession of illegal arms. It is a very serious offence. Moreover, we are not in normal times. The Arab rebellion is not yet entirely suppressed. You have yourself admitted that the 43 young men had been foolish and had broken the law. I say their offence is graver than that - it is criminal - not in the legal sense, of course, but in the practical sense. There cannot be one law for the Jew and another for the Arab. Going out with rifles and bombs is provocation.

Speaking of the wider issue, he asked how it was possible for the Government, in time of war, to tolerate the existence of secret military organisations and stores of secret arms? He said he knew that General Haining had made arrangements for the security of the Jewish settlements, arrangements which the Agency had admitted to be satisfactory. The settlements had their sealed armouries, and their defense organisations, which had worked quite well. The authorities had known that the Jews had illegal arms, but so far had winked at it; Moreover, the Arab terrorist bands had been broken up; he did not say there was no terrorism any more, but the organisation was broken. There was, further, a large British military force in Palestine; it was the duty of the British to maintain order in the country, and they were able to do it. Large stores of arms had been confiscated from the Arabs; not, perhaps, all the arms they had, but large quantities. How then could H.M. Government tolerate secret arms and secret military organisations and training, among the Jews? He said he knew that the vast majority of the Jewish community was absolutely friendly to the British; they might be opposed to the White Paper, but they remained friends of Britain. But there might all the same be some among them who would use arms to obtain possession of Palestine; even that might not be hostility to Britain, but simply that they wanted the country for their own. And that the British Government could not allow. They did not want the Arab rebellion to flare up again; that would be very serious indeed for the Allied Cause. They must treat both sides alike.

I asked permission again to reply to some of his points:

(1) I repeated that I had not come to plead the cause of the 43. But as to fairness as between Arabs and Jews, I could tell him that not a single Arab had been sentenced to long-term imprisonment, let alone hanged, for the mere possession of arms; such sentences had only been imposed when there was good reason to believe that the accused had intended murder. If these 43 had not been Jews, no such sentence would ever have been considered. If what had been known as to the antecedents of these Jews had been known

about an Arab - namely that there was no evil intention, but only a technical breach of the law - then there would have been no question of more than a nominal sentence. It was clear to us that the sentence passed on the 43 was a "political" sentence, imposed only because they happened to be Jews.

(2) It was true that the terror was now less than it had been. But it would be a mistake to think that law and order were re-established. The week before I left Palestine there had been shooting on the Tel-Aviv-Jerusalem road; Arab notables had been murdered in Nablus; and a British officer killed in Bethlehem. The terrorists were now returning from Syria and the Lebanon, and according to the declaration just made by the G.O.C. more would shortly be returning. I was afraid that terror was likely to increase in the near future.

(3) I said he had told me that there was now no need for the Jews to defend themselves in Palestine. I was well aware of what had been done during the last three years to improve defence arrangements. We had all deeply appreciated the work of the military; we were happy to co-operate with them, and would continue to co-operate. But, knowing the country as I did, I was obliged to tell him that we were not safe in Palestine. Now, as throughout the past sixty years, we must always be ready to defend ourselves. I had myself had experience in working in the fields in Palestine, under the Turks. I knew that I could not go out to work without a rifle. We had then had an organisation called Hashomer - the Guard - for self-defence. It had been disbanded immediately after the British occupation, on the ground that there was no reason for its existence under British rule. Unfortunately this proved to be a mistaken view. I was myself still a soldier in British uniform when there was a pogrom in Jerusalem: I could not go to Jerusalem to help defend my people there because I was in camp at Sarafand (with 2000 more Jews) under British military discipline. This was in 1920. There was another pogrom in 1921; another in 1929, and he knew what had been happening in the last few years. These things have not happened because the British did not wish to protect the Jews; they were inherent in the conditions of the country. There was not a single Jew in Palestine who, with the best faith in the world in the British Administration, could feel safe in that country unless he were armed. We knew that our very existence was a provocation to certain people. Even if the British forces were much greater than they are, there would be no possibility of their being able to protect every Jew in Palestine. I had to travel twice a week between Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem; could British troops be spared to escort me every time? I happened to have a licence and carried a gun. But was I to tell my son - who had no licence - to rely on police protection? And if I did, would he listen to me?

I considered it my duty to tell the Government that it should not disarm the Jews without first considering carefully the results of such a step. If they disarmed the Jews, the Government could not prevent Jews being murdered. For the disarming of the Jews would be a deliberate provocation to the Arabs, a deliberate encouragement to them to massacre. And this time, the blame would be on the British Government, because they had been warned in time.

He seemed very uneasy, but made only one comment; he said: "You say it was a political sentence on these 43 young men; I can assure you that neither we here nor the High Commissioner gave any instructions to the Court. On the contrary, we received your representations, and we transmitted them to the High Commissioner." He added that no decision had yet been taken on the larger issue.

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D.B.G.

London,  
16.11.39.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

19th November, 1939.

H. F. Downie Esq., C.B.E.,  
Colonial Office,  
Downing Street, S.W. 1.

Dear Downie,

I feel I must revert to the subject of the immigration certificates blocked in Germany, and should be very grateful to you if you would kindly transmit my representations to the Secretary of State for his urgent consideration.

We are now in possession of more precise data regarding the numbers and categories of these certificates. We also have fresh information about the effects, both general and personal, of the ruling that these nominees for immigration who are today in Germany, and who had not received their certificates before the outbreak of war, should not be admitted to Palestine. The reasons why this information has only now come to hand, and could not therefore be used by us in our interview with the Secretary of State or in my earlier letter to him are: (i) that our contacts with the Palestine Offices in Berlin, Vienna and Prague are indirect and roundabout (via Geneva), and (ii) that our people in Germany seemed until a couple of weeks ago to be so certain that all the pre-war nominees would be able to emigrate that they did not bother to draw our attention to the full implications of their not being able to do so, nor were they themselves, perhaps, aware of all those implications until they had heard of the negative ruling.

To give you the up-to-date figures first: there appear to be 309 certificates of the B.3 category blocked in the Greater Reich, of which 169 had been definitely allocated, but not distributed, to young persons now in the Greater Reich, the distribution of these certificates between the various centres being as follows: Berlin - 95; Vienna -14; Prague -18; Bratislava -42. Our claim for admissions under this category thus concerns only 169 persons, and not over 300, as we had previously thought. In addition, we are informed that the following are the numbers of certificates of other categories blocked in the four above-mentioned centres; Berlin -77; Vienna -67; Prague -3; Bratislava -14. Of the 77 certificates in Berlin, 62 appear to be of category A(i) and A(v), 13 of A (iv) and 2 of D. The Vienna certificates consist of 60 A(i) and 7 of Category C. Details as to the categories of the certificates in Prague and Bratislava are not yet available.

I have already pointed out in my letter of October 27th to the Secretary of State what disappointment and hardship awaits the young persons nominated under the Youth Immigration Scheme, who have all been undergoing their training prior to departure for Palestine, and many of whom have now no families to whom to return. But the position of the adult candidates for immigration is no less, and in some cases even more, difficult. The point is that capitalist immigrants have to be definitely designated for immigration long before their immigration permits can actually be handed over to them. As you know, a capitalist immigrant can only qualify for an immigration permit if he satisfies the Palestine Government or the Passport Control Officer concerned that he has the prescribed amount of capital in his free possession. With regard to immigrants from Germany, and with the exception of the relatively few cases in which a Jew resident in Germany happens to have money abroad, proof of possession of the necessary amount can only be supplied after the candidates

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has been allowed by the German authorities to pay it in to the Palaestina Treuhandgesellschaft (Trust Company) in Berlin. But the trouble is that the German authorities will not give the necessary permission until they are definitely informed by the Palestine Office, which acts upon assurances received from the British Passport Control Officer, that they are in a position to guarantee an immigration certificate to a given person. In other words, in order to get a certificate, a man has to pay in a sum of money, but in order to be able to pay it in, he must have an assurance that he will be given a certificate. Therefore, the candidates for immigration permits of the capitalist class concerned in the present case were all informed at a certain early stage that they would receive immigration permits from the last quota. This notification was made to them on the basis of information received from the Passport Control Officer as the numbers of certificates available for immigrants of this category. The nominees then proceeded to realise their assets in order to raise the necessary amount of capital, and in many cases gave notice to their landlords. They have since been living in the fixed expectation of an early departure to Palestine, and if they are now prevented from going, they will be completely stranded. Their expectation of an early departure was further confirmed by official notices addressed to candidates during the months of July and August by the British Consuls, of which a specimen photostat copy is attached, informing them that an immigration permit had been allocated and would be handed over on the production of certain documents. It was a matter of days, or perhaps a week, for these people to obtain their certificates; but unfortunately the declaration of war intervened.

I may add that the delay in the distribution of certificates was caused, to a large extent, by the lack of permits for wives and children - a handicap which was removed by the Government only in August.

But the shattered hopes and economic ruin of these people are perhaps not the worst consequences of refusing them permission to emigrate. According to authentic information received by us, reprisals are to be feared on the part of the Reich authorities, both against the individuals concerned, and against the Palestine Offices, which are held by the Nazi Government responsible for their evacuation. A Jew of whom the Nazis had thought they were ridding themselves, and for whose ejection they had made arrangements, is a ready candidate for the concentration camp when he is thrust back upon the mercies of the Third Reich. As for the Palestine Offices, they will have to face the charge that they have got the authorities to carry through all sorts of formalities under false pretences. Formalities in Germany take an inordinate amount of time, and the Palestine Offices had to apply for the passports and other documents of the persons in question well in advance of the estimated date of departure, so as to have them ready in time. The anger of the authorities, who now feel themselves misled, will be visited on the Palestine Offices, and the easiest "Strafe" against them would be to close them down. But if the Palestine Offices are closed down, then all the arrangements for the emigration of the balance of the 2,900 certificate-holders from before the war will come to a standstill. I should make clear, in this connection, that so far only 1180 of the above total have actually left for Palestine; the first transport, consisting of 580, sailed from Trieste on October 17th, and the second, 600 strong, on November 16th. The fact that it took a whole month to organise this second transport is an indication of the administrative difficulties involved.

Considering it all in all, we feel justified in asking that the whole matter of these 330 certificates should be reviewed, and we trust that, notwithstanding the quite natural difficulties involved in this transaction, it may now be

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found possible to treat the persons to whom these certificates had been promised on the same footing as those who had actually received their certificates before the war. We understand that the United States representatives in Germany are fully alive to the grave complications which threaten as a result of a negative decision on the part of H. M. Government, and we hope that, in the light of the additional information and explanations set out above, the Secretary of State may see his way to reconsider the matter.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd). M. Shertok



MEMORANDUM

November 10, 1939

TO: DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

FROM: SAMUEL CAPLAN

Attached herewith is a copy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs.

You will be advised as to the date of the next meeting as soon as it has been set.



MINUTES OF EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR ZIONIST AFFAIRS HELD ON TUESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 7, AT 4 P.M. AT THE OFFICE OF THE ZOA, 111 FIFTH AVE., N.Y.C.

PRESENT: Dr. Solomon Goldman presiding; Gedaliah Bublick, Leon Gellman, Hayim Greenberg, Louis Lipsky, Mrs. David de Sola Pool, Mrs. Bertha Schoolman, Robert Szold, David Wertheim.

Kurt Blumenfeld, Josef Cohn and Georg Landauer, by invitation.

Samuel Caplan, secretary and Mr. Morris Margulies.

Minutes of the previous meeting as circulated were approved.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

The secretary read the following cable sent to Mr. Eliezer Kaplan on October 25th:

"PALESTINE CHIEF RABBINATE CABLED HERE EXECUTIVE REFUSED PETITION AID NEEDY INDIVIDUALS INSTITUTIONS YISHUV HAYASHAN STOP MUST INSIST SOME ASSISTANCE BE GIVEN OTHERWISE IMPENDING VISIT STATES CHIEF RABBINATE PURPOSE COLLECTING INDEPENDENT FUND SERIOUSLY INJURE FORTHCOMING UNITED APPEAL DEMORALIZE PUBLIC OPINION STOP REALIZE YOUR ENLARGED RESPONSIBILITIES BUT ASK APPRECIATION OUR POSITION AGGRAVATED BY CONSTANT APPEALS EXTRA FUNDS WHICH WE UNABLE MEET STOP INFORM GRUENBAUM UNABLE ACCEDE HIS REQUEST OBTAIN FUNDS OUTSIDE UPA PURPOSE POLISH JEWS STOP AWAITING YOUR REPLY OURS OCTOBER 10 AND 12

EMERGENCY ZIONIST COMMITTEE"

to which no reply has as yet been received.

With regard to the request for funds by the Hicem in Bucharest, the secretary reported that a letter had been written in Dr. Goldman's name to HIAS, asking for disposition of this request, and that the following reply had been received: "We relayed the request to our central office in Paris and the answer we received was that that particular activity does not come within the province of its work. The Bucharest office was advised accordingly."

The secretary reported that as a result of an interview had by leaders of the Emergency Committee with Sir Herbert Emerson, Director of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, Sir Herbert issued a statement to the press on October 27th, stressing the role of Palestine in the absorption of refugees in the past six years. Prior to issuing that statement, Sir Herbert had visited Mr. Brandeis who discussed with him the subject of Palestine.

The secretary further reported that Dr. Wise had made arrangements for a luncheon meeting with Mr. Duff Cooper but that it was called off for the time being.

NEUTRALITY ACT:

The secretary read the following cable which had just been received:

"November 7, 1939

SOLOMON GOLDMAN  
ZIONIST ORGANIZATION

PLEASE CABLE WHETHER AND HOW FAR NEUTRALITY ACT AFFECTS  
PALESTINE PARTICULARLY SHIPPING CASH AND CARRY PURCHASE  
PALESTINE EXPORTS AND EVENTUALLY LOANS

KAPLAN"

Dr. Goldman stated that Rabbi Breslau has been working on this matter in Washington and that he would submit a report to the Committee within a few days.

Mr. Szold stated that the President's proclamation left open the question whether ships may touch Palestinian ports, although it was clear that ships of the American Export Line can go to Egypt and Greece, from which points goods may be trans-shipped to Palestine.

(Subsequent to the meeting, it was ascertained that the American Export Line will definitely continue shipping direct to Palestine)

COMMUNICATION FROM DR. LANDAUER:

The secretary read a communication from Dr. Landauer dealing with difficulties people are experiencing in getting transit visas for tourists and immigrants across France and suggesting the possibility of approaching the French Ambassador with a view to removing the difficulties.

The chairman stated that an attempt would be made to approach the French Ambassador through the Washington Bureau.

PROPOSED DELEGATIONS FROM PALESTINE:

Dr. Goldman reported that information had come to him that it was being planned to send two delegations from Palestine to the United States: one delegation for the purpose of assisting in the UPA campaign and another for special work among Polish Landschaftsmann to raise funds for Polish refugees. Dr. Goldman added that the administration of the UPA was of the opinion that a delegation to assist the UPA cannot possibly be of any help, and with regard to the second delegation, it felt that it would cause considerable difficulties with the JDC.

Dr. Landauer stated that when he left Palestine it had not yet been definitely decided to send the delegations.

It was the consensus of opinion that a cable be sent on behalf of the Emergency Committee, advising the Executive that the sending of delegations at this time would not be helpful; and further, that no delegations be sent without consultation in advance with the Emergency Committee.

AMERICAN ZIONIST ATTITUDE TO BRITISH GOVERNMENT:

Dr. Goldman stated that information coming from London and Jerusalem makes it clear that the Palestine Government is proceeding to implement the White Paper policy and he felt that it would be helpful if American Zionists were to make clear to the British Government that they were aware of the attitude taken by the Palestine Government and were deeply resentful that, despite the full measure of cooperation offered by the Zionists to the British Government, the latter should proceed to implement the policy which it was assumed was to be held in abeyance for the duration of the war.

The Committee decided that a memorandum along these lines be presented to the British Ambassador for transmission to his government.

STATUS OF COMMITTEE:

Dr. Goldman called attention to a letter from Dr. Lauterbach in London, transmitted to him by Dr. Landauer, in which the former refers to "the establishing in America of an information service intended to meet the situation created by the war." Dr. Goldman felt that there was a misunderstanding with regard to the functions of the Committee. He reviewed the steps leading to the establishment of the Committee, beginning with the information brought to him by Dr. Nahum Goldmann in Geneva that the Executive, at a meeting immediately following the adjournment of the Congress, had decided to authorize the creation of such a Committee in the U.S. to function in behalf of the Executive.

Mr. Lipsky felt that Dr. Lauterbach's letter need not be considered as an official statement and does not affect the status of the Committee.

The secretary reported that the UPA Executive Committee, at a meeting on October 30th, had adopted a resolution urging that in the UPA contract for 1940 there be inserted a clause providing for the appropriation of an amount to be placed at the disposal of the Emergency Committee.

Dr. Blumenfeld stated that other fund-raising organizations for Palestine, namely, Hadassah and Gewerkschaften, should participate in financing the work of the Emergency Committee.

It was decided that an application be made to the KH and the KK to provide in the 1940 UPA contract for an appropriation of \$250,000 for the work of the Emergency Committee. It was understood that an effort would be made to obtain appropriations from the other Palestine fund-raising agencies.

JTA APPLICATION FOR FUNDS:

The chairman stated that he had received a letter from the JTA applying for an amount of money for the purpose of setting up an overseas service. In this connection he asked for a report on the proposed JTA-Palcor amalgamation.

Mr. Lipsky stated that Mr. Szold and he had met with Mr. Landau who proposed the absorption of the Palestine News Agency by the JTA. Mr. Szold added that Mr. Landau had proposed that under such an amalgamation, the representative of the JTA in Jerusalem would be subject to the approval of the Jewish Agency and additional Zionist representatives would be appointed to the JTA Board of Directors here. Mr. Lipsky stated that he would not undertake to make any recommendations to the Emergency Committee on the basis of the proposals made by Mr. Landau.

It was decided to continue the discussion on the JTA at the next meeting.



Respectfully submitted,

SAMUEL CAPLAN  
Secretary

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

R E P O R T S  
on Jewish Conditions in  
Occupied Poland and the  
Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia

(Supplied by the Geneva Office of the Jewish Agency )



Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs  
111 Fifth Avenue  
New York

December, 1939

## REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN POLAND

Given on the basis of detailed conversations with Mr. Gottlieb,  
Editor of the afternoon paper "Moment", of Warsaw, and  
Mr. Koporovski, a large land-holder in Poland,  
both of whom left Warsaw, November 9, 1939.

### The Evacuation of Warsaw

The first days of war brought with them a half million refugees, who had left all their possessions in their homes in Western Poland and fled into the interior of the country out of fear of the foreign invasion. 20% of all refugees must have been Jews. In the course of a few days the Jewish population of Warsaw mounted to almost 500,000. But by the 5th of September this number was already diminishing as a result of the officially announced evacuation of Warsaw, and the Jews then continued their migration towards the east.

The migrants on the 6th and 7th of September are estimated at 40,000 who for the most part fell victims to the bombardment of the roads leading out of Warsaw which took place on September 7th, and of whom several thousand were Jews. In this way many families were broken up and their heads, who had started in on this journey, were robbed.

### The Siege of Warsaw

At the time of the siege about 40,000 Jews were still inhabiting Warsaw. The care of the people who had fled to Warsaw had already involved great difficulties, since primarily as a cause of the rapidly advancing bombardment a large portion of the disposable facilities for lodging had been destroyed and no places were available for the refugees to live in. The number of those without shelter, refugees as well as Jews native to Warsaw, rapidly grew to nearly 80,000.

Out of this situation there arose

### A Jewish Relief Committee,

that took over the problem of care and housing in the Jewish quarter, where even in peacetime great need had prevailed and where the housing facilities left a great deal to be desired. In spite of the urgent requests made previously by the authorities during the last days of August to put away stores of food, only a few could comply with this request, since for many thousands of inhabitants of this section the question of daily maintenance had been a serious problem for a long time. The homeless had to be brought out of their burning houses, destroyed by air attacks, mostly without even being provided with the most necessary clothing, and thousands of women and children who had been condemned to starvation in this way had to be cared for. It was evident that it was really the Jewish Community which should have undertaken this task, but unfortunately the man who had been designated government commissioner of the Jewish Community had taken to flight, and

many of the most important officials and members of the community council had followed his example. The engineer Czerniakov was named president of the Jewish Community by the President of the city. In this state of affairs Jewish middle-class circles, including the directors of the "Joint" who remained in Warsaw, Neustadt, and Buzik (Guetermann unfortunately has left for Vilna), had assumed the initiative and after a few consultations with the President of the city and with the members of the abovementioned central relief committee the Co-ordinating Committee of the Jewish Relief Organizations was set up. This committee, which had primarily been operating with the existing means of the community and of the "Joint", had been granted food-transports in abundance by the city administration.

At first the Relief offices were in the offices of the Joint, Yasna Street 11, but were destroyed by a bomb-explosion and were transferred to Leszno 13. Since this place of work had to be cleared out as well, the offices are at present located at Krolevska 27.

After Warsaw was surrendered, the position of the Jewish Relief Committee became more difficult from day to day, since the new authorities did not permit any subventions to Jewish relief in the form of provisions. Financial means became more limited, and even by the first week in November the Committee was threatened by the great danger of the restriction of its relief activities, since its means had been completely exhausted. Urgent help is necessary. Jews are excluded from the provisioning undertaken by the German occupation, and the Committee saw itself compelled to hand out 11,000 lunches at 35 people's kitchens.

#### The Situation of the Jews since the Day of Occupation.

In general it must be observed that the arrests among the Polish Jews did not assume the same mass character as did those in Austria and Czechoslovakia in their time. But on the other hand there is no doubt that many individual actions, for the most part to be sure connected with military activities, have inflicted tremendous losses on Polish Jewry.

The sacrifices which as a result of military activity have been caused by epidemics and starvation in the last ten weeks, would have to be reckoned without exaggeration at about 250,000 people, of which in Warsaw alone nearly 30,000 Jewish victims must be ascribed to direct and indirect military activity. Many cities inhabited by Jews have been burnt down and men dragged off to do the work of clearing away; women and children are camping to a large extent among the ruins, if not completely out in the open. Jewish merchants and small tradesmen have lost their livelihood. To the extent that they possess or possessed any goods these are of course taken away from them by the German military. In Lodz and its environs all trade in manufactured articles and leather was expressly forbidden to the Jews. Businesses were taken away from Jews in the main street of Lodz and German concerns were set up at once. Jews had to clear out of their homes, but were only permitted to take half of their furnishings, washing, dishes, etc. along with them. They had to leave the rest in their houses, which were to be given over to the Baltic Germans. The position of the population with no means of livelihood is very difficult. Today, probably over 80% of the Polish Jews are to be placed in this category. It is comparatively easy for manual laborers, who are being sought for, to find work, as well as doctors, who are even earning a great deal of money during this period. Otherwise the Jewish intelligentsia is without exception out of work. The Jewish press no longer exists in Poland, Jewish organizations are not active, and Jewish schools

have not been opened again. As a matter of fact only the work of the Jewish Community is still in existence, which has constituted itself as representative to the Gestapo, for which Messrs. Schosskin, Dr. Hartmann, Bloch, Krischenbaum, Dr. J. Kruk and Kasstau must receive special mention.

Relations of the Warsaw Community with the German Authorities

In order to counter the system of arrests, the Community went to the Gestapo and got their agreement to the Community's placing 700 workers daily at their disposal for clearing up. After that the arrests diminished, but individual assaults of subordinate officials are still taking place. It should also be mentioned that the Community was accorded only a very short space of time for the conscription of all Jews. The land-register was made use of for the establishment of the Ghetto. The announcements of the authorities appeared in German, Polish and Yiddish. Through the fact of the presence of a few highly placed German officers who were in Poland during the last World War, there turned out to be a number of points of contact for the leaders of the Jewish Community, which can be of significance in the near future.

Luckof:-

A criminal court was set up in this city in the course of the occupation at the end of October, as a result of which 400 Jewish men were shot in the market-place. After that the city was set on fire. In Luckof today there live the wives and children of the 400 men shot, which included the poet Lipa Kestin and his son, among the ruins of their former homes.

Kaluszin:-

This city suffered a similar fate. The Jews are living there today in the Beth Hamidrash.

Kattovitz:-

The majority of the Kattovitz Jews have been shunted into the interior of the country and many of them into the Lublin region south of Sandomierz. Only individual families are to be found in the surrounding country and in Kattovitz itself. The largest part of the Polish Corridor cities have been depopulated of Jews, of whom 40% without exaggeration have been victims of death. An exception is constituted by

Soznovice:-

in which Jews may go on as before making a living, but may not leave the city.

Cracow:-

In Cracow in and for itself little has occurred. A large portion of the Jews left the city for Lemberg before the entry of the German troops. A camp set up near Cracow serves for the internment primarily of Poles and Jewish volunteers from the Protectorate, who to the extent that they could not save themselves were unsparingly killed.

The main stream of refugees also turned towards Radom and Lublin.

The Living-Standard and Food-Supply

35,000 portions of food would be necessary every day, but it is only possible to give out 11,000.

A large part of the Jewish section of Warsaw is destroyed, but the work of clearing up and reconstruction of the houses which can still be repaired cannot be begun before spring, and the living facilities for the streets which have been declared a "ghetto" have become frightful. Ten and more individuals are making use of one living room. All Jews from the city must move into the ghetto, in which hunger, typhoid has broken out since the end of October.

Possibilities of Emigration

The negotiations with the Gestapo concerning the possibilities of emigration were conducted primarily through Hartglas. The German occupation authorities wish to place no difficulties in the way of emigration. The requisite means will have to be obtained - tickets for passage - tickets to be placed at the disposal of the emigrants in bills of exchange (Devisen) from abroad. A Jewish corporation for emigration is in the process of being set up.



Geneva, November 22, 1939

Conditions in Warsaw as described by Dr. Rosenblatt of Lodz, who was in Warsaw during the German invasion and left the city in November 18, 1939.

The contradictions between the picture given by Dr. Rosenblatt and reports of others are perhaps to be explained partially through the absence of telephonic communication within Warsaw during the past 6 or 7 weeks, and through the semi-devastation of the city, which caused many uncontrollable rumors to circulate.

#### After the Occupation.

After the taking of Warsaw, conditions were naturally better in many respects. The roaring of the cannons under which the city had been constantly quivering was over, provisioning was much easier, and at the time of Dr. Rosenblatt's departure (November 12) the water-supply was working again.

On the other hand existence became more and more difficult for the Jewish population. It is true that all necessities could be purchased for money, and according to Dr. Rosenblatt's report there seems to have been no particular lack of food. But Jews are permitted to own 2,000 zlotys at the most, and they must pay everything above this into a closed account of which they may dispose of only 250 zlotys per week.

The great mass of the Jewish population, whose number in Warsaw amounts to about the same as before the war (around 350,000) is completely ruined economically. Businesses are either destroyed or pillaged by the German soldiers, or else the goods have been requisitioned, and finally the Germans have prohibited Jews from doing many things which might otherwise have helped support them; for example, Jews are not permitted to buy leather, which takes the bread away from the dealer as well as from the cobbler.

Dr. Rosenblatt contests the fact that the relief committee showed any activity after the German occupation. Of the 35 soupkitchens that were supposed to have given out 11,000 lunches daily he heard and saw nothing. Neither does he believe that the Joint or other authorities had or have the necessary means for this, since after all countries abroad are not sending in any money for disposal within the territory occupied by the Germans.

The economic position of the great majority is desperate and hopeless. That goes not only for Warsaw but also for most of the other places with a large Jewish population. Dr. Rosenblatt expressed himself very sceptically concerning the relief activity begun abroad by various Jewish committees and individuals. He believes that if the Joint has hitherto been able to do what amounts to nothing, and also has no prospect of being able to do much in the future -- because the delicate question arises here as to whether money should be sent into German territory -- then other groups or individuals without means will certainly be unable to arrange anything. Dr. Rosenblatt accordingly regards the economic and with it the physical existence of Polish Jewry as almost hopeless. The only way out would be emigration either to Palestine or to other countries.

Conditions in Lodz.

In Lodz, which the Germans wish to Teutonize (they already write it Lodsch) the position of the Jews is supposed to be much worse than in Warsaw. The Jews are forbidden to step on the main street; they may not even cross over it, so that a Jew must walk around the entire city in order to get from one quarter to another, if it is on the other side of the main street. The Jews must wear yellow arm-bands, on pain of death! Traffic to and from Lodz is only possible with special passenger licenses. ✓

A number of Jews from Lodz who are politically suspect (former members of an anti-Hitler committee etc.) were arrested and sent to a concentration camp in Germany.

Summing up, the impression is given that in Western Poland and Lodz, that is, in the sections to be Teutonized, the Polish as well as the Jewish population is in part expelled and in part murdered; that in the Polish regions which Germany does not wish to annex permanently, life for the Poles is bearable to a certain extent (if there is no lack of food), whereas the Jews are economically ruined everywhere and are treated altogether like pariahs.

Conditions in the Territory Occupied by the Russians.

The number of Jews who have fled to the part of Poland occupied by the Russians is very considerable, although exact figures are not available. The crossing from German into Russian territory is, it is true, guarded on both sides by military posts but it is fairly easy to slip across. The evidence given in other reports as to the erection of assembly camps for refugees on the Russian side is not confirmed by Dr. Rosenblatt. He is of the opinion that the Jews in Russian territory have complete legal equality and freedom of movement. Of course persons and groups disliked politically by the Russians are also arrested and sent into the interior or locked up in prisons.

Strictly Confidential

Letter from Richard Lichtheim, head of the Geneva  
Office to Dr. Lauterbach in Jerusalem.

December 5, 1939

Re: Red Cross activity in Poland.

From a confidential report given by the Swiss delegate of the Red Cross, Mr. Junod who was in Poland from November 15th to November 23rd, the following items are of special interest to us.

1. All international bodies dealing with relief work for Poland ought to know and must keep in mind that the German occupied territory of Poland has been divided into two districts, one forming now part of Germany and the other forming the so-called "General-gouvernement Polen".

The frontiers of these two territories have not yet been definitely established, but apart from the western part of Poland (former provinces of Posen and Westpreussen) the town of Lodz will also be included in the Reich.

In this annexed territory the Jews are treated in the same way as in the other parts of the Reich, that is to say, they are outlaws, have no right and no possibility to make a living and are driven over the frontiers as far as the Gestapo is able to do so.

In the so-called Generalgouvernement the Nuernberg laws do not apply officially and Mr. Junod was assured by the authorities that there is no difference between the treatment of Jews and Poles.

But this assurance is untrue. We know that Jews in the Generalgouvernement are not allowed to exercise all professions, certain forms of trade are already forbidden to Jews and they cannot dispose of their money in the banks, while the Poles are allowed to do so.

Nevertheless there is a certain difference in the treatment and legal status of the Jews in the Generalgouvernement and in that part of Poland which the German regard as definitely incorporated in the Reich.

2. Mr. Junod confirms that the number of Jews in Warsaw is about 350,000. He was allowed to visit the Jewish quarters and the Jewish hospital and he had a talk with the Head of the Community, Mr. Czerniakow. The Jewish quarter is separated from the rest of the town by wire, partly by barbed wire. In the hospital there were about 15 cases of typhoid. From what Mr. Czerniakow told Mr. Junod it appears that the Community is not in a position to organise any relief work because the funds of the Community and the money belonging to the individual members of the Community in the banks have been blocked, the only exception being such sums belonging to the Community as will be necessary for the Jewish hospital until the end of December. After

that day money even for the hospital must be found from other sources and not from the blocked sums in the banks.

From this report, it would appear that the famous "Relief Committee" mentioned in previous reports and acting with the help of the "Joint" is more or less non-existent. This confirms what Dr. Rosenblatt told us about this Jewish Relief Committee.

3. Mr. Junod is of opinion that the German authorities would allow such relief work as Jewish or non-Jewish Societies would be willing to organise in the Generalgouvernement. If anything is to be done by the Red Cross, then the work must be carried out by the German Red Cross under the supervision of the international committee of the Red Cross. For the time being nothing in the way of relief work has been done by the Red Cross and it is doubtful if they will come to any definite arrangement with the German authorities in the near future.

In those territories which are regarded as part of the Reich, no foreign relief work for Jews will be possible, not even through the Red Cross, even if Jewish Organisations would be willing to organise such relief work, which is of course very doubtful because it would mean sending money or clothes or medical supplies or food into Germany.

With regard to the Generalgouvernement Mr. Junod is of opinion that even if Jewish Organisation would be willing to send money or supplies, this should not and could not be done, before a similar action is taken by some international body in favour of the non-Jewish population. This being the position the outlook for Jews and non-Jews alike is very gloomy indeed.

1. The Condition of the Jews in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

a) Number and Age Differentiation

According to statistics of January 1, 1939 there lived a total of 90,147 Jews in the Bohemia-Moravia Protectorate, of Mosaic and other persuasions. As far as could be hitherto ascertained approximately 75,000 Jews adhere to the Jewish faith, the others being racial Jews as defined by the Jewish laws governing in the Protectorate. In distinction to Germany and Austria the composition of the Jewish population presents a substantially favorable picture, both with respect to age and to occupational divisions. There are 43,849 men and 46,298 women. These are to be divided as follows, according to age:

between 0 - 15 years . . . . .	10,000
" 16 - 24 years . . . . .	9,741
" 25 - 39 years . . . . .	23,903
" 40 - 60 years . . . . .	31,003
over 60 years . . . . .	15,500
	90,147

According to their occupational training there is a large number of qualified manual laborers, hundreds of farmers, and merchants as well as members of the free professions. Put into percentages, this means that about 20% of the Jewish population of the Protectorate appear to be suited for a manual life and that at least 20% more of the Jewish population of the Protectorate would be assimilated within the labor system through vocational re-training. I am adducing these instances in order to emphasize the fact that the question in the Protectorate is one of men who primarily do not wish to become objects of social relief but who possess the capacity for existing as useful members of a working community in new countries.

b) The Economic Position of the Jews

In the course of the last few months the economic condition of the Jews in the Protectorate has been radically transformed. Thousands of Jewish employees who were engaged in public enterprises, in factories, banks, etc. were dismissed on September 30, 1939, and only in a fraction of the cases was the legally prescribed notice of dismissal given. 90% of those concerned were obliged to leave their place of work immediately, and since then have been referred to the support given by the Jewish community. This fact has not yet reached its widest scope, since the greater number of these who have become unemployed have found lodging

and maintenance among their relatives. In any case the statistics show a sudden leap in the number of persons reporting to the public organizations of the community as needing assistance. In particular the condition of the Jewish merchant body has become extraordinarily critical in the last few weeks. Many businesses have been Aryanized, but complications of a political nature have arisen which make it extraordinarily difficult to wind up business liabilities. Many Jews have transferred their businesses to Czech Aryans, the German authorities now do not wish to recognize these concluded transfers. Of course they do not give the real reason, which is that they do not consider the transfer of businesses to Czechs a genuine Aryanization and that the question in the Protectorate is still one of Germanization, also. Accordingly they procrastinate with any settlement in such a way that the Jewish merchants no longer have the possibility of being active in their businesses and at the same time are not allowed to draw the purchase price of a minimum income. As a result of this Jewish merchants have in many cases been reduced to the necessity of calling for public aid. A basic complication also arises through the fact that in the provincial centers the sale or cession of the undertaking to a German eliminates the opposition of the Czechs, which in many cases leads necessarily to an aggravation of the general Jewish position. The Jews of the Protectorate have come between two mill-stones and must conduct themselves very tactfully, but in spite of all efforts it is impossible in the long run to manoeuvre it and to guard against dangerous tendencies in the various sections of the population.

The members of the liberal professions are undergoing very great difficulties in these days. The lawyers have not been permitted to practise for quite a long time already. The German authorities are taking care that the Jewish lawyers do not do the smallest piece of work that might produce an income. In the Protectorate not even a percentage of the lawyers are permitted to work, as is the case in Germany and Austria.

The engineers have been excluded from the professional association and with that have in a practical way lost every possibility of working and earning something.

The physicians have been completely eliminated from the hospitals and sick-chests, but are temporarily permitted to continue their private practice. But this sort of pressure and anxiety means that the majority of Jewish physicians will hardly be in a position to maintain themselves.

Teachers and professors have of course been relieved of their positions, and in many cases payment of their pensions was withheld with reference to their political conduct.

Summing up, it must be said that the number of self-supporting Jews in the Protectorate is diminishing daily, and that social responsibilities are increasing to a degree which could not be assumed even in the case of a "German development."

c) Germans, Czechs, and Jews.

I have already indicated that the general position of the Jews in the Protectorate is assuming particularly catastrophic forms as a result of the existing and constantly deteriorating contradictions between the Germans and Czechs. The severe German rule and the hope which has not been given up for the re-establishment of a Czech state do not permit any hope of peaceful development. Complications must be reckoned with daily which are bound to affect the future formation of Jewish life in a terrifying way. The latest events have shown that the dangers for human life is much greater than even the pessimists can imagine. The Germans never had any cognizance of a careful progression and today every Jew that establishes any connection with the Czechs is in danger of his life. Accordingly, the official authorities are constantly concerned with keeping Jews distant from any political activity and are doing everything to prevent any reckless actions on the part of individual Jews. The greater the economic necessity and the more severe the pressure the more difficult it is for them to fulfill this task.

II. The Campaign for Poland

Everywhere in the Protectorate during the high Jewish Holy Days the Jews of Polish citizenship, and those who are stateless through having been born in Poland, were arrested and not set free again. A few weeks later the Jewish community of Moravia-Ostrau was requested to make out a list of all male Jews between 17 and 35 years of age. It was particularly emphasized that all individuals capable of work were to be sought out. The attention of the Jewish community was expressly called to the fact that the question was one of a campaign which was to include all persons ready to go voluntarily to a re-training camp. On this occasion the German authorities indicated that a Jewish reservation was to be created in Poland, and the notions of Hachsharah and a Jewish State were given special emphasis. A few days later, when it appeared that only a few people presented themselves voluntarily for re-training, the registration of all male Jews between 17 and 70 years of age was ordered. This work was finished within 48 hours, upon which, on Tuesday, October 17, 1939, all Jewish men had to turn up for inspection. Every man had a rucksack and a trunk with him. A few Aryan physicians were to conduct the examination. It was announced that all those being able to demonstrate a disability amounting to 70% were to step out of line. The others counted automatically as qualified. The disabled were then led before the Aryan doctors. Not one was examined, and their papers demonstrating the disability were thoroughly inspected. It was expressly announced that angina pectoris and inflammation of the lungs were not a cause of dismissal. The qualified men were brought to the railway station in auto-buses and arranged in the carriages.

The Trip to Poland

The train stayed in Moravia-Ostrau till Wednesday evening. The trip was begun at half past eight in the morning. In the first carriage there was the directing staff, consisting of an Assistant Storm-Troop

Leader of the SS and his accompanying corps. In the second carriage there sat the physicians and the Jewish subsidiary directing staff. During the trip from Ostrau to Cracow nothing untoward was to be noted. The windows could be opened and drinking water could be obtained in the stations. From Cracow to Nisko (the place of destination) the journey was considerably more difficult. The windows had to remain shut, it was terribly close, drinking water was not obtained, and a few responsible members of the Jewish subsidiary directing staff had to endure some decidedly unpleasant surprises on the part of the directing staff. After a three-day trip those taking part in it was unloaded in Nisko.

### The Basis of Classification

The 1,000 participants in the journey were divided into two groups, 550 younger men capable of work were led off to Zarzecze on the other side of the San. 450 old and disabled men were led off to the village of Pisznicza under escort of the guard. Zarzecze is a small village in which 7 Jewish families live. Outside of the village in a large field the 450 people came to a stop; throughout the whole region only 3 peasant huts were to be seen. The guard was settled in the barn of one of these huts, and the doctors in another barn. The remaining people were drawn up in formation and received instructions to begin the building of barracks under the direction of Jewish engineers. In spite of all fatigue, in spite of the pouring rain, and in spite of technical ignorance the Jews began their work. They spent the night in the open. They had to spend three nights without a roof over their heads or a floor beneath their feet. In the intervals the Jews had set up provisional barracks and to some extent attempted to fit them for habitation, so that two weeks later, staying overnight in the barracks was endurable, even though it was completely impossible to undress. Only three weeks later were guard-beds set up in the barracks and stoves lighted, so that it was then possible to inhabit them a la front-line soldiery. The Jews receive no compensation of any sort for their work. They feed themselves out of the provisions brought along from Ostrau and to a slight extent from the revenue of the physicians. There is a quite special significance attached to the presence of the doctors, since they are of the greatest importance for the maintenance of the people and also because they alone were in a position to improve relations a little with the Polish population.

The 550 Jews in Pisznicza assembled in the Jewish synagogue. The population of Pisznicza is reckoned at 2,800, of whom 3 to 400 are Jews. During the night the Jews were attacked by Polish gangs, and one Jew was killed, another severely wounded, and all the others were completely plundered under the threat of violence. In the same night one group fled towards Ullanov, a second group got lost and came to the swampy section near Krasnik, a third spent the night in the woods and the remainder was put up by the Jews in Pisznicza.

Two days after the arrival of the Ostrau transport-train two new transports arrived in Nisko, these from Vienna and Kattowitz. On the last named transport there were also 12 small children. Of the 1,000 Viennese there remained in the barrack-camp 97 professional men, of those from Kattowitz approximately 50; the rest were led off to Pisznicza again.

Altogether in the first 14 days, 1980 people came from the Protectorate, a little more than 2,000 from Vienna and the same number from Kattowitz.

Since the further migration of the Jews to Yaroczin, Hrubyeszov, Lubartov, Yanov etc. was accompanied by danger to life (between 12 and 16 dead had already been counted) the Jews decided to reach an understanding with the Polish burgomasters and clergy. For this it became evident that the physicians could be of great service in reaching this understanding between the Jews and Poles. Throughout the whole region epidemic illnesses were raging, such as cholera, typhoid, dysentery, etc. and with the exception of Yanov neither a doctor nor an apothecary can be found anywhere, so that the population is completely helpless with respect to hygiene. A very skillful Jewish doctor from Vienna who can speak Polish went to the village magistrate in Pisznicza, which seemed to be the center of the robber-bands, and made two suggestions: 1) a hospital should be set up in Pisznicza so that the inhabitants may be handled gratis and receive medicines gratis. 2) A body for self-defense is to be organized by the community whose expenses will be met by the Jews. The required money was to be collected in such a way that the Jews from Pisznicza were to bring half, and the Jews who had migrated were to make up the rest out of the means they had brought with them. Every transportee had been permitted to take along 600 zlotys with him to Nisko.

Both suggestions were well received. The hospital was set up immediately in a peasant-hut and had numerous patients. The Polish guards began to function and undertook to conduct the Jews further on, but it is true that the first division underwent a very bitter experience; not only were the Polish bandits paid for their escort but they led the Jews directly into the middle of the swam, completely pillaged them, and then left them to their fate. This group had to list 6 dead. After this the Jews decided to organize their own self-defense. A number of younger men accompanied by doctors began to wander from village to village, looking for sick people and bringing them medical aid, and in this way established better relations with the Polish population; in every place a few Jews remained who undertook to divide up arriving groups among the different villages and warn them of danger in time. The visits to the villages were made according to plan and then always in the direction of the Russian border. Besides Pisznicza hospitals were also set up in Ullanov and Yaroczin, and one or two doctors were sent to other places. And now for the first time it had become possible to pass by the villages with relative security, to buy the necessities of life and to reach the boundary of Russian interests. Of the 6,000 Jews about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  -4,000 went to Russia in the first month.

The representatives of the communities were commissioned by the directing staff to go into the villages and find quarters for the Jews. They were given instructions to conduct themselves as inconspicuously as possible and not to create an unpleasant impression on the authorities. But these men proved to be very clumsy and only a few days after their departure from the barrack-camp were set upon by German soldiers and arrested. They were then brought before the appropriate provincial administrator. When questioned about their activities they declared that

they had a commission from the proper authorities of the German police to look for Jewish quarters in the district between the rivers San, Vistula, and Bug which were to be set aside as a Jewish reservation. The district administrator showed himself to be completely uninformed and dismissed the men with instructions to go to Lublin and present themselves there to the Chief of Police. In Lublin there took place a conference of district administrators at which it turned out that no one had the slightest notion concerning the whole resettlement campaign. Thereupon the Chief of Police went to Lodz to the brigade-leader, came back a few days later and gave the Jews instructions to travel back to the camp and discontinue all work, because the further influx of Jews into Poland has been rigorously prohibited. The gentlemen from the community council returned to Zarzecza, where they were officially informed that for the time being, till February 1, 1940, the re-settlement movement of Jews from Germany to Poland was temporarily interrupted.

Since then the Jews have continued their work in building permanent barracks and in repairing the bridges over the San. As before they are not being paid. They are living on gifts sent them from Ostrau with the permission of the authorities, and on the provisions voluntarily given by the village population to the doctors for their services. The camp also is to undertake the care of the Jews who have been assembling in front of a doctor or around the hospital in the various villages.

700 people were settled in an assembling camp in Tomashoff Lubelski. They are under the supervision of the S.S. The treatment is not bad, comparatively, but as against that, the food is abominable. It is not permitted to send these Jews provisions, communication with the barrack-camp in Zarzecza is forbidden and there are no doctors present, so that 700 people are literally being given over to death from hunger. An attempt to bring help to them through the American Red Cross was unsuccessful. Whereas mail has been received at home from the other Jews, already the Jews in the Tomashoff camp cannot give their relatives any information. If a change does not take place shortly in these rigorous measures these 700 Jews must be considered as lost.

6,000 Jews have lived through the resettlement movement in Poland. Their wives and children are still in the Protectorate and in Austria, where they can live only with community assistance. The property of the Jews who have been deported was confiscated and laid to the account of "the Jewish community at the disposal of the secret police". It is clear that in reality the Jewish community has not even a penny at its disposal.

It is not possible in a report which is to give the fact to give an account of the pain, misery and despair of thousands of people. No one will ever forget the scene that was to be witnessed in Ostrau. Thousands of Czechs and German women stood in the streets and wept like small children. Deeply engraved on one's memory there will remain the first burial in the wilderness, of Mandl, a Jew from Ostrau. And none of this has ended yet; the Jews of the Protectorate are threatened with catastrophe to an extent never before experienced, unless the attempt is made through increased emigration to prevent the continuation of this campaign.

### III. Our Suggestions for Emigration

The members of the subsidiary directing staff for transport who have returned from Poland have received the following instructions from the Chief of the SS:

As a consequence of other important work the re-settlement movement is to be interrupted until the end of January 1940. It is to be seen to, that at least 6,000 Jews leave the Protectorate in the months of November, December, and January. From the first of February on the Jews who have remained will be shipped off to Poland 1,000 at a time, and that at a weekly rate of 4,000, of which 3,000 will be from Prague and 1,000 from the provinces. Since there seems to be little inclination for emigration observable in the Protectorate a series of measures is to be applied by the SS which appear suited for creating an appropriate mood.

These instructions were given in ultimatum form, and the Jewish representatives had to give an answer within a quarter of an hour as to whether they thought they could reach the above-mentioned figures, since otherwise the Central Executive for Jewish emigration would be shut down immediately. The Jewish representatives then observed that an increase in emigration in the prescribed sense was hardly possible. They indicated further that it really was a matter of some indifference whether 90,000 or 84,000 were evacuated into Poland. In the course of the conversations it turned out that the SS had conducted the Polish movement and was planning to continue it on its own responsibility and without the knowledge of the central authorities. It became clear to the Jewish representatives that an increase in the normal emigration would represent a retreat-encounter of the SS, which has been violently attacked from different sides, chiefly by the military authorities. We are under the impression that an increase of the emigration into neutral countries will give the SS the chance to stop the re-settlement campaign without any loss of prestige. But at the same time we are firmly convinced that "our chief" will not be able to rest a moment without continuing his work of destruction if we do not succeed in increasing the emigration to the extent required of us. The Jewish representatives have considered it their duty to give a positive answer, and must now exert all their energies in order to fulfill it with the help of the international Jewish relief organizations. It is clear to us that any other answer would have led to a pogrom such as the Protectorate has never had.

For the sake of a more detailed background I should like to say something about the "Central Executive" for Jewish emigration, before giving our suggestions for emigration. This Central Executive is the "original creation of our chief." The Jews are compelled to portray the good deeds of this Central Executive in every report. This Central Executive makes any direct intercourse between the Jews and the authorities

absolutely impossible. A Jew never has any opportunity of bringing in his request personally or of giving his appeal any foundation either orally or in writing. All petitions must be given in by him to the Central Executive, which is an office of the SS, where he can merely give brief replies to questions and nothing more. The Central Executive supervises the activities of the Jewish organizations, gives them instructions for current work and establishes the salaries of the officials. The Jewish organizations are the intermediaries between the Jewish petitioners and the Central Executive. Every Jewish emigrant must hand in to the Central Executive 18 question sheets and put in a request for a passport as well as for a transit permit. It goes without saying that all possessions must previously have been transferred to Aryans and that all fees, which make up about a third of the total possessions, must be paid. If a Jew receives a transit permit then he must leave the territory of the Protectorate from within one week to 30 days at the most; otherwise he will be brought to a "stopping over camp" like Dachau or Buchenwald.

Accordingly, in order to realize the program of emigration, 150 people daily must even now bring in their requests to the Central Executive, and these then will have to leave the Protectorate by the end of December and the beginning of January. We are greatly concerned as to whether it will be possible to obtain an emigration visa for these people. Everything must be done in order to help them, if thousands of Jews are not to be plunged into the most terrible misfortunes.

#### a) Children as Guests

Jewish children are our greatest concern. 10,000 Jewish children live in the Protectorate who must unconditionally be helped. The question is primarily one of children whose fathers have been sent off to Poland. In Moravia-Ostrau alone there are 225 children who must be provided for because their fathers are in Poland. A second group of children are those whose fathers have made a temporary sojourn in the K.Z. A third group are the children of these without a state, whose fathers have been interned. These children may definitely be looked upon as orphans. A fourth group are the children of such persons as have affidavits that will not become valid until later. All the children are waiting with longing for the help of Jews throughout the world. We are accordingly appealing to all Jewish organizations immediately to make every effort to bring thousands of Jewish children from the Protectorate into neutral foreign countries. Every Jewish family should accept one child!

#### b) Eretz-Israel

Because of the well-known friendliness to Palestine of Jewry in the Protectorate it is natural for thousands of Jews to be waiting with longing for the possibility of an Aliyah. We wish to reproach no one, but we must appeal to all responsible authorities that far more attention be paid than before to the requests of the Protectorate. It is still not too late; we still can and must be helped!

c) Bolivia

The present situation in the Protectorate compells us also to consider possibilities of emigration that we have previously ignored for various reasons. The Bolivia plan belongs here. There is already an agreement at hand made out by the Bolivian government, according to which 4,800 visas are supposed to be reserved for Greater Germany. This plan should be laid before the Joint for inspection. We beg that this project be examined and approved without any delay. We request an appropriate share for the Protectorate which seems all the more justified because of our having the requisite human material. We still have a Hachsharah of more than 1,000 people, of which 600 are in agricultural occupations and about 4 to 500 in various re-training courses. Besides that we have more than 300 qualified farmers from the Sudetan German region, who were compelled to leave their large and small holdings that they used to work themselves. We request that everything be undertaken immediately so that as large a number of Jews as possible can hand in their emigration documents at once to the Central Executive in Prague.

d) The Philippines.

We have learned from the American consul in Prague that possibilities of immigration into the Philippines of young people between 18 and 27 years of age may be obtained. We urgently request that this project also be examined without delay and that everything be done in this way as well to help many Jews by making available money and visas.

e) Renewal of Expired Visas

A considerable number of Jews are in possession of permits for England and other immigration permits for the colonies and dominions of Great Britain. If these visas could be renewed hundreds of Jews would be helped. In that case it would have to be seen to that a transit permit be given for a neutral state, from where the journey to the country of destination could take place.

We believe that our report shows the necessity of a relief campaign on broad lines. The fate of tens of thousands of Jews in the Protectorate now rests on the shoulders of World Jewry. If we are abandoned by the Jewish relief organisations, if our cry for help, against our expectations, rings out unheard, then 90,000 Jews will be delivered up to catastrophe.

Our faith that you will help us is firm. We await your answer and your action! It is up to you to shield the Jews of the Protectorate from the deepest despair!

Take care of immigration visas and certificates, devise methods of obtaining money, and never forget the Jewish children in the Protectorate!

MEMORANDUM

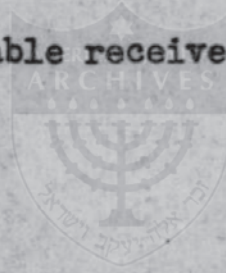
December 18, 1989

TO: DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

FROM: SAMUEL CAPLAN

Attached herewith is a copy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Emergency Committee.

Also attached is copy of a cable received today from Dr. Weizmann.



COPY TO DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

December 16, 1939

SOLOMON GOLDMAN  
111 FIFTH AVENUE

FLYING FROM LISBON TWENTY SEVENTH PLEASE INFORM JACOBS HEXTER KARPf  
CABLED ADLER REGARDS ALL

WEIZMANN



MINUTES OF EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR ZIONIST AFFAIRS HELD ON WEDNESDAY,  
DECEMBER 27, 1939, at 4 P.M. AT THE ZOA OFFICE, 111 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

PRESENT:

Solomon Goldman presiding; Gedaliah Bublick, Hayim Greenberg, Louis Lipsky, Mrs. David de Sola Pool, Mrs. Bertha Schoolman, Robert Szold.

Kurt Blumenfeld, Josef Cohn, Eliahu Golomb, Georg Landauer, Arthur Lourie, Henry Montor, Morris Margulies, by invitation.

Samuel Caplan, secretary

Minutes of the previous meeting as circulated were approved.

INVITATION TO DR. WEIZMANN TO ADDRESS CORNELL UNIVERSITY:

Dr. Goldman reported that an official invitation had been extended to Dr. Weizmann by Cornell University to speak at the University during the month of February or March on either a scientific or a political subject.

It was the consensus of opinion that the invitation should be accepted by the Emergency Committee but that it should be left to Dr. Weizmann to make final decision.

REPRESENTATIVE TO LITHUANIA:

Dr. Goldman read an excerpt of a letter he had received from Mr. Isaac Gruenbaum, requesting the Emergency Committee, on behalf of the Executive, to send an American citizen to Lithuania for organizational work, contact with refugees, etc., inasmuch as they had been experiencing difficulty in establishing contact with Lithuania.

On motion of Mr. Lipsky, it was decided to send a cable to Geneva asking for advice in this matter.

REPRESENTATIVE FOR CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA:

Dr. Goldman reported on an interview which he and Mr. Caplan had had with Mr. John Hezekiah Levy, who had been recommended by Mrs. Pool for the position of representative in South America. He stated that Mr. Levy had made a favorable impression and seemed to possess the necessary qualifications for the position.

Dr. Goldman added that it was the intention to engage Mr. Levy for a period of from three to six months, during which time he would visit the major communities in Central and South America and be expected to make surveys of Jewish conditions, organize Zionist societies, shekel campaigns, etc.

It was decided that the chairman be empowered to engage Mr. Levy for this work for a period of not more than six months.

BUDGET :

The secretary submitted the following tentative budget for the operations of the Emergency Committee for the six-month period from January 1 to June 30, 1940:

ESTIMATED BUDGET EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

FOR 6-MONTHS' PERIOD

JANUARY 1 - JUNE 30 - 1940

- - - - -

Office Rent	\$ 240.00
Secretary-Stenographer	910.00
Clerical Assistance, Bookkeeping	500.00
Cables, telegrams, postage	600.00
Printing Stationery, Supplies	350.00
Travelling	1,500.00
Washington Bureau	6,000.00
Bureau for Zionist Work among German Refugees	1,750.00
Economic Department	1,500.00
Activities in Central and South America	3,750.00
Alexander Easterman (Total Appropriation)	1,000.00
Dr. Weizmann's Reception	
1) New York meeting Metropolitan Opera House	2,000.00
2) Secretary for Dr. W. (for 3 months)	500.00
3) Hotel Rentals for other meetings in New York	<u>200.00</u>
TOTAL . . . . .	\$ 20,800.00

Mrs. Schoolman suggested that the budget should be divided into two parts: (a) administrative and (b) emergency needs.

Mr. Szold stated that, as treasurer of the Emergency Committee, he must have specific authorization in the minutes for every item of expenditure. He felt also that all expenditures should be approved by another member of the Committee. With regard to the Washington Bureau he stated that the Committee should vote a specific amount to be given to the Bureau each month in accordance with a budget to be submitted to the Committee.

Reporting on a meeting of the Economic Sub-Committee with Dr. Landauer, Mr. Szold said that it was decided that for the committee to function properly it would be necessary to engage a secretary on a part-time basis and a stenographer. The committee proposed to engage Mr. Maurice Boukstein as the secretary at a salary of \$50 per week. Mr. Szold estimated that the work of the Economic Committee would require an expenditure of at least \$3,000 for the next six months.

On motion of Mr. Lipsky, which was adopted, all the items specified in the proposed budget were adopted with the following exceptions:

- (a) that the expense of the Economic Committee be specified in the budget as \$3,000.
- (b) that the expense of the Washington Bureau be covered by the Emergency Committee monthly, in accordance with the budget submitted by the Washington Bureau.

It was further moved and carried that the treasurer be authorized to sign checks covering expenditures included in the budget.

#### PARTICIPATION OF OTHER PARTIES IN THE BUDGET :

Reference was made to a previous decision requesting Zionist parties engaged in Palestine fund-raising to make a contribution toward the expenses of the Emergency Committee. Dr. Goldman pointed out that the present budget was only tentative and represented the expenditure required at the beginning of the work and that in all probability the Committee would be called upon shortly to increase the amount of the budget. He proposed that Hadassah and Poale Zion should agree to pay an amount to the Emergency Committee based on a percentage of the money raised by their respective organizations during the year.

Mrs. Pool observed that the amounts raised by Hadassah were sent in their entirety to Palestine and no portion of the money raised by Hadassah could be allocated for another purpose.

Mr. Greenberg approved in principle the suggestion made by Dr. Goldman and stated that he would bring the matter before his organization for action.

It was decided that the Emergency Committee request the financial participation in its work of those organizations outside of the UPA who are collecting funds for Palestine and that a committee be appointed to take up this matter with Hadassah and the Gewerkschaften.

WASHINGTON BUREAU :

It was suggested by Mrs. Schoolman that the Washington Bureau be requested to submit a report of its activities to the Emergency Committee.

Reference was made to the fact that some Zionist groups in the country were not clear as to whether the Washington Bureau is an official Zionist Agency and it was suggested that the letterhead of the Washington Bureau bear the statement "Washington Office - Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs."

AMERICAN PALESTINE FUND INC. :

Dr. Goldman called attention to the formation of a body called the American Palestine Fund Inc., which has for its purpose the raising and distribution of funds to about 70 institutions in Palestine which are soliciting monies in the United States. This organization, he added, had applied to the UJA for an allocation of \$400,000 in 1940. Mr. Edward Norman is listed as chairman of this organization.

Mr. Szold stated that Mr. Norman had spoken to him about this organization and while he declined to accept membership, he felt that there was merit in the idea of coordinating and budgeting the needs of the various Palestinian institutions which are not represented in the UJA. He emphasized, however, that the American Palestine Fund ought to raise the required monies from private sources without going to the UJA.

Mr. Montor observed that the American Palestine Fund, in the form in which it had been launched and on the basis of the broad powers conferred upon it by its charter, constituted a menace endangering the work of the KH and the KK in this country.

Mr. Lipsky stated that the idea involved in the American Palestine Fund had originally been broached by Mr. Edward Warburg but he felt that the name and the form of the organization were entirely different from the original plan. He suggested that an effort be made to persuade the sponsors not to use the name of American Palestine Fund, which is much too similar to the names of the present fund-raising agencies.

Dr. Landauer stated that he had also had a conversation with Mr. Norman who had given him the impression that the purpose of the organization was to give subsidies to educational and cultural organizations of all kinds. Dr. Landauer pointed out that there are a number of Palestine institutions not being supported by the Jewish Agency and they are applying in America for funds. If such an institution were established here, it might obtain some backing from Palestine. He felt that if the money were raised in such a way as not to interfere with the UJA campaign, there should be no objection. However, before giving them any cooperation, he considered it necessary to make the following stipulations:

1. Change of name.
2. No institution which is in the budget of the Jewish Agency to be included.
3. They must cooperate with the Jewish Agency and not to apply to Welfare Funds or the UJA.
4. They are to apply for funds only to private individuals.
5. They must be represented in Palestine by an authority approved by the Jewish Agency.

It was the consensus of opinion that a committee be named to consult with Mr. Norman on the basis of the discussion held.

FEATURE SERVICE FOR ANGLO-JEWISH PRESS :

Dr. Goldman pointed out that the Anglo-Jewish press has been practically closed to Zionist sources of information by reason of the fact that the existing news and feature agencies, which are not particularly Zionist, have a monopoly of the field. He suggested that the facilities afforded by the Geneva office of the Jewish Agency presented an opportunity for us to make available to the Jewish press European news and articles being sent by that office. All that was required, he added, was to enlarge the present facilities of Palcor so as to enable it to function as a feature syndicate.

Mr. Lipsky supported Dr. Goldman's suggestion, emphasizing his view that it was necessary to counteract anti-Zionist tendencies being manifested in the Anglo-Jewish press. It was not intended, he said, to compete with the JTA in the field of cable service but if a small sum were made available to Palcor, he felt that the latter could be extended to enable it to render effective service in the field of Zionist and Palestine propaganda.

Mrs. Pool and Mr. Greenberg supported Mr. Lipsky's suggestion.

It was moved, seconded and carried that an appropriation of \$5,000 for the next six months be made to Palcor and included in the budget of the Emergency Committee, to enable Palcor to establish a syndicate to service the Anglo-Jewish press.

It was suggested by Mrs. Pool that a committee be designated to have charge of this activity.

STATEMENT ON REVISIONISTS :

Approval was given to the following statement submitted by the secretary, to be sent out by the various Zionist organizations to their branches:

"STATEMENT ON REVISIONIST FUNDS TO BE DISTRIBUTED BY VARIOUS  
ZIONIST ORGANIZATIONS

Inquiries have been received with regard to the identity and purpose of organizations called "American Friends of a Jewish Palestine" and "Tel Hai Fund", which are soliciting funds for various purposes connected with Palestine.

For information of all concerned, we desire to state that neither of the two above-named organizations is in any way associated with or responsible to the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the World Zionist Organization or any of their branches. It should be pointed out that the formation of both the "American Friends" and the "Tel Hai Fund" was initiated by the Revisionists.

"The "American Friends" and the "Tel Hai Fund" are appealing to the public for funds for purposes of immigrant transportation, agricultural colonization, a "marine school" and other activities. There is no public record by which the claims advanced by these organizations may be established. It should be emphasized, however, that the Jewish Agency for Palestine, through its authorized organs, bears the responsibility for all immigration, colonization, education, health and other enterprises essential to the upbuilding of Palestine. The needs of Palestine can be served best by making larger funds available to the Jewish Agency. The activities of independent organizations seeking to duplicate or parallel the work of the Jewish Agency are to be discouraged."

Respectfully submitted

SAMUEL CAPLAN  
Secretary



EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR ZIONIST AFFAIRS  
111 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK CITY

April 4, 1940

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: MEMBERS OF THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

FROM: SAMUEL CAPLAN

1. Attached herewith is the minutes of the meeting of the Emergency Committee held on April 2nd.
2. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Friday, April 12th, at 2:30 P.M. at the ZOA office.
3. Enclosed herewith are several items that came from the Geneva office and are intended for the information of the members of the Emergency Committee.



MINUTES OF EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR ZIONIST AFFAIRS HELD ON TUESDAY,  
APRIL 2, 1940, AT 4:00 P.M. AT THE ZOA OFFICE, 111 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

PRESENT:

Solomon Goldman presiding; Juliet Benjamin, Gedliah Bublick, Leon Gellman, Israel Goldstein, Louis Lipsky, Robert Szold, David Wertheim.

Georg Lendauer, Morris Margulies by invitation.

Samuel Caplan, secretary

Minutes of the previous meeting as circulated were approved.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

The secretary reported that, in accordance with the decision of the last meeting of the Emergency Committee, the following cable had been sent to Mr. Ben Gurion on March 26th, 1940:

"MORDECAI NEWMAN HERE CONFERRING JABOTINSKY PROJECT JEWISH ARMY CABLE CATEGORICALLY WHETHER NEWMAN ACTING AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE STOP HIS ACTIVITIES NOW UNDESIRABLE

SOLOMON GOLDMAN"

in answer to which Eliezer Kaplan sent the following reply on March 27th:

"MORDECAI NEWMAN HAS NO AUTHORITY NEGOTIATE BEHALF EXECUTIVE"

On receipt of this cable, Dr. Goldman wrote to Mr. Newman, asking him to refrain from further consultations with Mr. Jabotinsky or pursue any other activities in connection with the Jewish Legion in behalf of the Executive. The secretary added that Mr. Newman subsequently received a cable from the Palestine Jewish Legion, in whose name he had apparently undertaken to speak, asking him not to confer with Mr. Jabotinsky.

REVISIONISTS:

Mr. Bublick was of the opinion that the Emergency Committee should formulate a definite policy of action with regard to the Revisionists because of the fact that many people who are unacquainted with the true facts are being misled by the propaganda carried on by the Revisionists. Many people, he said, have been brought to believe that the Revisionists are anxious for unity with the Zionist Organization but that they have arbitrarily been kept out by the Zionists.

Mr. Wertheim agreed with Mr. Bublick and added that it was not only necessary to expose the Revisionists in New York but also in other communities. He suggested that the Emergency Committee send out circulars dealing with Revisionist activities, including the Marine League, etc.

Mr. Lipsky observed that it is obvious that Mr. Jabotinsky was making an impression on American Jews at this time and that he was accomplishing this, not by promulgating Revisionist ideas, but by using the ideas of the Zionist Organization. He felt that it was necessary to take a different attitude towards the Revisionists. It was necessary, he said, to give accurate information on the activities of the Revisionists that

would destroy the influence that Mr. Jabotinsky is exerting on the American public. He felt, however, that while it was necessary to combat the activities of the Revisionists, it would be unwise to attack Mr. Jabotinsky personally.

Dr. Goldman suggested that a series of articles be written in the English, Anglo-Jewish and Yiddish press, detailing what Revisionism has done in the last several years and what it is doing now.

Mr. Lipsky suggested that Dr. Landauer prepare a statement of the facts which could be used as the basis for the preparation of articles and pamphlets.

Dr. Goldman felt that it might be wise to have a cable from Jerusalem stating that the Executive was ready to listen to any proposals that the Revisionists may have to offer.

Dr. Landauer gave a summary of the negotiations which had taken place between the Revisionists and the Jewish Agency. Meetings, he said, were to be held between Ben Gurion and Mr. Jabotinsky, then between Dr. Weizmann and Mr. Jabotinsky, and later a formal meeting, but only the first meeting actually took place. The negotiations, he said, broke down because Mr. Jabotinsky had demanded that the existing Zionist Organization be supplanted by a new organization in which the Revisionists would have fifty per cent control. Ben Gurion naturally refused to consider such a proposal and countered with a demand that the Revisionists re-enter the Zionist Organization, which Mr. Jabotinsky refused. An exchange of letters then followed, Dr. Landauer said, but nothing came of the negotiations.

Adding to Dr. Landauer's report, Dr. Goldman stated that the Actions Committee meeting in November, 1938 in London officially approved Ben Gurion's negotiations and asked him to continue with this work. Furthermore, Mr. Golomb was authorized to carry on negotiations and he had several meetings with Mr. Jabotinsky.

The Revisionists accepted membership in the Vaad Leumi, Dr. Landauer continued, only after a bitter internal discussion and without the full agreement of the rank and file. The Vaad Leumi was enlarged by allowing the Revisionists three representatives, although the Revisionists claimed a 50% representation.

Miss Benjamin stated that Hadassah has already sent a communication on the Revisionists to its chapter presidents, but Hadassah feels that the Emergency Committee should give direction to the activities.

Incidentally, Miss Benjamin observed that Hadassah considered the leaflets issued by the Washington Bureau to be a valuable contribution to Zionist literature and they felt that these leaflets should receive wider distribution.

Dr. Goldman replied that the mailing list to date comprises some 1500 Jewish names, mostly non-Zionists, and approximately 6500 non-Jews. The Bureau is now enlarging the mailing to about 20,000.

Mr. Bublick observed that the hospitable attitude of the Yiddish press to the Revisionists was harming the Zionist Organization and suggested that a Yiddish press conference be held as soon as possible in order to convey the attitude of the Emergency Committee.

IT WAS MOVED SECONDED AND CARRIED:

THAT the Emergency Committee undertake to combat the Revisionist activities in the United States and the Secretary be authorized to spend an amount up to \$500 for the preparation of a pamphlet and articles to accomplish this purpose.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Mr. Szold submitted a financial statement showing that as of April 1st the Emergency Committee had expended \$17,754.49 from receipts of \$20,000, having a balance in the bank of \$2,245.51.

In commenting upon several items of the budget, Mr. Szold stated that the amounts originally appropriated for clerical assistance, travelling, cables and postage were nearly exhausted and he requested authorization from the Committee to continue paying for these items as incurred, and that at a future date he would submit an additional budget for these items.

This was granted by the Committee.

Mr. Szold stated further that he believed the amount of \$50,000 originally placed at the disposal of the Committee for the period of six months until June 30th would be ample to cover the needs of the Committee. He added that the Economic Sub-Committee had reduced its expenditures and that Mr. Boukstein, who had been engaged as part-time secretary, was no longer on the payroll.

COMMUNICATION FROM DR. LANDAUER:

The secretary read the following letter from Dr. Landauer dated March 25th, 1940:

"Dear Dr. Goldman:

On December 8th, 1939, I addressed a letter to you with regard to the problem of Jewish claims which were to be submitted to a future peace conference.

This letter was brought before the Emergency Committee with the following results:

(a) Dr. Stephen S. Wise, at that meeting of the Committee, declared that the American Jewish Congress had devoted considerable attention to the matter. Now Dr. Wise informs me, in response to my reminder about it, that "the World Jewish Congress is already at work, particularly in Geneva".

(b) A copy of my letter was directed to Mr. Robert Szold to be dealt with by the Economic Sub-Committee of the Emergency Committee. This letter was brought before this sub-committee and when the latter discussed the aspects of its work, it decided that this matter did not belong within the province of its committee and therefore would not deal with the problem.

The other day I had a communication from Dr. Arthur Ruppin who informed me that he has been devoting a good deal of attention to this

matter and he found that our part of the work in Palestine, which may prove to be of very great importance for the upbuilding of the country, cannot be done without consideration for the corresponding activities in other countries, especially in America. I should therefore like to urge once more that the Zionist Organization, or any body which you will find suitable for this purpose, should immediately be commissioned to undertake the task of preparing all necessary material on claims for compensation by Jews against the Powers in Europe, perhaps along the lines indicated in my letter to you on December 8th."

Dr. Landauer observed that in the event of the Allies winning the war, the question of compensation to peoples who had suffered property losses during the war would receive favorable consideration and he felt that it was essential to set up the machinery for the preparation of Jewish claims. The line of action, he said, might follow the suggestions contained in his letter of December 8th as follows:

- (1) to compile the legislative and administrative decrees which have been published since the 1st of April, 1933 against the Jews in Germany.
- (2) to ascertain the damage done to the Jews in Germany and in the territory now under German domination and protection.
- (3) to prepare a statement of the funds which were raised by Jewry in order to assist, inside and outside the Reich, the Jews who were wronged in Germany.
- (4) to formulate the claims of individuals for restoration of their rights and compensation for the loss of property inflicted in various ways.
- (5) to collect the claims on pension and insurance funds.

Dr. Goldman said that he had discussed Dr. Landauer's proposals with Justice Brandeis and Ben Cohen and that both of them were of the opinion that it was even more important to be prepared with a sort of White Book on the Jewish situation throughout the world, with special reference to Palestine. This White Book should be prepared by a body of experts and should contain a detailed account of the loss in life and property among the Jews of Europe, the infringements on Jewish rights, the destruction of constitutional agreements and treaties, and results of the several projects of colonization. They felt that this White Book should also contain a statement on reparations but they were of the opinion that such a statement, if prepared only by Jews, would not prove very effective at the future peace conference since requests for reparations usually come in the name of governments.

It was Mr. Lipsky's view that neither the Zionist Organization nor the Emergency Committee has any direct interest in this matter and he suggested that the matter be directed to the attention of general Jewish organizations, with the understanding that they would have the cooperation of the Zionist bodies.

Dr. Goldman suggested that a committee should approach the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee and the General Jewish Council on this matter.

Mr. Mergulies felt that the Zionist bodies should make the initial steps in this undertaking and later invite the cooperation of other Jewish bodies.

IT WAS MOVED BY MR. SZOLD AND CARRIED:  
THAT a committee of two be designated to study the question and to bring back a report to the Emergency Committee.

Mr. Lipsky and Mr. Szold were named as members of this committee.

FAREWELL TO DR. LANDAUER:

Dr. Goldman stated that Dr. Landauer was sailing for Palestine on April 13th. He expressed the gratitude and appreciation of the Emergency Committee to Dr. Landauer for the useful service he had rendered during his visit to the United States and on behalf of the Committee he wished him bon voyage. He suggested that Dr. Landauer, being well acquainted with conditions here, undertake the responsibility of acting as liaison for the American Zionists upon his return to Palestine.

LAND RESTRICTIONS:

Dr. Goldstein suggested that the Committee give serious thought to the advisability of continuing to protest against the land restrictions for the possible effects it might have in two directions: first, in reference to the discretionary power which is vested in the High Commissioner; and second, with a view to preventing the further implementation of the White Paper.

Dr. Goldstein further pointed out that the question of the validity of the Palestine land ordinance insofar as it pertains to the rights of American citizens had never been put to a test, and the suggestion had been made that now might be the time to put it to a test. All these things he felt ought to receive the fullest consideration.

The chairman proposed that this item be placed first on the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

SAMUEL CAPLAN  
Secretary

EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR ZIONIST AFFAIRS  
111 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK CITY

MEMORANDUM

May 7, 1940

TO: MEMBERS OF THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE  
FROM: SAMUEL CAPLAN

Attached herewith are the following:

- (1) Copy of the minutes of the last meeting of the Emergency Committee.
- (2) Copy of a communication from Jerusalem in the matter of certain Jewish quarters of Jaffa.
- (3) Copy of a communication from London dealing with negotiations with the Colonial Office with regard to the admission to Palestine of certain refugees in Denmark, Sweden and Holland.

MINUTES OF EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR ZIONIST AFFAIRS HELD ON  
FRIDAY, MAY 3, 1940, AT THE ZOA OFFICE, 111 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

PRESENT:

Louis Lipsky presiding; Gedaliah Bublick, Israel Goldstein, Mrs. David de Sola Pool, Mrs. Herman Shulman, David Wertheim, Stephen S. Wise.

Kurt Blumenfeld, Josef Cohn, Morris Margulies, Henry Montor, Charles Ress, by invitation.

Samuel Caplan, secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting as circulated were approved.

COMMUNICATIONS:

(a) Letter from Heshel Farbstein: The chairman presented a letter from Mr. Farbstein requesting the cooperation of the Emergency Committee in the following three projects; (1) Mizrahi Bank; (2) establishment of the "Kehilat Hakehelot" (to head the Jewish community of the entire Jewish world); (3) publication of a "Black Book" which is being edited in Palestine.

It was the consensus of opinion that the first two items did not come within the purview of the Emergency Committee. With regard to the third proposal, it was felt that inasmuch as the World Jewish Congress was preparing the publication of a similar volume, there would be no advantage in sponsoring another book of the same type.

(b) Letter re Ezra Ubitzoran Foundation Inc.: The chairman reported that several people in New York had organized a corporation to raise funds for Palestine by means of the sale of semi-annual membership certificates involving the award of "prizes" to members, and that the Emergency Committee had been asked to give its approval to this undertaking.

It was the consensus of opinion that this corporation be notified that the Emergency Committee disapproves of the plan, which it feels should not be sponsored by any Zionist body.

(c) Letter from Benno Frank: The secretary presented a letter from Benno Frank, a former Palestine resident who has been giving a great deal of assistance to Zionist bodies in the production of Hebrew and Zionist plays, requesting a loan of \$400 to purchase steamship tickets for his wife and child from Palestine to America.

It was decided to refer this request to the sub-committee consisting of Dr. Goldstein and Mr. Lipsky.

(d) Re book on Masaryk: In the matter of a communication from Mr. B. Pollak, requesting financial assistance to enable the publication of a volume on Thomas Masaryk, it was the consensus of opinion that this matter did not come within the jurisdiction of the Emergency Committee.

IT WAS MOVED BY MRS. POOL, SECONDED AND CARRIED:  
THAT a Committee on Publications, consisting of one representative from each of the groups, be appointed to consider all matters dealing with publications by the Emergency Committee and to report its recommendations from time to time to the full meeting of the Committee.

PAMPHLET ON REVISIONISM:

The secretary reported that the pamphlet on Revisionism, previously decided upon, was ready to be printed and he wished to know whether the Parties preferred to issue these pamphlets through the Emergency Committee or under their own imprimatur.

It was decided that the pamphlet would be published by the Emergency Committee and the Secretary was empowered to consult with the various Parties to ascertain the number of copies desired by them.

REPORTS ON TRANSPORTATION FUND:

(a) Zionist Organization: Mr. Margulies reported that as of May 2nd a total of approximately \$13,200 had been received, of which \$10,000 had been remitted.

(b) Hadassah: Mrs. Pool stated that Hadassah had already sent \$25,000 to the Fund.

(c) Poale Zion: Mr. Wertheim reported that the Poale Zion had sent \$10,000.

(d) Mizrachi: Mr. Bublick was not prepared to make a report on the activities of his Organization.

INCREASED BUDGET:

In view of the fact that the previous budget adopted by the Emergency Committee had proved insufficient to cover several of the items, the Treasurer suggested the following increases to June 30, 1940:

Rent & Equipment	by	\$150
Secretary-Stenographer	"	300
Clerical Assistance	"	500
Travelling	"	1500
Cables, telephone, postage	"	750
Washington Bureau	"	<u>600</u>

TOTAL INCREASE      \$3800

IT WAS MOVED, SECONDED AND CARRIED:

THAT the proposed budget increase of \$3800 be approved.

DR. WEIZMANN'S ARRIVAL:

Dr. Wise reported that Dr. Weizmann was expected to arrive in the United States about the 15th of May and he asked that the Emergency Committee consider in what way all the Zionist groups in America, perhaps acting through the Emergency Committee, could give the fullest measure of cooperation to Dr. Weizmann

April 5, 1940

The Chief Secretary,  
Government Offices,  
Jerusalem.

Sir,

I have the honour to address you in the matter of the Jewish quarters of Jaffa known as Florentin, Shapiro, Givat Herzl, Shaffor-Klein, Haoved, Shivat Zion, Givat Moshe A, Givat Moshe B and Kerem Hatemanim, which I had the privilege of discussing with you at our interview of February 5, 1940.

2. As I informed you at the time, the Jewish quarters of Jaffa, with the exception of Kerem Hatemanim are, according to our information, about 98% Jewish. The land comprising these quarters is owned by Jews, their inhabitants are Jews and they came into existence by the natural overflow of the population of Tel Aviv beyond its municipal boundaries. In the course of the economic expansion of that city some of its inhabitants purchased orange groves adjoining the city and developed them building houses and gradually establishing these new quarters. The number of Jews inhabiting these quarters is estimated at between 15,000 and 18,000. They are in every respect residents of Tel Aviv except that they happen to live in houses built on Jewish-owned land situated outside the municipal boundary of that city.

3. After the establishment of the quarters the residents continued to send their children to the Tel Aviv schools and to receive medical care in Tel Aviv clinics. Their religious needs were satisfied in Tel Aviv, their social service requirements were furnished them by the Municipality of Tel Aviv and all ordinary municipal services, except light and scavenger services, were provided them from the outset by the Tel Aviv municipality. With regard to the supply of water only some 10% of these persons received the same from the Jaffa Municipality. The remainder have been supplied with water by the Tel Aviv Municipality. We are informed that, as far back as in 1935, the Jaffa Municipality requested the Tel Aviv Municipality to provide the inhabitants of these quarters with water as the former were not in a position to do so. The economic life of the inhabitants of these Jewish quarters has at all times remained completely bound up with the city of Tel Aviv.

4. When the disturbances broke out in April, 1936, one of the first Jews to be killed in Jaffa was an inhabitant of one of these quarters who, as it happens, was murdered when leaving the offices of the Jaffa Municipality where he had gone on some business with the Municipality. On the outbreak of the disturbances the Arabs of Jaffa went on strike and these Jewish quarters were left without scavenger services. They had to arrange for this service themselves and have continued to do so up to the present day, except in the Kerem Hatemanim quarter where the Municipality of Jaffa a number of months ago, with the aid of the Police, forced its scavenger service on the inhabitants.

The position, as it has remained up to the present, is that these Jewish quarters have practically nothing to do with Jaffa except when they need to obtain a building or business permit which by law cannot be granted them by the Municipality of Tel Aviv.

5. It is respectfully submitted that the present position is anomalous and should be regularised. The inhabitants of these quarters live outside the municipal boundaries of Tel Aviv and, therefore, do not enjoy all the

rights of residents in that municipality although they form part of the Jewish community of that city. At the same time they do not receive, nor do they wish to receive, from the Jaffa Municipality the ordinary municipal services. They nevertheless remain liable in theory to pay rates to the Municipality of Jaffa for benefits which they do not receive. We submit that there is no good reason for these Jews to be compelled against their wishes to remain within the Municipality of Jaffa.

6. In our submission it would not be right to regard a municipality as a business concern which is entitled to retain the custom of certain inhabitants for its financial advantage. In our view a Municipal Corporation is created solely for the purpose of providing certain services and satisfying the municipal needs of a particular group of inhabitants. If a substantial section of that group of inhabitants wish to care for their own municipal needs or to leave one municipal group in order to join another, it would be unjust to prevent them from doing so. This is particularly so in the present case where the persons in question have consistently for over four years persisted in their determination to be part of the Jewish community of Tel Aviv and not to be forced asunder from their fellow Jews in that city, even for municipal purposes. The Municipal Corporation Ordinance (see Section 5) expressly contemplates and makes provision for the possibility of part of a municipal area being removed from the jurisdiction of a Municipal Corporation and transferred to that of another Municipal Corporation. We respectfully submit that there can be no more appropriate case than the one under consideration for the exercise of the powers conferred by this provision of the Municipal Corporations Ordinance.

7. We would respectfully urge that the long-standing grievance of the Jewish inhabitants of these quarters be satisfied and that their quarters be separated from the Jaffa Municipality and transferred into the jurisdiction of the Municipal Corporation of Tel Aviv. The matter has become all the more urgent in view of the promulgation of the Municipal Corporations Amendment Ordinance No. 3 of 1940 in the Palestine Gazette of March 31st (see Section 9), as the residents of these quarters fear that by virtue of this provision the Jaffa Municipality may seek to compel them to pay rates for services which were not rendered. We would, therefore, ask that the matter receive your early consideration.

(Signed) Bernard Joseph  
EXECUTIVE OF THE JEWISH AGENCY

MINUTES OF AN INTERVIEW AT THE COLONIAL OFFICE ON APRIL 13, 1940 at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT: - Mr. H.F. Downie  
Mr. B. Locker  
Mr. J. Linton

MR. LOCKER said that the reason for our interview was the invasion of Denmark and Norway. We were concerned with the fate of 1255 Chaluzim and candidates of the Youth Aliyah who were in training in Scandinavia, Holland and Belgium. The persons in question were distributed as follows:

Chaluzim:

Denmark (Category C).....	336	
Sweden       "	217	
Holland       "	289	842

Youth Aliyah Candidates:

Denmark (Category B.III).....	270	
Sweden       "	96	
Holland       "	39	
Belgium       "	8	413
		1255

We were anxious to get these people out of danger and into Palestine as quickly as possible. The first point that he wished to raise was whether it was possible to obtain an immediate advance on the forthcoming schedule. Every day's delay increased the danger. Most of these people came from Germany and Czecho-Slovakia, and in Denmark they were again in the hands of Nazis. He appreciated that Denmark might be considered differently from the other countries. He would like to say, however, that the people in Denmark worked mainly in groups and were known to each other. If we succeeded in getting them out quickly, the danger of them coming under Nazi threat or pressure would not arise.

MR. DOWNIE pointed out that there was a ruling that people could not be taken out of Germany or German occupied territory. The question about the people in Denmark would have to be put up separately. He asked whether there was a possibility of getting the people out.

MR. LOCKER replied that there may be possibilities of getting these people into Palestine. He thought that a case could be made out in favour of the people in Denmark. They had left Germany with the definite intention of emigrating to Palestine. They were on the list of the Jewish Agency for certificates as soon as possible. He hoped that the German authorities would not make any difficulties about letting them out.

MR. DOWNIE said that he could not tell what attitude would be adopted with regard to the people in Denmark. He was, however, prepared to put up the matter for consideration. As regards the request for an advance on the schedule, he pointed out that such a request had already been rejected. The quota for the next schedule would probably be announced in the course of the next ten days. Before the negotiations for an advance could be settled, the quota would be out. There would be no question of giving additional certificates to the quota.

MR. LOCKER pointed out that as times were abnormal, a delay of a few days meant a great deal. If they received certificates immediately, they could at any rate save the people in Holland and ~~and~~ Sweden. If anything were

to happen in those countries, the Colonial Office would again say that Holland and Sweden came within the rule for occupied territories.

MR. DOWNIE asked whether it would not be possible to take these people say to France or Switzerland. Would not the Authorities concerned take the guarantee of the Jewish Agency that Certificates would be allotted. He would bring the request of the Jewish Agency before the Secretary of State for decision. It might be possible without giving a formal advance to allow the Jewish Agency to get these people into Palestine and deduct the number involved from the quota.

MR. LOCKER replied that this put them in somewhat of a quandary as they did not know what the quota would be.

MR. DOWNIE replied that if the High Commissioner should desire the Jewish Agency to make arrangements for the Youth Aliyah they would know that they would receive at least 600 certificates for this purpose in the quota.

MR. LOCKER then asked about the Chaluzim.

MR. DOWNIE said that he saw that we were asking for about 500 Chaluzim certificates (he apparently excluded Denmark). We would know in about ten days what the quota for Category C would be. In discussions which had taken place in Jerusalem, allocations had been made of certificates to special types of labour. It was possible that the people in Sweden and Holland were not included in these categories. It would be a limited schedule because of the unemployment in the country. He could not disassociate our request from the question of the total quota. They would only put up our request to the High Commissioner who had already put forward certain proposals for the quota.

MR. LOCKER pointed out that the people concerned had been taken out of Germany and Czecho-Slovakia at great trouble and expense. They had been specially trained for Palestine and he felt that something should be done to help them now that they were in danger.

MR. DOWNIE said that the primary consideration of the Palestine Government was the economic position in the country. He suggested that we should cable our people in Jerusalem to approach the High Commissioner. The Colonial Office would not express an opinion until he had heard from the High Commissioner. We could inform our people in Jerusalem that the Colonial Office had asked that they should approach the High Commissioner. He (Mr. Downie) would wire to the High Commissioner for his opinion which would be placed before the Secretary of State.

MR. LOCKER said that he would like to point out that they were dealing with a ~~particular~~ particularly desirable element for Palestine.

MR. DOWNIE replied that they too were interested in getting a desirable element into Palestine. Too many undesirables were entering. He would like to put a question to us. Assuming that there available 75,000 certificates, and that the 25,000 certificates for Refugees had already been used, would the Jewish Agency prefer the 50,000 in a rush or over a longer period.

MR. LOCKER replied that if they were faced with a situation such as existed in Denmark, then they obviously must save the people concerned, irrespective of what would happen tomorrow.

MR. DOWNIE said that he would cable to the High Commissioner that day. He would like a letter from Mr. Locker setting out the arguments which the Jewish Agency desired to advance.

LETTER FROM MR. LOCKER TO THE COLONIAL OFFICE

April 17, 1940

H.F. Downie Esq. C.B.E.  
Colonial Office  
Downing St., S.W.1

Dear Mr. Downie:

In accordance with your kind suggestion, I am sending you a short note on the matter which we raised when we saw you last Saturday.

Following the invasion by Germany of the Scandinavian countries, considerable anxiety has been aroused as to the fate which may befall those refugees from Nazi persecution at present in Denmark, Sweden, Holland and Belgium, where they had been waiting to receive their certificates for Palestine. In Denmark these prospective immigrants are already under Nazi rule once more, and their plight is serious. No less obvious are the dangers which attend the continued presence of the remainder in Sweden and Holland and we naturally wish to get them all out to Palestine as soon as possible. In particular, we are concerned to save at least those (they are members of the Hechaluz Pioneer Organisation) who have received the necessary training to qualify for Labour Schedule certificates, as well as a number of the Youth Aliyah category, all of whom had previously been definitely selected by us for certificates as soon as certificates became available. These selected candidates number 1255 in all, distributed as follows:

Haluzim (Category C)

Denmark.....336  
Sweden .....217  
Holland.....289

842

Youth Aliyah Candidates (Category B.3)

Denmark.....270  
Sweden .....96  
Holland.....39  
Belgium.....8

413

We would ask therefore whether the necessary certificates could not be made available forthwith, in order to enable the immediate immigration of these people to Palestine. I realise, from what you told me, that the Government may have in mind to grant a relatively small Labour Schedule for the next six months, but I would urge that, whatever the amount of that schedule, these people should not be condemned to remain in their present precarious situation.

As regards the prospective immigrants now in Denmark, I would point out that all those in Category C (i.e. all the adults) had left Germany before the outbreak of the war, with a view to immigration to Palestine. Moreover, identification is in this case relatively easy, as these candidates have been working together in Denmark, mostly in small groups and for some considerable time, so that they are well-known to one another.

It will, I feel sure, be appreciated that the situation in which these people find themselves is a quite exceptional one, in which every day that passes increases the peril which threatens them. We do sincerely trust that His Majesty's Government will find it possible to grant the necessary facilities in time.

Yours sincerely

B. LOCKER

UNITED PALESTINE APPEAL

111 FIFTH AVENUE  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

MEMORANDUM

May 24, 1940

TO: Mr. A. Keller - United Jewish Appeal

FROM: Miss Saxon - United Palestine Appeal

This will acknowledge your memorandum of May 22nd with which was enclosed a check for \$158.16 to cover air travel charges incurred by the United Palestine Appeal on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal.

I note that you "cannot pay the charges for telegrams for April" sent by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver " unless we receive copies of these." The charge for these telegrams is \$2.37.

We are not in the habit of asking the National Chairmen of the United Palestine Appeal or the United Jewish Appeal to send us copies of telegrams. Will you be good enough to send that request to Dr. Silver in Cleveland.

I believe this is the first time that such a request has ever been made.

THE EXECUTIVE OF  
THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION - THE JEWISH AGENCY FOR PALESTINE

Geneva

4.VI.40

Mr. S. Caplan  
The Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs  
111 Fifth Avenue  
New York City.

Dear Mr. Caplan,

I want to give you the following information with regard to the situation in the countries occupied by Germany during the last weeks.

1. We have not yet received reliable information about the fate of the Jewish Communities in Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium. Press reports and Ita reports have appeared, but it is impossible to say if the reports are correct.
2. It seems that our young people in Denmark who are there on Hachscharah work have been left alone and are continuing their work.
3. In Belgium all German subjects including Jewish refugees had been interned when war broke out, but after a few days the refugees were set free and evacuated to France.
4. In Holland all German subjects including the refugees had to remain indoors when the war broke out. It is to be feared that many of them will by now have fallen into the hands of the Germans. A small number of them have left the country before the war in Holland started and some others have fled to England when the invasion began.
5. Postal connection by letters or telegrams between Switzerland on the one hand and Belgium and Holland on the other has not yet been established. Therefore it is impossible for the time being to make inquiries regarding individuals.
6. In Poland and in Germany there is no substantial change with regard to the position or treatment of the Jews, as compared with the situation described in my last reports.

The food situation in Germany seems to be steadily deteriorating. There is still sufficient bread of good quality, but in the big towns, especially in Berlin, there is a shortage of potatoes, very little meat and fat and practically no fruit and vegetables. For the Jews the position is still worse because they cannot buy additional foodstuffs as for instance fish and poultry, which sometimes can be bought at high prices by the gentiles. I know from letters of personal friends that they are simply going hungry. They sometimes received half a pound of chocolate or cheese from Holland and this was always a great event for the family. But this also has now come to an end.
7. In Poland the situation is of course still worse and whatever the Joint is doing is nothing in comparison to the real needs.

8. The Lublin scheme has not been revived. Lately a certain number of people from Maehrisch-Ostrau have been allowed to return to Maehrisch-Ostrau if they were able to produce some document showing that they have a possibility to emigrate. (You are aware that the whole male population of Maehrisch-Ostrau was sent to Lublin; a considerable part of them have fled to Russia). I therefore do not believe the Ita-Reports to be true according to which Seyss-Inquart has started a new expulsion of the German-Jewish refugees in Holland to Lublin. Of course, anything is possible now the Gestapo is taking over in Holland, but this project seems unlikely in view of the opposition of the military and other circles to the Lublin experiment. As predicted in previous reports the tendency now prevails in Germany and Poland to use Jewish labour in the form of forced labour in Poland for the majority of the Jews and under somewhat better conditions (against payment of wages) for part of the Jews in certain towns of Germany.

Yours sincerely

(signed) R. Dichtheim



June 9, 1940

TO: MEMBERS OF THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

FROM: KURT BLUMENFELD

REPORT ON ZIONIST WORK AMONG IMMIGRANTS

(Additional details will be given at one of the next meetings of the Emergency Committee)

1. Organization:

The number of organizations which participate in our work has increased. The group of the Theodor Herzl Society, Jakob Ehrlich Society, Maccabi, KJV, and Igul has been joined by the Italian Zionists and the Deborah Organization of Zionist Women. After thoroughly investigating the situation we have come to the conclusion that our work could be made more effective by founding a number of special organizations according to the origin of their members. We believed this would be the only way to reach Zionists on a mass scale because Jews from different countries differ so greatly with regard to their traditional Zionist background. Therefore we are now planning to organize Dutch, French, and Yugoslavian Zionists. The unity of our work is warranted by a committee consisting of representatives of all bodies with the collaboration of Mr. Morris Margulies and the undersigned. Today our work has advanced to such a point that very soon all groups will be able to set up systematic propaganda of their own.

Our secretary, Dr. Emil Lehmann, fulfills all our wishes both from the organizing and from the cultural and political point of view. Within a short time he has succeeded in winning for himself the trust of all affiliated organizations.

2. Propaganda:

(a) Public meetings: In the framework of our organizations the following speeches were given since the issue of our last report:

Lazar Wallerstein: Are Zionism and Internationalism Compatible  
Hermon Sherry: Jews in Scandinavia  
Hermon Sherry: Jews in Holland  
Emanuel Neumann: Self-defense in Palestine  
Alfred Werner: Jewish Refugees in England  
R. Karplus: Speech in the memory of Jakob Ehrlich  
Herzl-Festival: Speech by Rabbi Hoffmann  
Ernst Winkler: Jews in the Concentration Camp  
Siegfried Altmann: Answer to the Questions of our Time  
Rabbi Vida: Membership Meeting in Washington Heights  
Rabbi Vida: Our Zionist Task

(b) Internal Activities: An appeal to our members for additional addresses has proved very successful. Newcomers to this country were welcomed by personal letters. Through this method we have won many new members, and many of them have signed membership declarations for one of our affiliated groups.

At this moment the Jakob Ehrlich Society is trying to establish a branch organization in Newark, New Jersey.

(c) Publications: The Theodor Herzl and Jakob Ehrlich Societies are publishing a bulletin which to begin with is in a multigraphed edition but which they hope will become a permanent Zionist weekly. It is published bilingually and distributed among members and prospective members all over the United States. The KJV and Maccabi also issued bulletins, the latter in English. Dr. Emil Lehmann is in charge of the editing of the Maccabi periodical. While its first issue was principally sports news, the forthcoming numbers will also deal with problems of educational work in connection with the Maccabi tendencies.

### 3. Educational Work

(a) Academy of Zionism: The Zionist Academy on which Dr. Lazar Wallerstein gave a report in THE NEW PALESTINE has made remarkable progress. The courses mentioned in our previous report were attended by an eager audience, which interpreted the lectures from many interesting points of view. Today all groups of immigrants appreciate our Academy as a centre of Zionist, Jewish, and political education.

(b) Department of Music and Art: We established a Department of Music and Art comprising a large number of actors and musicians. This department forms ensembles to take part in the cultural Zionist functions held in the various districts. Thus this group will become important for the whole of Zionist work in America.

(c) Youth Group: Our Youth Group meets twice a week in our club home, once for the Oneg Shabbath where lectures are given and Hebrew songs sung, and once for a weekly seminar on Zionist and general Jewish questions. The following courses were held at these sessions:

Kurt Blumenfeld: Theodor Herzl  
Lazar Wallerstein: Zionism and Socialism  
Siegfried Altmann: Richard Beer-Hoffmann  
Theodor Goetz: Modern Hebrew Authors (Bialik, Perez,  
Sholem Alechem)

Seminar conferences on:

Herzl's Predecessors  
Pinsker's "Autoemancipation"  
Herzl's diaries  
Werfel's "Hearken unto the Voice"

This youth group will form the nucleus of a Zionist leadership school to be established in the fall, and which will also comprise younger children between the ages of 10 and 15 years.

Our Youth Group also participates in the work of the Keren Kayemeth placing and emptying the Blue Boxes.

(d) Women's Group: An organization of Zionist women from Europe has been formed, named Deborah. At its opening reception Mrs. Kurt Blumenfeld spoke about the recent development in Palestine. The main task of the Deborah group will be the Zionist education of children in the framework of social work. The children are to be placed with Zionist families in the country to combine their summer vacation with an inspiring Zionist training. For those who have to stay in the city a day camp will be established under the supervision of a trained Zionist counselor. The Deborah organization will also arrange a regular Oneg Shabbat for its members.

#### 4. United Jewish Appeal

All our groups are taking an active part in the United Jewish Appeal. Contributions are solicited at all our functions. A special meeting was held for the UJA, which was very successful. Besides, 150 receipt booklets were distributed among the members of the Theodor Herzl and Jakob Ehrlich Societies and the KJV.

#### 5. German-Jewish Club

Our relations to the German-Jewish Club have still more improved and our influence within this organization has increased. Dr. Lazar Wallerstein has become a member of its cultural committee, and the German-Jewish Club arranged for us a series of important meetings, among them two lectures by Kurt Blumenfeld.

The AUFBAU reaches about 40,000 Jews with its weekly edition. These readers do not only consist of needy immigrants but also of influential people who might become important for the Zionist Organization and above all for the United Jewish Appeal.

Anti-Zionists devote a great part of their means to the work among immigrants. The funds available to them for this purpose are much larger than those granted to us. But we plan to strengthen and develop our own position within the near future.

#### 6. Budget

The amount allotted to us by the Emergency Committee was granted for half a year to begin with. The resolution stated that this was only a matter of form and that we could count on a similar sum for the future. It is of the utmost importance for the continuation of our work to clarify this point now.

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We would be particularly happy to see American Zionists participate in our work. Dr. Stephen Wise's cooperation has had an inspiring and encouraging influence. We deeply regret that we have not had the opportunity, so far, of bringing American Zionist leaders into a closer relationship with our work.

KURT BLUMENFELD