



Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

Featuring collections from the Western Reserve Historical Society and
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

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

Series II: Harold P. Manson File (Zionism Files), 1940-1949, undated.

Sub-series A: Main Manson File, 1940-1949.

Reel
100

Box
35

Folder
10

British Government Policy in Palestine, 1941-1942.

August 15, 1941

PRIVATE

Field-Marshal The Right Hon. J.C. Smuts, P.C.,
Ministry of Justice
Palace of Justice,
PRETORIA.

I returned from the United States just over a week ago, and feel that I must write to you at once with regard to the situation which I find on my return. I shall try to be as brief as I can, but even so I am afraid this may prove a rather lengthy letter, and I must ask your indulgence.

Political developments have recently been moving rapidly in the Middle East. On the eve of the Allied operations there, Syria and the Lebanon were promised independence by the British Government and the leader of the Free French Forces. Later, General Catroux announced that this promise would be implemented immediately on the completion of the occupation of Syria. Mr. Eden, in his speech on May 29th (later published as a White Paper - Command 6289 - and thus given the weight of a statement of policy) promised the Arabs a greater degree of independence and unity, and His Majesty's Government's "full support to any scheme (for such unity) which commands general approval." Mr. Lyttelton has been sent to Cairo as a member of the War Cabinet, and will presumably, apart from co-ordinating and concentrating the economic side of the war effort in the Middle East, also deal with political and diplomatic problems. The press reports conferences in Cairo between the various Arab States, and the discussion of plans for an Arab Federation. It thus seems that the shaping of the political destinies of the Middle East is not to await the end of the war, but is already the subject of discussions which may later prove to be decisive.

Palestine lies in the very heart of the Middle East. It is the most vital interest of the Jewish people. Yet so far the Jewish people, and its internationally recognized representative, the Jewish Agency for Palestine, have neither been consulted nor mentioned. In Mr. Eden's speech there is not a word about the special position of Palestine or the rights and interests of the Jewish people in Palestine. It is true that we have been informed by the Colonial Secretary that the words "general approval" in the passage from the speech quoted above were intended to cover also the rights of the Jews with regard to Palestine. This assurance, welcome as it is, cannot be regarded as a satisfactory answer to our misgivings. The fact remains that it was not thought necessary to consult the Jewish Agency on the subject of Palestine before Mr. Eden's announcement, and that even afterwards, the assurance given orally was only elicited by an enquiry from the Jewish Agency. It would be important to know whether the Arabs have been informed of this connotation of the words "general approval". Remembering how the MacMahon correspondence, and the Hogarth Declaration (first brought to light in 1939) were exploited by the Arabs, and even by a British Government, in order to explain away the interpretation of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate accepted by the League of Nations, and by His Majesty's Government itself, for nearly twenty years, we are naturally apprehensive of similar difficulties which may arise in the future through the lack of clarity of Mr. Eden's speech.

This complete neglect of the Jewish people as an active factor in the Middle East fits into the policy followed in regard to our affairs since the outbreak of the war. The White Paper of 1939 and the Land Transfer Regulations of

March, 1940, were forced through Parliament against the better judgment of the opponents of appeasement. But even after appeasement had been dropped as a general policy, it survived in regard to Palestine. It would not, I feel, have been unreasonable to expect a lenient interpretation of existing laws: within the framework of the law, the Palestine Administration could have done much to alleviate the sufferings of the Jewish people, and to open to the Jews, in Palestine and elsewhere, every avenue to full cooperation in the war effort of the Allies. Unfortunately a very different policy was adopted.

The Jews in Palestine were systematically prevented from taking their full share in the common struggle against Nazism. The most restrictive interpretation was placed on the immigration clauses of the White Paper, in order to reduce legal immigration to a minimum; and for the first time, mass deportation, accompanied by ill-treatment, was applied to "illegal" immigrants. The half-yearly immigration quotas were withheld in October 1940 and May 1941, and even the issue of 100 immigration certificates for leading Zionist workers from Greece was refused on the ground that it was impossible to save all the 75,000 Jews from Greece. But for this rigid immigration policy, many thousands of Jews from countries under Nazi occupation would by now have been in Palestine. Many valuable lives would thus have been saved to work or fight on the Allied side, instead of rotting in concentration camps or slaving for the Nazi war effort.

Our endeavors to obtain the consent of the British Government to the creation of a Jewish Fighting Force have so far produced no concrete results. Some four months ago the plan seemed near to realization, but was shelved for political reasons. We are trying to revive it now. In Palestine, under the spur of immediate danger, some steps have been taken to organize Jewish home defense, but only about 9000 Jews have been admitted to service in the Army, though tens of thousands are eager to enlist. All they ask is to serve in Jewish units, so that the national identity of the people first singled out by Hitler for hatred and persecution should not be submerged. They want to serve under their national flag. It is the pride of Jews the world over that Jewish soldiers have won praise from their British commanders for their conduct in Libya, Greece, Abyssinia, and Syria; it is their sorrow that the way to full participation in the historic struggle on which the fate of our people depends is not yet opened to all of them.

This atmosphere of organized silence and camouflage, even on the part of their friends, is too rarely broken. The sufferings of the Jews, like their deeds in the war, are seldom mentioned directly. They are made to feel that the very mention of the word "Jew" may compromise the cause. The reasons for this silence are not far to seek. There is an unwillingness to be identified with the Jews, for fear of Goebbels' slogan: "This is a Jewish war". There is the desire not to incur obligations to the Jews by accepting, openly and unreservedly, their collective help in the war. There is the fear of doing anything which might be used by the Axis for propaganda amongst the Arabs. And this last fear is being exploited by those whose chief concern, even at this moment, seems still to be to safeguard at all costs the White Paper policy.

Developments in the Middle East have been utilized by the Arab leaders to achieve a very advantageous position: when loyal they have to be rewarded; when rebellious they have to be placated, and it would be tactless to mention the case or the rights of the Jews. This is a situation in which the Jewish people and their leaders cannot acquiesce.

When victory is won the Jewish problem will not have disappeared. Those then responsible for shaping the future will have to face that problem with courage and determination, and to find for it a definite and radical solution. At present there are about eight million Jews - one-half of the Jewish people - under Nazi domination, and their physical destruction is proceeding at a pace which it is difficult to estimate. How many of them will survive will depend on the length of the war, but it is clear that some millions of Jews, stripped of their all, and uprooted from their former habitations, will have to try to remake their lives in the new world which will emerge after the war. It is difficult to see a newly-reconstructed Poland or Czechoslovakia prepared to absorb Jewish minorities to the same extent as before this war - indeed, indications to this effect are already apparent. I think it is a not unreasonable estimate to say that not more than half of the former Jewish communities of these, and other, countries will be able to re-establish themselves there after the war. There will thus be some three or four millions of homeless Jews, pauperised and tortured into desperation, to be cared for by someone. Primarily the responsibility will fall on the Jewish community of America, and on those few smaller communities which may still survive intact. But it is obvious that a problem of such magnitude cannot be solved unless aid is given by England and America. I can see nothing practical emerging from all the neo-territorialist projects which have been discussed, and even from the purely refuge point of view, Palestine is the only country capable of absorbing masses of immigrants within a reasonable time, provided only that the necessary political conditions are established.

British statesmanship is right in thinking ahead, and trying to hammer out, in close consultation with those primarily concerned, definite plans for the future. But all concerned must be consulted and considered, and no gaps or obscurities left to create misunderstandings in the present and dangers in the future. The principle of holding out to the Arabs prospects of a higher degree of independence and unity - by way of Federation or otherwise - than they can achieve among themselves, appears to be reasonable. But it must be made clear from the outset that these advantages to be acquired by the Arabs in the vast territories at their exclusive disposal cannot be given them at the expense of the vital rights and interests of the Jewish people, whose claims, hallowed by uninterrupted ties of thousands of years, and internationally recognized in the Mandate, are limited to what Lord Balfour called "the small notch" of Palestine. Nor can these rights of the Jewish people be made dependent on the concrete advantages which the Arabs will receive from a victorious Britain, or on the constitutional settlement which the Arabs may be able to reach among themselves. Both are outside the sphere of Jewish influence, and we can hardly be asked to pay other people's bills.

The ultimate formulation of our detailed demands in regard to Palestine will obviously be the task of the entire Zionist movement and the Jewish Agency for Palestine. But without prejudicing that formulation, I can, I think, venture on some indication of the problem as I see it. After the war, the Jewish people will need a territory large enough to receive the bulk of the Jewish immigration to be expected, and to form the foundation of a sound and self-supporting Jewish commonwealth. This State or Commonwealth must have such degree of sovereignty as will secure its independence and freedom from outside interference. The Jewish people can never agree to being a permanent minority in one Arab State (as envisaged in the 1939 White Paper), nor yet to be subject to a combination of Arab States so far as its vital interests (immigration, internal administration, education, finance, security, etc.) are concerned. The last few years have brought the Jewish National Home to a stage in its development which makes almost impossible a continuance of the tutelage exercised under the mandatory regime, and some new form of Government will have to

be devised. In fact, even in 1937, the Royal Commission already adumbrated some such necessity. But apart from political considerations, the purely economic aspect makes it imperative that the National Home should become autonomous in its fiscal policy. Otherwise the financing of a considerable immigration of people stripped - as the Jews will be after the war - of everything, will be impossible.

I believe that on the basis of the foregoing principles, the British Empire, the Americans, the Jews and the Arabs, could work out, in friendly consultation, the basis of their mutual relations. The conception is not a new one. It was the basis of the agreement which I signed with the Emir Feisal (the spokesman of the Arabs at the Peace Conference) in 1919. It should not prove impossible even now to recreate the atmosphere necessary for such an agreement, if Great Britain will lose no time in making it clear that no settlement of Middle Eastern problems is possible without securing to the Jewish people their right to return to full nationhood in Palestine.

Since my return to London I have had two long talks with Lord Moyne, whom I believe to be anxious to do his best, and who has given the matter some thought. His idea - it is still very vague - is to make the Arab Federation conditional on an arrangement between ourselves and the Arabs with regard to the National Home. But he always comes back to the curious statement that "of course the Jews and the Arabs have to come to an agreement between themselves". And such an agreement is rendered almost impossible by the mere existence of the 1939 White Paper. Whenever we do talk to any of the Arabs with whom we are in contact, they simply reply: The White Paper has settled the problem: no more immigration is to take place, and there is therefore nothing to be discussed between us. We know that whatever the Arabs got out of the last war, and whatever they may get out of this one, will be due entirely to Great Britain and America. They are in an extraordinarily favourable position: not only have they done nothing to help the war effort (on the contrary!), but they are likely to get - as an American friend put it - ninety-eight cents to the dollar. One might, I think, expect the two great democracies to tell the Arabs frankly that it is their considered opinion that the Jewish National Home must grow by immigration; they would thus remove the barriers which prevent Arabs and Jews from coming together at present. But the whole policy hitherto pursued has tended in the opposite direction.

I have just returned from America, and I see that I have said little about what I found there. I enclose a copy of a letter which I wrote, towards the end of my stay, to Lord Moyne, and hope that you may find time to read it. The American Jews have no wish to embarrass the British Government; but they do feel that, with the heavy responsibility devolving upon them, they simply cannot allow this drift of British policy to continue unchallenged. Sooner or later, either directly or through their Government, the American Jews will formulate their ideas and a clear stand will have to be taken by the British Government. It will not be possible to gloss over the situation indefinitely, and I am anxious that you should be fully informed about it, and should give us the advantage of your advice, and - if you can - your support, in the critical days which lie ahead.

With kindest regards, I am

Ch. W.

UNITED PALESTINE APPEAL

41 EAST 42nd STREET

NEW YORK, N. Y.

January 28, 1942

His Excellency The Rt. Hon. The Viscount Halifax, K.G., P.C.
British Embassy
Washington, D.C.

Your Excellency:

It has come to my attention through a dispatch of the Palcor News Agency that cabled news reports of the National Conference for Palestine, sponsored by the United Palestine Appeal at Cleveland, Ohio on January 17th and 18th, are reported not to have been received in Jerusalem for circulation to the Palestine press, although these cables are reported to have been transmitted from London to which they were originally sent.

It will be a source of deepest concern to the hundreds of men and women who were associated with the National Conference for Palestine if this allegation of censorship, which would prevent the Jews of Palestine from receiving the words of encouragement and enheartenment spoken at the National Conference for Palestine, were to be confirmed.

I would be deeply grateful for advice from you on the subject.

Sincerely yours,

Henry Montor
Executive Director

HM:EE

LOUIS E. LEVINTEAL
606 City Hall
Philadelphia

C
O
P

April 7, 1942.

His Excellency,
His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador, Viscount Halifax,
The British Embassy,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Lord Halifax:

Thank you for your letter of March 21st. At the risk of prolonging unduly a correspondence which reveals rather far-reaching divergencies of approach, I feel that there are one or two points in that letter to which I must refer further.

As American Jews, most of us here do not, of course, have a knowledge of the political problems of the Middle East based on actual experience on the spot. But not a few of us do have that experience and in general contacts with Palestine are sufficiently close to justify me in saying that our difficulty is not so much in understanding those problems, as that we find it almost impossible to reconcile British policy there with the aims and needs of this war. It is obvious that the Jews, of all peoples, do not wish to imperil the cause of the democracies in this war, but it is our belief that British policy in Palestine, leading as it has to horrible tragedies such as the "Struma", is providing aid and comfort to the enemy by undermining the faith of free men everywhere in Great Britain.

The "denial of asylum to some hundreds of Jews from Central Europe" to which you refer, is in fact a denial of the right of the Jewish people to its homeland and of the right of Jews to the same treatment as any other human being, which may involve as it did in the case of the "Struma", the elementary right of mere physical existence.

Admittedly the security of Palestine is a factor of vital importance in the present struggle. But to refuse Jewish refugees asylum in Palestine in no measure increases security there. The White Paper policy of May, 1939, was the repudiation of British pledges to the Jewish people, but it failed to secure the friendship of the Mufti; it did not prevent the rebellion in Iraq; nor has it produced a single Egyptian soldier to fight in the defense of Egypt. It is an ironic commentary that among those who have thus fought, are thousands of Jews from Palestine, including hundreds of these self-same "illegal" immigrants.

Permit me, with deep respect, to say in conclusion that it is our conviction that the policy pursued at present by His Majesty's Government in Palestine does great damage to the cause of the democracies and is a denial of everything for which the peoples in America and Britain are fighting.

With kind personal regards, I am

Faithfully yours,

United Palestine Appeal
41 East 42nd Street
New York, N. Y.

COPY

British Embassy
Washington, D. C.

April 30, 1942.

Ref. 213/50/42.

Dear Sir,

His Majesty's Ambassador asks me to inform you that a reply has now been received from the competent authorities regarding the complaint against the Palestine censorship which you made in your letter of January 28th last.

You are doubtless aware that on the 10th February Mr. Shertok had an interview with the Chief Secretary for Palestine at which the latter explained fully to him the policy of the Government of Palestine in regard to press censorship, and also discussed the reports of the Cleveland conference. In consequence of this interview Mr. Shertok will probably have informed you that the paramount consideration governing the operation of the Palestine press censorship is security. Articles or telegrams on controversial matters are accordingly banned when in the judgment of the competent authorities on the spot they are likely to affect opinion in any community in a manner prejudicial to security in Palestine or the Middle East, or to the war effort.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) A.C.E. Malcolm

Mr. Henry Montor
Executive Director
United Palestine Appeal
41 East 42nd Street
New York City.



1942 — 60th Anniversary of Jewish Colonization in Palestine

UNITED PALESTINE APPEAL

PALESTINE FOUNDATION FUND (KEREN HAYESOD)
JEWISH NATIONAL FUND (KEREN KAYEMETH)
For the Defense and Upbuilding of the Jewish National Home in Palestine

41 EAST 42nd STREET

NEW YORK CITY

Telephone: MUrray Hill 2-3320

Cable Address—Palfund

May 5, 1942

NATIONAL OFFICERS

Honorary Chairmen

Albert Einstein
Herbert H. Lehman
Julian W. Mack
Henry Monsky
Nathan Straus
Henrietta Szold

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

You will be interested in a copy of a letter which came from A. C. E. Malcolm of the British Embassy in connection with the censorship of the reports on the UPA Conference in Cleveland last January.

I am also attaching a copy of my original letter to refresh your memory on this subject.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Cordially yours,

Henry Montor
Executive Director

HM:FE
Enc. 2

National Chairman

Abba Hillel Silver

National Co-Chairmen

Stephen S. Wise
*Chairman,
Administrative Committee*
Louis Lipsky
*Chairman,
Executive Committee*
Solomon Goldman
Israel Goldstein
Louis E. Levinthal
Morris Rothenberg

Treasurer

Charles J. Rosenbloom

Associate Treasurers

Abraham L. Liebovitz
Jacob Sincoff

Vice-Chairmen

Barnett R. Brickner
Leon Gellman
James G. Heller
Edmund I. Kaufmann
Charles Ress
Elihu D. Stone
Robert Szold
Joe Weingarten
David Wertheim

Executive Director

Henry Montor

"We in the United States must help strengthen Palestine"

—HON. FRANK KNOX, Secretary of the Navy

HONORARY VICE-CHAIRMEN

Louis Altschul, <i>Mount Vernon</i>	Prof. Mordecai M. Kaplan, <i>New York</i>
Day J. Apte, <i>Miami</i>	Louis E. Kirstein, <i>Boston</i>
George Backer, <i>New York</i>	Prof. Gustave Klausner, <i>St. Louis</i>
Dr. Joseph Bank, <i>Phoenix</i>	Sidney G. Kusworm, <i>Dayton</i>
Rabbi Solomon N. Bazell, <i>Louisville</i>	Milton Kutz, <i>Wilmington</i>
Rabbi Morton M. Berman, <i>Chicago</i>	Monte M. Lemann, <i>New Orleans</i>
Oscar Berman, <i>Cincinnati</i>	Judge Benjamin Lencher, <i>Pittsburgh</i>
Joseph M. Berne, <i>Cleveland</i>	Joseph Leonard, <i>Allentown</i>
Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein, <i>Rochester</i>	Maurice Levin, <i>New York</i>
Robert M. Bernstein, <i>Philadelphia</i>	Louis Levine, <i>New York</i>
Dr. Jacob Billikopf, <i>Philadelphia</i>	Rabbi B. L. Levinthal, <i>Philadelphia</i>
Jacob Blaustein, <i>Baltimore</i>	Rabbi Israel H. Levinthal, <i>Brooklyn</i>
Samuel J. Bloomingdale, <i>New York</i>	Rabbi Felix A. Levy, <i>Chicago</i>
Louis J. Borinstein, <i>Indianapolis</i>	Rabbi Joshua L. Liebman, <i>Brookline</i>
Charles Brown, <i>Los Angeles</i>	Julius Livingston, <i>Tulsa</i>
Gedalia Bublick, <i>Brooklyn</i>	Alex Lowenthal, <i>Pittsburgh</i>
Fred M. Butzel, <i>Detroit</i>	Rabbi Max Maccoby, <i>Mount Vernon</i>
Jesse B. Calmenson, <i>St. Paul</i>	Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin, <i>Los Angeles</i>
Hon. Alfred M. Cohen, <i>Cincinnati</i>	Rabbi Julius Mark, <i>Nashville</i>
Rabbi Henry Cohen, <i>Galveston</i>	Samuel Markell, <i>Boston</i>
Isadore Cohen, <i>Bluefield</i>	Israel Matz, <i>Brooklyn</i>
Sol Cohen, <i>New York</i>	Mortimer May, <i>Nashville</i>
Amos S. Deinard, <i>Minneapolis</i>	Millard Mayer, <i>Kansas City</i>
David Diamond, <i>Buffalo</i>	Rabbi Irving Miller, <i>Far Rockaway</i>
Dr. Clarence W. Efroyinson, <i>Indianapolis</i>	Charles W. Morris, <i>Louisville</i>
S. Mason Ehrman, <i>Portland</i>	Max Moss, <i>Jacksonville</i>
Benjamin Eisenstein, <i>Schenectady</i>	Stanley C. Myers, <i>Miami</i>
Mark Eisner, <i>New York</i>	Morris Neaman, <i>Pittsburgh</i>
Sol Esfeld, <i>Seattle</i>	Max Ogust, <i>New York</i>
Mose M. Feld, <i>Houston</i>	Kurt Peiser, <i>Philadelphia</i>
Rabbi Leon I. Feuer, <i>Toledo</i>	Hardwig Peres, <i>Memphis</i>
Rabbi Louis Finkelstein, <i>New York</i>	Abe Plough, <i>Memphis</i>
Judge Phillip Forman, <i>Trenton</i>	Arthur Ravel, <i>Albuquerque</i>
Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof, <i>Pittsburgh</i>	Col. Albert H. Rosenberg, <i>Chicago</i>
Dr. Harry Friedenwald, <i>Baltimore</i>	Michael Schaap, <i>New York</i>
Daniel Frisch, <i>Indianapolis</i>	Edwin J. Schanfarber, <i>Columbus</i>
Herman Gessner, <i>Escanaba</i>	Albert Schiff, <i>Columbus</i>
Leonard Ginsberg, <i>New York</i>	Max J. Schneider, <i>New York</i>
Prof. Louis Ginzberg, <i>New York</i>	Baruch H. Schnur, <i>New York</i>
Abraham Goldberg, <i>New York</i>	William H. Schwarzschild, <i>Richmond</i>
Mrs. Maurice L. Goldman, <i>San Francisco</i>	Simon Shetzer, <i>Washington</i>
Abraham Goldstein, <i>Hartford</i>	Mrs. Archibald Silverman, <i>Providence</i>
Jack A. Goodman, <i>Indianapolis</i>	Eugene M. Solow, <i>Dallas</i>
Joseph Goodman, <i>Troy</i>	Dr. Ferdinand Sonneborn, <i>New York</i>
Rabbi Julius Gordon, <i>St. Louis</i>	Michael A. Stavitsky, <i>Newark</i>
Hayim Greenberg, <i>New York</i>	Judge Horace Stern, <i>Philadelphia</i>
Rabbi Simon Greenberg, <i>Philadelphia</i>	Leon C. Sunstein, <i>Philadelphia</i>
Joseph E. Grosberg, <i>Schenectady</i>	Morris D. Waldman, <i>New York</i>
Dave Grundfest, <i>Little Rock</i>	Eugene Warner, <i>Buffalo</i>
Benjamin R. Harris, <i>Chicago</i>	Lionel Weil, <i>Goldsboro</i>
Isaac S. Heller, <i>New Orleans</i>	I. M. Weinstein, <i>Atlanta</i>
L. Manuel Hendler, <i>Baltimore</i>	Rabbi Saul E. White, <i>San Francisco</i>
Sidney L. Herold, <i>Shreveport</i>	Hon. David T. Wilentz, <i>Perth Amboy</i>
Isidore Herschfield, <i>Washington</i>	Henry Wineman, <i>Detroit</i>
Herman Hoffman, <i>New York</i>	Mrs. Stephen S. Wise, <i>New York</i>
Rabbi Jacob Hoffman, <i>New York</i>	Rabbi Samuel Wohl, <i>Cincinnati</i>
Judge Harry A. Hollzer, <i>Los Angeles</i>	Dr. Alex S. Wolf, <i>St. Louis</i>
Judge Jacob J. Kaplan, <i>Boston</i>	

CONFIDENTIAL

Y C O P Y

B R I T I S H E M B A S S Y

Washington, D.C.

May 6, 1942.

My dear Judge Levinthal:

You will remember that on March 5th when you called on me with some other gentlemen, I promised to ask for information about the reports which had reached you, alleging ill-treatment of the detainees at Athlit in Palestine. I have now received certain information on this subject and am glad to communicate with you.

It seems likely that the reports which you mentioned had their origin, in part at least, in certain incidents which took place at the Athlit camp on January 16th last. The facts of these incidents are as follows: The wire fence of the Athlit clearance camp was cut on the nights of the 14th and 15th of January and two detainees escaped. During the ensuing search of the detainees one of them assaulted a constable and was arrested. Thereafter ensued a demonstration and riot in the compound in which about 150 detainees took part. They refused to disperse and twenty-one were injured in a baton charge. A hunger strike was declared but terminated a few days later. There were no subsequent incidents.

The allegations of ill-treatment which reached you here no doubt originate from exaggerated accounts of the foregoing occurrences. I am assured that only such repressive measures were applied as were necessary to prevent mass outbreaks and Mr. Shertok of the Jewish Agency commenting to the Chief Secretary on what had taken place, observed that the policy "naturally had to take action."

On this general subject it may be of use to you to know, if you and others in the United States who are interested do not know already, that a representative of the Jewish Agency visits Athlit camp almost daily, and other persons nominated by the Jewish Agency are given permission to visit the camp from time to time. All visitors have expressed their appreciation of the internal arrangements of the camp and of the humane manner in which the inmates are treated. Schools have been established for children and adults; three teachers appointed by the Jewish Agency, who are assisted by three of the inmates, attend to the education of the detainees. Social welfare workers from the Jewish organizations visit the camp and supply materials for women's work. Small tailoring, shoemaking and carpentry workshops have been established. Some 30 to 40 men are employed on gardening, and intensive market gardening on a considerable scale is now being started. The detainees do their own domestic duties. A hospital under the charge of a resident Jewish doctor and staffed with Jewish nurses by the Department of Health, is provided for the treatment of inmates. Approximately 30 visitors daily are permitted to see their relatives at the camp. All internees now receive and write letters and periodical entertainments are arranged for their benefit. Males and females are accommodated in separate compounds but every afternoon may mix.

I realize, of course, that you and those who share your views would rather see these internees admitted as legal residents of Palestine; but, short of that, I hope the foregoing information will be sufficient to remove from your mind any impression that the internees are not being properly treated where they are.

Believe me,
Yours sincerely,

His Honor-
Judge Louis E. Levinthal
Court of Common Pleas # 6
Philadelphia Pa.

HALIFAX

JERUSALEM -- 6.10.42.

From: Executive, Vaad Leumi (sd. I. BEN ZVI), P.O.B. 1088, JERUSALEM.
To: Chief Secretary

Some time ago the announcement was made in London that senior officials of the Colonial Office were about to pay visits to several colonies in order to acquaint themselves at first hand with local conditions and problems in the colonies. We received that announcement with considerable gratification, for we saw in these visits a most efficacious means for knitting more closely the direct relations between the people of this country and the Colonial Administration in London.

It was apparently pursuant to that decision of the Colonial Office that the Chief Medical Adviser to the Colonial Office, Dr. Smart, visited Palestine a few weeks ago and spent a week in the country. The Jewish Institutions, as is well known, are responsible to a no small extent for the health of the Yishuv. Upon our medical services falls virtually the whole onus of the provision of medical facilities to the Yishuv, of the preventive medical treatment of the mother and child, of school hygiene, the anti-tuberculosis campaign, the treatment of mental cases, etc. Our workers' community maintains, single handed and without any legislative or financial support from the state, a health insurance service for workers which comprises 40 per cent of the Yishuv. The Jewish medical profession, numbering some 2,000, several of whom enjoy considerable eminence in the medical world, have formed an organization which does valuable scientific work and deals with all the professional problems of its members.

In the light of these facts it should have been permissible to expect that those responsible for the programme of Dr. Smart's itinerary in Palestine would see to it that he meet the representatives of our Institutions - the Vaad Leumi, Hadassah, Kuppat Holim and the Jewish Medical Association, for an exchange of views and a joint discussion on medical problems in this country. It would have been easy to invite all these bodies, through the Vaad Leumi, to a meeting with Dr. Smart. But we regret to have to say we received no notice of Dr. Smart's visit from those responsible for the programme of his tour. We learned of such visit through a casual report published in the "Palestine Post". On the day that report was published, Dr. Katznelson, a member of this Executive, addressed to Dr. Smart a letter, copy of which is enclosed. The following day he met Dr. Smart by chance at the Hadassah Hospital and there heard from him that he was due to leave Palestine within a day or two and could not, therefore, grant the request for an interview.

The plan contemplated by Dr. Katznelson, to arrange for Dr. Smart to meet the heads of our medical services, had, therefore, to be abandoned, and the unique opportunity, particularly during the war, of creating personal contact between the Jewish medical effort in Palestine and the supreme medical authority of the Colonial Office was thereby lost. By the short visits which Dr. Smart paid to two of our hospitals, which were arranged in the one case at very short notice and in the other case without any prior notice, Dr. Smart could not naturally learn what has been achieved by us, and even less so -- what is waiting and still remains to be done. We should note that Dr. Smart has not visited Tel Aviv and its medical institutions.

That fact had a depressing effect on the community, particularly on those responsible for its medical services, and I write to express to you the profound disappointment of the Vaad Leumi at what has happened.

I shall be grateful if you will cause this letter to be transmitted to the Secretary of State for his information.

MINUTES OF AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. ERIC MILLS, CONTROLLER OF MAN-POWER,
ON MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 1942.

Mr. Mills telephoned to ask me to call to see him. He opened the conversation by saying that he wished to inform us of labour needs in the immediate future. The position was that the Army would require during the next nine months the services of 30,000 unskilled workers in addition to those working for them now, and 5,000 skilled workers. After that period they would require a large number of additional skilled workers to work the machines that would be set up during that period. He didn't see where we were going to take the men from. It was clear that the training programme which we had in mind would not be able to provide all the skilled workers needed and where would the others come from? District officers were complaining that there were not enough Arab workers to gather in the village crops. The Public Works Department complained that they cannot get Arabs to work on the roads. Instead of 25 piastres per day they were asking 35 piastres. The matter was very serious. He thought we should know what the position was and we asked whether we would not be prepared to consider instructing our recruiting committees not to recruit skilled workers even though they were not employed in enterprises engaged on war work so that they might serve as a reserve for future needs.

I told Mr. Mills that I could not understand his request because it was diametrically opposed to what the Army wished us to do. Mr. Shertok had just come back from Egypt. In Cairo he had seen General Hughes who was in command of the R.E.'s. General Hughes had urged upon him the importance of our providing the Army with more and more artisan works companies of the R.E.'s; that meant recruiting skilled men. The General had insisted that there was no end to the number of companies they needed and that we should do everything we could to help provide them. Mr. Shertok had also seen the L.G.A., General N. Lindsell, who had told him that the Army would insist on our recruiting at least 50 per cent. of our recruits in the future into technical units in view of the great need for these units. Mr. Shertok pointed out that the position was that in the past as much as 75 per cent. of our recruits had joined the technical units. The General said he mentioned the matter because he imagined we would want to concentrate on recruiting into the Jewish Battalions. He wished to make it clear that the same attention would have to be paid in the future, as in the past, to the recruiting of technical units, and he thought therefore that he should mention the Army would expect us to recruit at least 50 per cent. of the men into technical units.

I asked Mr. Mills what he suggested we should do in the face of this insistence of the Army that we should press forward with recruiting of men into technical units, which meant, to a large extent, the recruiting of skilled men. I was sure he appreciated that we could not refuse to give the Army the help it asked for, even though, like himself, we were by no means anxious to denude industry of skilled workers. After all it had been difficult to set up what industry we had in the country. But we had gone even further than worry about only skilled workers engaged in war industry. We had followed the principle of not pressing any skilled worker to enlist if he held a key position, or if his enlistment might harm the establishment in which he was engaged, even though it might not be war work. But the Army's wishes were clear and they seemed to differ entirely from his present request to us.

Mr. Mills threw up his hands in despair and said he really did not know what these people wanted of him. Evidently the one did not know what the other was doing. In view of what I had told him, of course he could not press his point of view. It was very strange. On the one hand Rucker comes up to Jerusalem and urges upon him the importance of making men available for the industrial effort, and on the other hand the Army makes different demands on us. He would have to speak to Colonel Douglas-Brown about the whole matter.

I said that it seemed to me that there were still large numbers of men available and the real problem was how to get at this hard core and draw it into war services of one kind or another. It was this that we were concentrating on now. I added that it was clear to me that if we were to provide tens of thousands of workers whose employment in Palestine the authorities envisaged we would have to bring in people from the outside.

Mr. Mills said the trouble was that he did not see where they were to come from. The Yemen had its peculiar problem which we knew of. It was difficult for the people to get out and transportation problems were great. In Iraq he understood the position to be that Jews were afraid to be seen going to the British Consulate. If large numbers of Jews were to begin emigrating from Iraq there might be a renewal of anti-Jewish excesses. So far as Russia was concerned that was a delicate matter. Clearly it could only be arranged by negotiation between H.M.G. and the Russian Government. He did not know whether

H.M.G. would consider it an opportune moment to press the Russians in any way over this matter. That would have to be left to H.M.G. to decide, but even at the best these negotiations were bounds to take months. He could tell me that if there were an opportunity of bringing Jews into the country now he would as he could honestly advise Government that there was a distinct shortage of both skilled and unskilled workers, and that a very substantial schedule should be granted, but he did not see where the Jews were to come from.

He then turned the discussion to man-power and told me that only yesterday he had been meeting with Graves to discuss the wages problem, or, as he preferred to call it, the problem of income. It was clear that something would have to be done about this and that was why he was so anxious to get his Committees working. He enquired whether we had done anything in this regard.

I told him that Mr. Kaplan had spoken to the Histadrut. I asked him what sort of a meeting he had had with the Histadrut representatives and he told me briefly the substance of their discussion and said he thought it had been very useful and he hoped that it would be fruitful. Remez had been rather concerned about the fact that Government might have to consider squeezing skilled labour out of the non-essential industries, some of which might have to be closed down. There are two views on the subject and he had not quite made up his own mind although he tended to the view that this would be necessary. This was just the sort of thing that could be done best if done carefully by a representative committee.

Mr. Mills then reverted to the original question he had raised and asked whether even though, as he realized, I could not very well give instructions to our Committees to discontinue recruiting of skilled men in view of the Army's request to us, would I be prepared to ask our Committees to soft-pedal recruiting amongst skilled men even though they were not engaged in war industry.

I replied that I would be prepared to ask our committees during the next couple of weeks to concentrate their efforts on the non-skilled sectors with a view to increase the number of recruits into the Palestine Regiment, but as he realized we could not disregard the wishes of the Army in the matter of recruiting into technical units.

Bernard Joseph.

New York, November 5, 1942

STATEMENT MADE BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON 16TH DECEMBER

- - - - -

His Majesty's Government are aware of the anxiety of Jewish communities throughout the world to be assured that their Kinsmen in Palestine are afforded every possible opportunity to take arms actively against their avowed enemies, the Axis powers and to defend their homes in Palestine against the aggressions of these powers. As has previously been made clear in this house, Jews and Arabs in Palestine have ample opportunity of joining the British Army for service outside Palestine. It was with the object of affording both races the defence of their Palestinian homes, that I announced on the 6th August His Majesty's Government's decision to proceed with the formation of the Palestine regiment of the British Army for employment in Palestine or adjacent countries for the defence of Palestine.

The defence of Palestine is an integral part of Middle East strategy and cannot be considered apart from it. The duties allotted to the regiment must therefore be related to the Middle East Military dispositions as a whole, its task must be that which at any given moment will contribute most to the defeat of the Axis powers in that theatre. The Commander-in-Chief Middle East is in the best position to judge from a military point of view what this task should be. The immediate role which he has allotted to the Regiment is the defence against sabotage and raids on vulnerable points, aerodromes, radio telegraphy stations, etc. in Palestine vital to our war effort.

This task is one of great responsibility. By undertaking it the Regiment releases fully trained and seasoned troops urgently needed for Battle who would otherwise be required to undertake these duties while the scale of duties involved is increasing with the arrival of further trained reinforcements and the consequent enlargement of base installations. The Regiment is therefore fulfilling an indispensable task and the Commander-in-Chief has complete confidence in its ability to carry it out. The scale of Arms and equipment required for this role is not so great as that of the units fighting actively in the front line and it would therefore be manifestly uneconomical to equip the Regiment on a heavier scale so long as they have this role. In matters of this sort involving the best disposition of troops the Commander-in-Chief's judgment and decision naturally receive due weight from His Majesty's Government. I would stress that this is the immediate role of the Regiment. Present military circumstances dictate that it cannot be other. But it does not follow that as the situation develops the role will not be different.

The Commander-in-Chief intends to relieve units of the Palestine Regiment of their general duties when equipment and circumstances permit for training in field duties. His Majesty's Government fully approve this intention and it is hoped that the Palestine Regiment will in its turn be enabled by these measures to take a more active part in operations in the Middle East should the situation require it.

C O P Y

GME.

BRITISH JOINT STAFF MISSION
OFFICES OF THE COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

19th December, 1942.

Dear Dr. Goldmann:

I am sorry that I have had to keep you waiting so long for further information regarding the formation of a Jewish Army which we discussed together on 23rd October.

I have to-day received the text of a statement on the subject which the Secretary of State for War made in the House of Commons on 16th December and I attach a copy for your information.

I think you will agree that in the circumstances the immediate employment of the Jewish battalions must be Home Defence duties in Palestine, but I hope you will rest assured that this is a necessary temporary arrangement and a more active role lies in store.

I hope that Dr. Weizmann is better. Please give him my kindest regards when next you see him.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) J.C. DILL

Dr. Nahum Goldmann,
Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs,
41 East 42nd Street,
New York City.