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

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

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Neumann, Dr. Emanuel, 1942.



WARDMAN PARK HOTEL

Washington, D. C.

CONNECTICUT AVENUE & WOODLEY ROAD
1800 ROOMS

April 20, '42

Dear Abba,

Here I am working with Weizmann - just as smoothly & happily as last year. As if nothing had happened! The fly in the ointment: B. J.'s secretary rang up the Z. O. A. office today & inquire (a) whether I was here (b) what I was doing and (c) to ask that a room be reserved for B. J. who is coming here tomorrow.

So far as I know nothing has happened on the question of the "set up". But canards are being circulated about me, two of which I have heard about and have nailed. (1) That Felix expressed himself in a manner reflecting upon my activities (2) That I had told V. P. Wallace that for every Jew killed by Arabs we killed 10 Arabs. As to (1) I can tell you confidentially that Billikopf had corresponded with Felix about it & the latter replied branding the rumor as false. As for (2) I have tracked down the lie in the Vice-President's office today. Mrs. Anna Lindheim is responsible for it.

Have you written to Chaim?

I understand you are due in New York next Sunday. On that day there will be an all day meeting of the Z.O.A. Executive Com. at which I shall report on the situation in the Emergency Com. I would like the discussion to take place when you are present. Will you attend? Please do if at all possible.

The Stimmung in Washington is I think more favorable to us than it has been. Confidentially I have been told that the President recently expressed himself in favor of a Jewish army in Palestine at a Cabinet meeting! I am going to try to find out what Gen. Marshall has to say on the subject. Dill is for it & is reported to have sent a cable to London in support.

Best regards.

Yours.
Emanuel



CONNECTICUT AVENUE & WOODLEY ROAD
1800 ROOMS

WARDMAN PARK HOTEL

Washington, D. C.

Leaving for N.Y. tomorrow
Friday.

April 22, '42

Dear Abba,

I have just wired you "Adolph Agreable". He was in fact very nice about it. He knew of you, of course, and had read about your activities in England. He wants to know the precise date & other particulars & I said he would get a letter from you. To be sure he made the usual reservation about any unforeseen emergency that might arise between now & then. I said nothing about a fee & neither did he. Just the same it might be a very good thing to offer it. "Es kann nicht schaden..."

In a conversation I had with the colonel at the British Embassy he inquired about your trip etc. It would be advisable perhaps for

you to drop a line to the Ambassador
expressing appreciation of the courtesy extended
etc.

Chaim seems to be scoring a great
victory in connection with his process, of
importance for the war effort. I hope the matter
is clinched soon - for then he will be
quite a force in government circles here.
I have just told him that for this they must give
us also Transjordan.

Wilkie's address is:

Office 15 Broad St.

Home 1010 Fifth Ave

Please wire him playing up Chaim, and
saying you would like him to give a little time
for such a meeting devoted to the Jewish question
& Palestine & suggesting a luncheon meeting on
Tuesday or Wednesday when you expect to be in the city.
Let's try.
Cordially
Emanuel

(with whom I think he shook hands
last year)

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RABBI ABBA HILLEL SILVER=

DLR THE TEMPLE EAST 105 & ANSEL=

ADOLPH AGREEABLE AM WRITING YOU AIR MAIL REGARDS=

EMANUEL.

May 5, 1942

Mr. Emanuel Neumann
Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs
41 East 42nd St.
New York, N.Y.

My dear Emanuel:

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the letter which I received from Mr. Wendell L. Willkie. Perhaps from here on you may wish to carry on the contact. I may be in New York on Monday, May 25. Perhaps Mr. Willkie could see Dr. Weizmann then.

I am also enclosing a copy of the letter which I received from Lord Halifax.

With all good wishes, I remain

Very cordially yours,

AHS:BK
Enc. - 2

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PALESTINE

Suggestions for a Survey and Report



Submitted by
Emanuel Neumann

November 19, 1942.

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR PALESTINE

1 - THE LOWDERMILK PROJECT

For a considerable time Zionist leaders have been disturbed by resistance to the Zionist program encountered in certain official quarters. Among American statesmen and officials in high position, there is more sympathy for the Jewish people and understanding of the problem of Jewish homelessness than ever before. They not only recognize the problem but agree that large numbers of European Jews will have to emigrate after the war. They are also inclined to the view that it would be desirable to resettle them compactly in a single territory rather than to disperse them. Moreover, there is appreciation and admiration of the work done in Palestine. All of this does not, however, add up to an acceptance of the Zionist program. The chief obstacle is the view widely held and deeply rooted that Palestine is too poor, too small and too populous to absorb a further large immigration. The President himself, as well as some of his close advisers, are reported to share this opinion. Nor can there be any doubt that representatives of the British Government have been encouraging this view as well as stressing the fact of Arab opposition. The resulting situation is definitely unsatisfactory, if not dangerous to the whole Zionist position.

The need has therefore been felt for dealing with the question of absorptive capacity in Palestine in a more thoroughgoing and convincing manner than has yet been attempted. But though the question is crucial, nothing of decisive importance in this respect has been done either in Palestine or here.

About six months ago I approached Dr. W.C. Lowdermilk of Washington, to write a book on Palestine based largely upon the studies he had made there on behalf of the Department of Agriculture in 1939. He finally consented to devote the summer to this task provided research workers would be placed at his disposal. The work proceeded steadily during June and July. I had many conferences with him in the

course of which I repeatedly stressed the importance of attacking the problem of absorptive capacity and to that end successfully urged that industry, as well as agriculture, be dealt with in his book. Late in August Dr. Lowdermilk sent me a draft outline of a chapter entitled, "TVA Reclamation Project for the JVA and a Post-War Solution for the Jewish Refugee Problem." It was subsequently changed to "The Jordan Valley Authority". In this chapter Dr. Lowdermilk outlined a comprehensive plan consisting of eleven parts, as follows: (1) Power Project; (2) Diversion of the Sweet Waters of the Jordan for Irrigation; (3) Draining of the Huleh and Irrigation Canals; (4) Development of Industries; (5) Land Classification and Inventory of Resources and Coordination of the Development of Land, Waters and Minerals; (6) System of Water Conservation and Flood Control; (7) Adjustment of Agriculture; (8) Improvement of Range Management of Extensive Grazing Areas; (9) Reforestation of Lands Unsited for Farming and Grazing; (10) More General Extraction of Mineral Wealth from the Dead Sea and Surrounding Lands; (11) Provision of Supplementary Transportation, Railroads, Motor Roads, Increased Harbor Facilities and Merchant Shipping.

The most interesting and impressive features of the Plan may be briefly described as follows:

(a) The fresh waters of the Jordan are to be diverted into irrigation canals through which the water will flow by gravitation to irrigate parts of Galilee, the Emek and lands of the Jordan Valley.

(b) Water from the Mediterranean is to be carried from the vicinity of Haifa through the Emek to the edge of the Jordan Valley by means of an open canal and a tunnel. This sea water will be poured into the Jordan River bed replacing the fresh water diverted for irrigation. The drop of 1,000 feet will be utilized for generating electrical energy which, it is estimated, will run into hundreds of thousands of kilowatts, thus providing cheap power for agricultural and industrial development.

(c) With the help of the power thus generated, a great electro-chemical industry is to be developed, utilizing the resources of the Dead Sea, including magnesium which cannot now be utilized because of the high cost of electric current. Dr. Lowdermilk states it as his considered judgment that by utilizing all surface waters and impounded rain water for irrigation, large areas of land now virtually unused can be cultivated intensively and provide a subsistence for large numbers of agricultural settlers, while the power project would stimulate an industrial development hitherto un dreamed of. He concludes that the execution of his Plan in its various aspects would make it possible to settle five million additional persons in Palestine.

Dr. Lowdermilk discussed the subject with his former chief, Vice-President Wallace, who expressed himself enthusiastically about it and added that this was the kind of constructive projects which the United States should help realize. Dr. Lowdermilk believes that Mr. Wallace will consent to write the foreward to his book.

Unfortunately, Dr. Lowdermilk had to leave for China as the head of an agricultural mission before he could elaborate his proposals or submit them to further analysis and study. He left with the conviction that this Plan offered the hope for a solution of the Jewish problem by solving the problem of absorptive capacity. He indicated that the Plan should be modeled on the work of the Tennessee Valley Authority. As in the case of the TVA, the Jordan Valley Authority would be managed by a board of directors (to be appointed by the Jewish Agency for Palestine). The JVA should be given wide powers which it would exercise under the supervision of an international commission of the United Nations. While its powers should be made broad enough to enable it to carry out the development Plan, the authority of the Palestine Government in other respects need not be impinged upon. A somewhat analogous situation exists in the case of the TVA in relation to the state governments of the seven states in which it operates.

I promised Dr. Lowdermilk that we would have competent engineers check his figures and plans before the book is published and I likewise undertook to draw into consultation the heads of the TVA as Dr. Lowdermilk had recommended. Accordingly, I sent a copy of the outline to Mr. David Lilienthal, chairman of the TVA, who promptly wrote me to say that the project interested him enormously; that he would be glad to confer, and that it was desirable for us to visit the TVA works and to consult with TVA experts. Accordingly, following a luncheon conference with Mr. Lilienthal in Washington, three of us, Mr. Robert Szold, Mr. Israel B. Brodie and myself, went to Knoxville, Tenn. and spent three days in conferences with various groups of experts and with Mr. Lilienthal himself. The reception and treatment accorded to us was extraordinary, every possible facility being placed at our disposal. The experts seemed eager to use the opportunity to advise us on a great project involving the development of Palestine. They indicated, of course, that much study and work would be required before a definitive judgment could be pronounced, but that from the maps and other information at their disposal, the project did not seem to present unusual technical difficulties. At about the same time I consulted with Mr. Gerald V. Cruise, Executive Secretary of the Power Authority of the State of New York, who is also a member of the St. Lawrence Waterways Commission; and he is now examining the project.

In approaching the whole matter, it is well to bear in mind that the author of the Plan is a scientist of distinction and high repute. Dr. Lowdermilk is a civil engineer, a soil expert of note and occupies the eminent position of President of the Geo-Physical Association of America. He is familiar with large engineering projects which have been carried out in this and other countries. His ideas are, therefore, entitled to most serious consideration. This is also the opinion of all experts with whom we have thus far discussed the matter.

It may be stated, in confidence, that Dr. Chaim Weizmann and American Zionist leaders attach the utmost importance to the Plan not only from the point of practical view of its utilization in Palestine but from the point of view of its immediate

political value. It is felt that nothing is so calculated to influence favorably the attitude of official circles towards the Zionist program as a large-scale and comprehensive economic project such as this. It offers a new and more promising approach to the problem of Palestine and one that is peculiarly suited to the American mind. The conception of a Jordan Valley Authority in particular is thoroughly in line with the social and political philosophy of the New Deal.

Dr. Lowdermilk's Plan is regarded as a bold and ingenious project likely to fire the imagination and attract wide support on the part of many who would naturally resist a direct political approach. Politically speaking, it may be regarded as a flanking moving of a most promising character -- one of the most significant contributions ever made to Political Zionism.

It is, therefore, agreed that a study of the Lowdermilk Plan should be undertaken at once with the help of competent experts. To put it more broadly a study should be undertaken for the purpose of evolving an Economic Development Plan for Palestine, using Dr. Lowdermilk's ideas as a basis. The scientists, experts and planners should not be bound by strict adherence to Dr. Lowdermilk's outline in all its aspects but should feel free to alter, add or modify as their investigation and judgment may suggest. The study should deal almost exclusively with technical and economic problems. Though the experts may find it necessary to touch upon political and financial considerations involved, it will be assumed, for the purposes of the study, that the political and financial requirements can be met and satisfied.

For obvious reasons, it is desirable that the study be conducted through a non-political group which should, however, be in close touch with the Zionist leadership.

II. COST AND BUDGET

Considerable thought has been given to the question of the cost of such an investigation and the elaboration of plans. The more this question is examined, the more impossible it appears to estimate costs and propose a budget at this stage with any degree of accuracy. There are many unknowns and equally many variables bearing directly on costs and budget. It were well to consider several of these factors briefly.

1. To begin with, while Dr. Lowdermilk's plan as outlined consists of eleven parts, they are not of equal importance and urgency and not all of them need be examined and worked out in detail at this time. Two major projects, the power project and the irrigation scheme, constitute the core of the plan and must be dealt with at once. Other features may be left out of consideration for the time being. Another group of projects may be regarded as belonging in a third category: to be dealt with if sufficient funds are available.

2. Judging by our experience to date, there is reason to hope that considerable help can be obtained from experts on a voluntary basis, that is, gratis. We have satisfied ourselves from conversations with Mr. David Lilienthal, chairman of the board of T. V. A., Mr. Gerald V. Cruise, executive secretary of the Power Authority of the State of New York, and others, that the assistance of experts in the service of state and federal agencies can be obtained. There is also the possibility that the cooperation of experts in private life, connected with private enterprises can likewise be enlisted. By way of illustration: Mr. Lazarus White, a prominent engineer and head of one of the largest construction companies in this country, heads an organization of Jewish engineers in support of the Haifa Technical College; and he has offered the cooperation of a number of engineers, members of his society, as well as his own and personal cooperation on a voluntary basis.

These fortunate circumstances may well serve to reduce the total cost of

the investigation, although experience teaches that such voluntary service, precious as it is, would most probably have to be supplemented and sometimes even replaced by paid professional service. The extent to which voluntary assistance of first-rate quality will be available constitutes, at the moment, an undetermined factor.

3. Both volunteer and paid experts will require a considerable volume of factual data which will have to be sought, gathered, sifted, organized and supplied to them. On first consideration it would seem that several decades of Zionist work in Palestine and the large volume of published scientific material in existence should provide ample sources for the necessary data. But certain limitations must be borne in mind. Much of the data already in existence is in the hands of various organizations, institutions and corporations, both public and private; and it will require some effort and perhaps persuasion to obtain them. To cite one illustration: The Palestine Electric Corporation undoubtedly has much relevant data in its files but may not be inclined to furnish it upon request. The problem would be easier, of course, in the case of public institutions, like the Jewish National Fund. To the extent to which existing information will not be available, original research will be required, thus influencing the question of costs.

4. It has been suggested above that the purpose of the study should be the eventual submission of an Economic Development Plan for Palestine which may or may not be strictly within the framework of Dr. Lowdermilk's outline. The question will arise whether work should be undertaken outside and beyond that framework. In the opinion of the writer, it would be highly desirable to supplement the studies which Dr. Lowdermilk's proposals indicate by a special report dealing with possibilities for specific industrial enterprises in Palestine. To cite an illustration: A successful manufacturer of plastic goods, who is a Zionist, has already studied the possibilities and prospects of a plastics industry in Palestine and

has reached definitely favorable conclusions. It is entirely feasible to induce a number of industrialists to undertake similar studies with the help of their own technicians. As a result, it would be possible to append to the final report a supplement dealing with a wide variety of industries whose establishment in Palestine has been carefully considered and recommended by competent experts. (Obviously the interests of the private firms concerned will have to be safeguarded.) Entering this field in the manner suggested would not require the engaging of experts on our part but would involve considerable administrative work.

It follows from the foregoing that the presentation of a program of research and planning and a budget for this work is no simple matter. The unknown and variable factors, only some of which have been mentioned, render it difficult to make an estimate based upon knowledge rather than guesswork. Leaving out of consideration for the time being an eventual technical mission to Palestine (which would in itself involve an outlay of probably \$15,000 to \$20,000), a preliminary survey of the work to be done here and of available scientific and technical resources would be required.

For the present, I can only give my own impression - which is little more than an impression, though based upon considerable thought during the past few weeks - that a sum of \$25,000 would about suffice, especially if the salary of an administrative director and such items as rent are not to be included in the budget. I would therefore propose that the setting up of the definite budget be postponed. The sum of \$25,000 may be set aside at this time subject to a further report to be rendered within a reasonable period of time during which the whole situation will be canvassed.

Without attempting to go into details, one may consider briefly the uses to which the proposed appropriation would be put. The principal heads of expenditures would be as follows: (a) Payments to technical experts; (b) Payments to research workers engaged in gathering, sifting, and organizing factual data; (c) Secretarial

and clerical service; (d) Other administrative expenses, including such items as travel, correspondence, telegrams, etc.; (e) Supplies, including books and pamphlets. In all probability, the largest single item would be (a) and the second (b).

Assuming that such a sum is made available, a committee should be set up consisting of persons of sound judgement with technical background and experience in large affairs, whose devotion to the cause is beyond question. This committee should work closely with an administrative director who will devote his full time, or the major part of his time, to this project. The first task of the director and his committee should be to map out the investigation, canvass the availability of experts, as well as the availability of factual data, and present a report including a well considered budget. If it is found that the sum of \$25,000 is more than ample, the appropriation may be correspondingly reduced or a reserve set up with it for unforeseen expenditures or to help finance the sending of a technical mission to Palestine. If, on the other hand, it should transpire that a larger sum is required, ways and means of providing additional funds will have to be considered. From present indications, there is no doubt in my mind that such additional support will be forthcoming if the preliminary report of the committee will warrant it.

There is general agreement that this work is of such vital importance and immediate urgency that there should be no delay in launching upon it. It is also earnestly suggested that for various reasons which need not be specified, the utmost discretion and even secrecy is required. This memorandum should therefore be treated as strictly confidential.