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

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

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Weizmann, Dr. Chaim, 1941.

C. Weyman

Secret

Arrowhead Springs
California

June 21st, 1941

The Right Honourable
Lord Moyne
The Colonial Office
Downing Street, London.

I am afraid that you will think me remiss in my duty, and failing to keep my promise to write to you. But my excuse should be that the work here has been very hard, entailing a great deal of traveling. I did not wish to write before my impressions had crystallized, and this required the completion of the program first. I am now at the end of my tour, which was somewhat extensive. Apart from a lengthy stay in New York and two visits to Washington, the latter covering about ten days in all, I have been to Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis, Kansas City, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and finally Los Angeles and San Francisco.

I have had an opportunity of seeing things at fairly close range and of meeting numbers of people, both Jews and non-Jews, in various stations of life. I am now taking about ten days' rest here and intend to return to New York on July 2nd in order to finish one or two things which still require attention, then to visit Boston, and to leave for home about the middle of July. I hope to get accommodation promptly so that, all being well, it is my intention to be in London about the 20th or 25th of next month, which is slightly more than a month from now.

THE WAR POSITION: Things are moving very rapidly here, and it is always somewhat hazardous to try and give a clear description of a dynamic state of affairs. In the three months spent in this country, one has seen great changes, both in the state of public opinion and in the actions of the administration, which is closely watching public opinion and adapts its steps to its moods. There is no slightest doubt that the President and his colleagues are determined to do all in their power in helping England to the limit of their possibility. This desire is sincere and genuine and the notion that England is the first line of defense for the United States is not merely a catch-phrase for propaganda purposes, but forms a fundamental conception determining the attitude of the Government. I doubt whether the President would like to engage American man-power into this struggle; he would naturally be happy if he could avoid doing it, but I am sure - and this is confirmed by some of his utterances made confidentially to his close advisers - that he sees clearly where the logic of events is driving this country, which can no longer escape the cruel necessity of taking its stand as a belligerent. The task before the President is neither easy nor simple. It is a vast and heterogeneous country. The Irish and the Germans are, in the majority, hostile to England and some of them probably friendly to the dictators. They form important groups, influential in local politics if perhaps not very powerful nationally. There are the Italians, a great many fascist in outlook; but of course there are the friendly Poles, Greeks, Czechs and Norwegians. There is also the usual group of appeasers with which we are so familiar from our own history, led primarily by Lindbergh and Wheeler, and they have gathered some momentum in these three months. They are constantly being reinforced by German propaganda and make abundant capital out of our difficulties and misfortunes. Talking to common people - taxi-drivers, or on trains or in small places - one notices that even in remote districts away from the Atlantic Seaboard - there exists a remarkable unanimity amongst the small people who condemn the attitude of the minority very strongly.

In the eyes of the common folk they are identified with fascism or nazism. But the country is vast, and in spite of excellent communications by rail or plane, in spite of the radio, the movies and the press, it is not easy to weld and mold opinion into a harmonious whole, and this accounts for the apparent slowness with which the administration moves. It does seem slow to us, but I believe it to be very rapid, under the circumstances prevailing here. After all, there is some logic in the attitude of the non-interventionists, that the danger to America is still remote and that, given a few quiet years in which to prepare, this Colossus can ward off almost any onslaught: Why rush? etc. etc. Remembering what we ourselves preached and practised before the collapse of Czecho-Slovakia and even during the first year of the war, is it to be wondered that this American minority can produce a plausible argument? And I think that we should be the last to judge them severely.

There is another set of arguments which one hears from the young intelligent public - college graduates, professors and intellectuals generally. "What kind of war is it? Is it the old imperialism under a new guise, and if we are to fight, we ought to know what is going to be the future better world. Is it really going to be a genuine democracy?" And here again these young doubters are able to point to a great many weaknesses in our structure and to portents which do not inspire them with too much confidence - like some of the vague statements uttered by our statesmen. I am not referring to Jews, about whom I shall write later, but I am speaking of the young American intellectual who is occasionally tainted with a sort of mild parlour Bolshevism but to whom democracy has a real meaning, not merely as a formal political or parliamentary way of conducting business but as a mode of life. He somehow misses it in England, which he does not know and which he judges merely by the representatives who come over here and who are not his ideal of democrats. I was anxious about this - and I don't know whether you have noticed a cablegram of mine sent some time ago to 10 Downing Street recommending that people like Wedgwood, Tom Williams, Ellen Wilkinson should come here, unostentatiously. They should go into the workshops, into the colleges and talk to the people and enlighten them. There are young people only too anxious to learn - they are not hardened in their opinions - but they hate being bamboozled by propaganda. I was happy to read that Wedgwood is already in this country, and am looking forward to seeing him on my return to New York. I hope that others may be spared to come over. They have a real task to perform. This category of young men and women may appear somewhat leftist to you, but upon them and the workingmen a great deal will depend here, as the war goes on.

PRODUCTION: One can obtain some idea of the potentialities of this country by visiting the middlewestern industrial centers. Some of them I have enumerated. It is no exaggeration to say that when this district alone gets into full swing it can produce more than the whole of Europe. But apart from this nucleus there are enormous possibilities both in the East and in the West, and one sees everywhere new plans being laid down and production getting under way. Experts and trained observers, university men in close connection with industry, have assured me that it would take another 4 or 5 months until the so-called "tooling" is completed and then the amount of material produceable in 1942 is almost incalculable. I believe that at present the production is no more than 30% of the possible potential, but it is being stepped up quite rapidly, although not uniformly in all branches. Aircraft production moves quickly, tanks are slower, and I fear that the chemical industry is somewhat lagging behind. However, it is not easy for a stranger to assess these things properly, although I had access to people who seemed to know what they were talking about. I would like to add at the conclusion that things in Washington are at present in a state similar to ours two years ago. The gigantic problems are towering before the people and Government offices have increased in size enormously. I think the population of Washington has grown to a great number in a comparatively short time, and the heads of the administration have to grapple with unprecedented problems under severe pressure

and as most of them have already two terms of office behind them they create the impression of tired men incapable of bringing a fresh mind to the complex questions facing them. I have no doubt however, that the administration will have recourse to the ample reserves of intelligent human material available in this country. A short period of empiricism is bound to precede the creation of an adequate administrative machinery adapted to the new situation.

It is difficult to say what the origin of the labor troubles is. It may be due partly to sabotage, partly to propaganda, but I should imagine on a whole to a genuine fear on the part of the working classes of losing the privileges which they have gained under the New Deal after so much heart-searching and struggle (and frankly, I cannot blame the workmen whose position is only now becoming normalized). There is still a great deal of greed and profiteering manifest here and the workman is suspicious of the employer whom he suspects as being out on a war-racket. I am informed on good authority that so far these strikes, although rather spectacular, have not seriously interfered with production, but as a symptom they are disconcerting. One can imagine that the President was very reluctant to call out the armed forces in order to break a strike, and he does so only in extremis, wisely relying on his mediation board and not on physical force. This situation of course may also be very much simplified if the country is placed on a war footing, which is of course very different from a state of national emergency which exists now. It will certainly come, although it may take time. The events in Russia and the blackmailing on the part of Japan may hasten this process and, by the time this letter reaches you, all that I am saying may prove to be obsolete. (Since dictating these words yesterday the war between Russia and Germany became a fact. What effect it will have on this country is impossible to say at present).

THE JEWISH PROBLEM: I think I am right in saying that of all the ethnic groups comprising this country there are two which have taken a very definite stand in the problem of American entry into the war: these are the Anglo-Saxons and the Jews. For the latter the conquest of the Nazis constitutes a question of life and death and they are imbued with the conviction that only through America's joining up intimately with England in this struggle the world can become free again, and in union they see the salvation of humanity as a whole and perhaps of themselves in particular. I am using the word "perhaps" advisedly. Whereas it is axiomatic that the primordial requirement consists in the wiping out of the Nazi-Fascist evil, they have many reasons to doubt whether a military victory will bring them the relief and satisfaction to which they are entitled. They view the future with grave concern and they are appalled by the problem which will face Jewry after this war is over and they genuinely doubt whether the statesmen who will be re-shaping the future world will show any generosity and foresight in their approach to the Jewish problem and its settlement, and that they will not merely dispose of it by improvising some form of a makeshift or compromise. (The Russian complication draws into the vortex another four million potential victims). For the Jews here - like everywhere else, I believe - the acid test of democracy is determined by the way their own grievous problem will be dealt with. A rising tide of anti-Semitism is evident in this country and the Jewish situation here contains many elements of grave danger. This of course makes the Jewish population here much more wide-awake to the realities as compared with the others, much keener to get on with the war, although, on the other hand, they are thwarted in this endeavor by a creeping fear that the non-interventionists may choose the Jews as a target for their accusation that they are dragging America into the war. This fear which was conspicuous about a year ago has greatly diminished now but it is still lingering on and dampens to some extent the fervor of the Jew.

In this state of mind Palestine plays no small part. You hear from time to time, no doubt, that there is opposition to Zionism and Palestine amongst the so-called influential Jews. This is not to be denied but the term "influential" as far as the Jewish community is concerned cannot be applied to the very small number of so-called prominent Jews who may be trying to speak to British and American statesmen on behalf of Jewry but who would never dare to do so publicly as they know only too well that they would be violently disavowed by the overwhelming majority of the Jews. If ten years ago these rich and powerful people may have had some claim to leadership, they have lost it almost completely by now. They can only work subterraneously, utilize their social connections in order to press forward their point of view, but their value is almost nil in the eyes of the Jews, although I confess that some non-Jews, ill-informed about the real state of things, mistake them easily and sometimes too willingly for Jewish leaders. They are, of course, easier to deal with than the representatives of Jewish democracy. Palestine means nothing to some of these notables because they have been divorced from Judaism and therefore they will be ready to make concessions, for instance, to adopt the White Paper. In the eyes of some representatives of the British and Palestine administrations such self-appointed Jewish leaders are always welcome and the others are conveniently dubbed "extremists". My visit here has made me acutely aware of this state of affairs. I may say without exaggeration that 95% or more of the Jews in this country are anxious to see the Palestinian problem settled fairly, being at the same time animated by a keen desire not to embarrass His Majesty's Government at present, they are waiting patiently until the tide has turned, but then they rightly expect fair treatment for the Jews with regard to the Palestinian problem. They genuinely believe (and this belief is shared by a great many representatives of the administration including the President) that a decent settlement can be arrived at between the Jews and the Arabs, if the problem is approached not merely from the point of view of expediency and appeasement but if inspired by a genuine desire to do justice. The Jews and a great many non-Jews believe that whatever the Arabs have now and are likely to have in the future, is and will be due entirely to the efforts of England and America and therefore it will depend upon the sense of justice of these two countries to bring about a satisfactory solution which they are entitled to enforce if necessary. England has, at present, its best friends in the Jews who are exposing themselves to a great many risks in view of the state of affairs in this country now. I could quote a whole galaxy of distinguished men in every walk of life both in the capitals like Washington and New York and in the provincial towns who are making every effort to speed things up and to help England in every conceivable way. I do not think that England has a better friend than Secretary Morgenthau. You know how much a treasury can obstruct things, but he has done everything in order to smooth the way even at the risk of being reproached that he is doing these things as a Jew and not merely as a patriotic American. As a matter of fact, he is both, in a very high degree. He feels keenly that it is his duty as an American to render every possible assistance to England but he is also deeply concerned about the position of the Jews and the attitude of Great Britain towards Palestine. His is not an enviable position and I am afraid that many of us share the same fate. You will understand, therefore, that we were much exercised by the problem of re-arming the Jews in Palestine and even more by Mr. Eden's speech. I know all the arguments concerning the first problem and you were good enough to discuss it very fully and frankly with me before I left for this country. But things have been moving so rapidly in these three months that it is difficult to understand the static attitude of the British Government with regard to the arming of the Jews in Palestine and to a Jewish army, particularly, in view of the picture which the Arab world presents today. We feel deeply that appeasement, which may have disappeared from the English mind as far as world politics is concerned, has found its last stronghold in the attitude of our British statesmen towards the Jews. The Arabs have betrayed and are betraying, - and in the term "Arab" I include Egypt; therefore they must be appeased.

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The Jews are doing the impossible under difficult circumstances to render every assistance: therefore they can be ignored. All this seems so utterly absurd, short-sighted and un-English that I sometimes wonder whether this fear of the Arabs is not merely a feint which covers - subconsciously perhaps - something much deeper, namely, fear and suspicion of the Jew. This is an ancient experience to us dating from Pharaonic times! I am conscious that perhaps I am generalizing a little too severely, but I am giving you the general impression created in the Jewish mind and also on a great many Americans whom you can count amongst the best friends of England, foremost amongst them a person like Dorothy Thompson. Eden's speech, to return to it for a second, was vague and indefinite, and sinned by the deliberate omission to mention the Jews, who have suffered so much at the hands of Nazism and to whom a word of comfort should have gone out at this time of trial and tribulation. I felt deeply shocked by this omission and have telegraphed to the Prime Minister to that effect. I had reason to do so because the Prime Minister was particularly kind and encouraging to me before I left England. I believe implicitly in what he said to me although it was a private statement. I believe in a future just settlement; I am certain that the White Paper will eventually become a war casualty; that perhaps His Majesty's Government will be-think itself and take out from the pigeon-hole the Royal Commission's report which it has adopted once and was ready to carry out, and find that with certain important readjustments the report and its ideas may become the basis of an imaginative constructive conception of a better Palestine reshaped after the war. I confess to you that I have been trying to adumbrate these ideas in many circles and have found deep understanding and sympathy in spite of some counter-propaganda which occasionally emanated from the Press Department of the Washington Embassy. I can assure you that this has served the British cause much more than some official statements, and it is likely to serve it in the future in an increased measure.

I am afraid that my letter has become lengthy and I hope that you will forgive both its size and its frankness. It would have been useless for me to write unless I might put before you the things as I see them and by doing so I hope to serve the cause of England and of my own people. I believe that the stars in their courses have decreed that these two causes are inter-twined. The binding link is the reverence which the two peoples have for the precepts of the Bible, which will survive this age of confusion. Those who tamper with them commit a grave sin against the two peoples which in the end must be expiated.

I am looking forward to seeing you soon and to report personally and in greater detail on the impressions which I have gained during my stay in this great and most interesting country where I have learned a great deal and where I have tried in some small measure to help our common cause.

C.W.

P. S. I hope that you will find it possible to show this letter to the Prime Minister as I do not wish to trouble him with a lengthy document.

ARROWHEAD SPRINGS HOTEL AND SPA
CALIFORNIA

June 23rd, 1941

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
The Temple
Cleveland, O.

My dear Silver,

Having completed my tour, I am trying to get a little rest at this place, and expect to be back in New York on July 2nd.

I have asked Arthur Lourie to send you copy of my letter to Felix Frankfurter, summing up my impressions gained in the course of my visit to this country. I should very much like to have a talk with you before leaving for London, which will be about the middle of July. Do you plan to be in New York within that period?

With affectionate regards to you & the family
Yours ever
Chaim Weizmann

July 1, 1941

Dr. Chaim Weizmann
Arrowhead Springs Hotel
Arrowhead, California

My dear Dr. Weizmann:

Thank you for your kind note of June 23. I have not yet received your letter to Felix Frankfurter. Weisgal phoned me yesterday in New York, saying that a meeting has been arranged for July 10, in New York City which you will attend, and requested me to attend that meeting. I shall make every effort to be there. In that case we shall have a chance during the day to get together for a talk.

With all good wishes and hoping that you have had a good rest, I remain

Very cordially yours,

AHS:BK

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DR ABBA HILLEL SILVER=

1941 JUL 2 PM 6 21

THE TEMPLE EAST 105 ST AT ANSEL RD=

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR LETTER AND BOOK WHICH I WILL READ
EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY ANXIOUSLY LOOKING FORWARD
SEEING YOU JULY TENTH HOPE YOU WILL NOT FAIL ME CORDIAL
GREETINGS=

CHAIM WEIZMANN.

ABBA HILLEL. CHAIM .

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Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs

41 EAST 42nd STREET
ROOM 1121
NEW YORK CITY

September 24, 1941

Dr. Abba Hillel Silver
c/o The Commodore Hotel,
42nd St. & Lexington Ave.
New York City

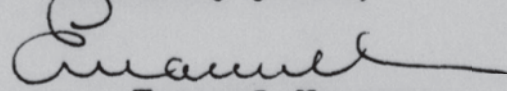
Dear Abba:

Friends who came over from London have brought a number of documents from Dr. Weizmann for our information. We are treating them as strictly confidential and not circulating them even among the members of the Emergency Committee, with the exception of one of them -- Dr. Weizmann's letter to Smuts. However I feel you ought to see these documents which give some idea of the situation. May I suggest that you kindly return them to me as soon as you have read them.

Have you seen Pertinax' article in The Times the other day? I am enclosing an offset, in case you have not. We are keeping in touch with the Free French, not without some interesting results. The attitude that Pertinax takes towards our problem is not bad, considering that he was formerly rather anti-Zionist in his views.

With best wishes for the New Year, I am

Cordially yours,


Emanuel Neumann

Enc.

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1

Revised
AmE.M.

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
THE HONORABLE SUMNER WELLES
BY THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR ZIONIST AFFAIRS

1. It has been generally assumed that British policy with regard to Palestine would undergo no important modification during the progress of the war. In Zionist circles it was hoped that no further steps would be taken toward implementing the White Paper of 1939 and it was believed that there would certainly be no basic change in the status of Palestine or of the Palestine Mandate.

2. A recent address delivered by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Anthony Eden, made specific reference to a coming change in the status of Syria and Lebanon and promised support by the British Government for a scheme of federation in the Middle East as yet undefined.

Dr. Stephen S. Wise and Dr. Nahum Goldmann conferred with you shortly thereafter, and you were kind enough to state that in your view it was extremely improbable that the British Government would take any steps involving the status of Palestine either by the inclusion of Palestine in a federation or otherwise, without prior consultation with the Government of the United States; and furthermore, that if proposals affecting the status of Palestine or of the Jewish National Home were forthcoming, the American Government would accord the representatives of American Zionism adequate opportunity to present their views before taking any position on such questions.

We take this occasion to express our profound appreciation of these statements made by you at the time to our representatives.

5. Since the interview referred to took place, signs have been multiplying that the question of new political dispositions in the Middle East has been occupying the attention of important British circles following the termination of the Syrian campaign. There is in our considered judgment reason to believe that the possibility of effecting a political reorganization in the Middle East is being considered in British official quarters. This has given rise to a certain apprehension lest under the pressure of war and of military developments in that region, steps may be taken or commitments made which involve the status of Palestine and of the Jewish National Home in a manner and direction we can not foresee or judge at this distance. Such steps or commitments, if made either publicly or privately, may conceivably lead to the result that the Mandate for Palestine would be materially affected at a time when neither the League of Nations nor its permanent Mandates Commission are in a position to function. A further consequence would be that such international settlement as may be expected to take place at the end of the war may be prejudged by such commitments or by the creation of accomplished facts.

4. We would therefore respectfully suggest that it would be most helpful if the American Government would elicit from the British Government authentic information on this subject as well as an assurance that it does not intend to carry on negotiations or make commitments involving a change in the legal and political status of Palestine or a derogation of the position of the Jewish National Home, whether by promoting a union between Palestine and other territories, or otherwise; and that no steps will be taken without previous consultation with the government of the United States.

We wish to record our gratitude to you for so kindly offering to act promptly in this matter, and to express the hope that we may be informed of the result in due course.