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State Department, 1943.

CONFIDENTIAL

Report of Conversation with Mr. Adolph Berle, Assistant
Secretary of State, Department of State.
Washington, D. C. September 16, 1943

Present: Mr. Berle, Dr. Nahum Goldmann

Mr. Berle started by saying that he had read Dr. Goldmann's address to the American Jewish Conference twice, and that it presented the Zionist case in a most convincing way. However, he said, that Dr. Goldmann would appreciate the difference between a good case from a platform and the problem of those who had to implement it.

Dr. Goldmann replied that he fully understood this difference and had spent the past ten years of his life trying to reduce the difference between Zionist plans and the facts which were created by the British Government.

Mr. Berle asked for details on the composition and character of the American Jewish Conference.

Dr. Goldmann stressed the point about Zionists who want a Jewish Commonwealth being considered extremists, unless the totality of American Jewry can be regarded as extremists, and underlined the fact that in a democratic country like America the fact that millions of its citizens are behind a program must be a factor which carries great weight.

Mr. Berle said that he and his colleagues in the State Department dealing with such matters are in a difficult position. Jewish public opinion is so touchy and sensitive that whenever anyone in the State Department expresses a varying point of view, or points out some of the difficulties, Jewish public opinion is aroused and the person involved is immediately attacked as an anti-Semite. No one wants to be put in such a position, and the point will be reached where no one will dare to touch such problems, fearing such attacks.

Dr. Goldmann said that whenever such a point would be reached, he would be ready to recommend a few courageous Jews ready to step in and deal with the problems.

To this Mr. Berle replied: "That is not exactly the idea." He made the point again, to which Dr. Goldmann replied: The complaint, if it was one, was not justified. In all the criticisms levelled against the State Department, its attitude on Palestine played a very minor role. It was criticized for what liberals considered a reactionary policy in North Africa, the abrogation of the Cremieux laws, etc., but the question of Palestine was a very minor part of these criticisms.

Mr. Berle said he did not refer specifically to the Palestine issue, but to the attitude of Jewish public opinion generally concerning Jewish problems. He pleaded for a more objective attitude on the part of Jews, who must realize the difficulties of the personnel in the State Department in trying to shape their policies.

Dr. Goldmann then asked whether he might be informed of the result of the mission of Col. Hoskins. The press had reported his return and his report had surely been handed in. Dr. Goldmann also said that Mr. Welles had promised to let the Zionists know the reply of Ibn Saud; Dr. Weizmann had discussed this in his talk with the President and the representatives of the Jewish Agency should certainly be kept informed.

Mr. Berle said that, naturally, the Agency representatives would have to be informed, but as this was a matter of great importance and delicacy, he felt that the Secretary of State should discuss it with Dr. Goldmann. He urged Dr. Goldmann to try to get in touch with Mr. Hull immediately. He asked him not to go with a delegation. The matter had been discussed with Dr. Weizmann and Dr. Goldmann as representatives of the Jewish Agency and the State Department would like to continue on this basis. He advised Dr. Goldmann to get in touch with Mr. Gray, one of the secretaries of Secretary Hull and find out whether the Secretary would see him, or authorize one of the officials of the State Department to discuss the matter with Dr. Goldmann. He, himself, did not feel free to discuss it unless authorized to do so.

Speaking of Ibn Saud, Mr. Berle said that when Rommel was in El-Alamein, and there was the danger that the Germans would break through the Suez Canal to Palestine, the State Department was very much concerned and considered ways of evacuating Jews. At that time the State Department got in touch with Ibn Saud and asked whether he would receive as many Jews from Palestine as could be evacuated, into Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia appeared to be the safest place, because the Germans might have broken through to Iraq at the Caucasus. Ibn Saud declared his willingness to receive as many as could be evacuated on condition that the Allies supply the necessary food for them. He based his willingness to receive them on the ground that it was his duty as a Moslem to save people who believe in one God, and said they would be treated as pilgrims who had come to a holy country.

Dr. Goldmann told Mr. Berle that he intended to go to Palestine; that the Executive had been urging him to come for months and that it was important for the Zionist work here to have a direct report on the situation in Palestine.

Mr. Berle said he thought Dr. Goldmann's trip would be most useful and the State Department would be interested in having a report from him on the situation which they regard as tense, and which is a cause of concern. He said that they would welcome having Dr. Goldmann's opinion after having been there and that he would facilitate his flying to Palestine. He said that it would take some time to arrange if Dr. Goldmann wanted to go directly from hereto North Africa, because there is a long list of staff officers and supplies awaiting transportation; however, he asked whether Dr. Goldmann could not arrange that Dr. Weizmann secure priorities from London, as he could easily arrange the trip from here to London.

Dr. Goldmann said he would cable to Dr. Weizmann and find out what the likelihood was of securing a priority for Palestine from London. Mr. Berle promised he would do his best to be helpful.

After the conversation, Dr. Goldmann got in touch with Mr. Grey who could not speak with Mr. Hull because he was at the White House. The next morning Mr. Grey informed Dr. Goldmann that Mr. Hull was not yet ready to discuss the Hoskins report with him, as it was now being studied.

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Washington, D. C.
September 23, 1943

AHS File

Interview with Mr. Wallace Murray - State Department
Washington, D.C. - Sept. 23, 1943

Present: Mr. Murray, Mr. Paul Alling, Dr. Nahum Goldmann

The discussion opened with the impending visit of the son of Ibn Saud; two of his sons are coming.

Mr. Murray said that Congressman Bloom had informed him of his conversation with Dr. Goldmann. Mr. Murray said he took it for granted that the Jews would not attack a person who is coming here as a guest of the President.

Dr. Goldmann said he agreed, but that the Jews naturally assumed that the State Department would prevent these guests from using their visit as an opportunity for making a statement such as had appeared in "Life".

Mr. Murray said he thought this request was justified and that the State Department would have to see to it that nothing be done to provoke controversies.

Dr. Goldmann said that the official Zionist movement would make no attacks and that he would do his best to influence the Jewish and Yiddish press to refrain from them. He also warned Mr. Murray that the official Zionist movement could not be held responsible for whatever the Jewish Army Committee might do. He had asked Congressman Bloom to see Senator Johnson and request him to try to control the activities of that group.

Mr. Murray asked various questions concerning the Army Committee. He said that everyone thought the Zionists were behind them and they had never made it sufficiently clear that they were not.

Dr. Goldmann said that statements had been issued in the Zionist and Jewish press, but that Mr. Murray could not expect the official Zionist movement to publish ads in the Times, stating its disaffiliation.

Mr. Murray then asked a number of questions concerning the position of Ben Gurion, the composition of the Executive and the Agency and wanted to know the reason for the conflict between Ben Gurion and Dr. Weizmann.

Dr. Goldmann said that the conflict had now lost its character and if there was any difference of opinion, it was because Ben Gurion was too pro-American.

Mr. Murray laughed and asked what that meant.

Dr. Goldmann said that at a certain moment, Ben Gurion, for understandable reasons, had lost his hope in England and thought the solution would come through American intervention, whereas Dr. Weizmann and others felt that we had to rely on Great Britain as much as on America.

Mr. Murray said: "I assure you that is the only right policy." America cannot be expected to embarrass Great Britain, but, if given a free hand by Congress, America may assume joint responsibility with Great Britain in the Near East and other places.

Dr. Goldmann explained that the conflict was a different opinion on tactics as very often happens, and as he read, has often happened even in the State Department. But, fundamentally both Mr. Ben Gurion and Dr. Weizmann are united on the Biltmore program.

Dr. Goldmann then raised the question of Col. Hoskins' visit to Ibn Saud and the prospect of conversations between the Zionists and Ibn Saud.

Mr. Murray said that Col. Hoskins had just returned, but that he has to make his first report to the President, as he was sent as an emissary. This report is to be made some time next week. After Col. Hoskins has reported to the President, the State Department will study the report and get in touch with the Zionists to consider the situation.

Dr. Goldmann told Mr. Murray that he intended to go to Palestine and would like the Near East Division to recommend that the necessary facilities be granted.

Mr. Murray said he would be glad to be of help.

Again and again during the conversation, Mr. Murray stressed the point that Zionists should not adopt tactics and methods of publicity which would antagonize people who want to be friendly. In this connection, he mentioned Emanuel Celler and others. He expressed his appreciation of Dr. Goldmann's attitude concerning the visit of Ibn Saud's sons and his cooperation in controlling Jewish public opinion and the Jewish press.

Mr. Murray said he hoped to see Dr. Goldmann soon again and asked him repeatedly to keep in closer touch with him.

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Washington, D.C.
September 27, 1943

CONFIDENTIAL Minute of Conversation with Mr. Loy Henderson
U. S. Minister to Iraq. State Department
Washington, D. C. September 23, 1943

Present: Mr. Henderson, Dr. Nahum Goldmann

The first part of the conversation concerned Russian Jewish problems, the visit of the two Russian Jewish delegates to this country, etc. (Mr. Henderson, before his appointment as Minister to Iraq, had been the head of the Russian Division of the State Department). He said he thought the two delegates from Russia had behaved with much tact and caution and that their visit had been very successful.

Dr. Goldmann then discussed the Palestine problem. Mr. Henderson said he would leave for Iraq in about three weeks, going first to London and from there to Iraq. He referred to the first conversation he had had with Dr. Goldmann and Mr. Szold about Palestine and said he would be pleased if he could pave the way for an understanding between the Arabs and the Jews by his work in Bagdad. He believed that America could play a big role in this respect, since it had the confidence of the Arabs and no direct interest in the Middle East. He said he was aware of the moral value of Zionist demands and hoped that some way would be found to reach an understanding with the Arabs.

Mr. Henderson said he knew that Nuri Pasha wanted to become the leader of the Arab world, but the State Department had a greater regard for Ibn Saud, than for Nuri Pasha, who is really only a politician, more or less dependent on the good-will of the British; he has many competitors and is not trusted by all sections of the Iraqi people.

Mr. Henderson said he wanted to ask Dr. Goldmann three questions and wanted his frank replies. He said he wanted Dr. Goldmann's opinion since he would have to have many talks with Nuri Pasha and others.

1. The eventual transfer of the Arabs to Iraq: Dr. Goldmann said this was not a part of Zionist demands. Zionists were convinced that Palestine had ample room for all those who would want to go there without the necessity for transferring any Arabs. However, if the Arabs wanted, voluntarily, to be transferred, Zionists would be willing to help them in acquiring and developing land in Iraq. It is not a demand of the Zionists, nor is it a necessary condition for the implementation of our program.

Mr. Henderson said he understood the Zionist attitude and thought it wise, but he thought if a transfer could be arranged, it would be most helpful.

Dr. Goldmann said that the Zionists were a democratic people and would not ask any Arab to remain in Palestine if he preferred to go to Iraq, to which Mr. Henderson replied: "That is very generous of you."

2. Do the Zionists insist on the inclusion of Transjordan?

Dr. Goldmann replied that on this question he could speak only personally and off the record without committing anyone. He said he personally believed there was no necessity of raising the issue now. Unfortunately, the number of

Jews who will seek immigration has been greatly reduced through the Nazi policy of extermination and Zionists were convinced that all of them could be absorbed in Palestine, so that the inclusion of Transjordan was not a condition sine qua non for the Zionist program. On the other hand, many leaders of Transjordan wanted Jews to start to colonize there, because Palestine Arabs had become rich and prosperous through Jewish immigration and the Transjordan Arabs had remained poor. The Emir Abdullah had leased part of his land in Transjordan to Jews for colonization purposes, but the British had prevented the Jews from working in Transjordan. Zionists would not, therefore, insist on the inclusion of Transjordan, but would like to have it opened to Jewish colonization, through some arrangement with the Emir Abdullah and there was a good chance that he and others might welcome Jewish immigration there.

3. Arab Federation: Mr. Henderson said that as far as he has studied the situation in the past few weeks, he did not believe that the Arab Federation was practicable-- there were too many difficulties and rivalries-- Ibn Saud regards the Iraqi as faithless and irreligious, the situation in Egypt complicates the issue, etc. etc. However, since the Arabs continue to discuss federation, he would like to know what the Zionists think about it.

Dr. Goldmann said he would again speak personally since the Executive has not taken a definite position. Generally, however, Zionists regard the question of federation as an Arab business-- if the Arabs want to unite and federate it is not their business either to encourage or discourage them. It is a mistake to assume that Zionists are opposed-- their first concern is Palestine and if their position there and the opportunity for expansion is guaranteed, they would not fight a federation if the Arabs succeeded in establishing it, which, Dr. Goldmann said, he doubted they could for the next ten or twenty years at least.

From a certain point of view, Dr. Goldmann continued, Zionists were deeply interested in close economic relations with the Arab world and a customs union of the Arab countries might be very useful, as Zionists must increase the absorptive capacity of Palestine which can be done only by the creation of large Jewish industries, for which a hinterland is necessary. Palestine cannot compete with Manchester or Pittsburgh on the European or American market, but it could become a natural supply center of many goods in the Near East, therefore close cooperation and an economic arrangement with an Arab federation is very important for the future development of Palestine. So long as the future status of Palestine is guaranteed, Zionists would do nothing to prevent, and might even be prepared to establish close economic cooperation between Jewish Palestine and some form of Arab customs union.

Mr. Henderson was very much interested and said that the Zionist approach was a statesmanlike one and that the conversation had helped to give him a background, as far as the Zionist attitude was concerned, for conversations he would have in Bagdad.

Dr. Goldmann repeated a previous invitation to Mr. Henderson to visit Palestine. He said he would in the near future. He said that if Dr. Goldmann were in London at the same time as he was, he should see him there. He said again that he hoped to pave the way for Zionist leaders to be able to discuss their plans with Iraqi leaders and that if he could, he would be glad to welcome Dr. Goldmann in Bagdad.

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Washington, D. C.
September 23, 1943

Duplicate *AHS Fib*
EXERPT FROM REPORT BY MR. JAMES WA Terman WISE CONCERNING
A CONVERSATION WHICH HE HAD WITH MR. BRECKENRIDGE LONG. *re: U.S. policy*

December 3, 1943

"Mr. Long then turned to the Palestine situation and stated that conversations had taken place, the result of which, when they were made known in the next month or so, would be, he felt, extremely gratifying. He called attention to the extension of the date of the White Paper Immigration Certificates, and when I pointed out that this did not go to the heart of the matter which was the question principally, he fully agreed. He added that while America had no legal status in regard to the mandate, not having been a member of the League of Nations, definite representations had been made to the British "on moral grounds", and he felt certain that these representations would not go unheeded. The general implication of his statements was that there would shortly be distinct modification in the attitude of the British Government to the White Paper, although he did not commit himself in any specific statement of this kind."

