



## Abba Hillel Silver Collection Digitization Project

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### **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.

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Reel  
102

Box  
35

Folder  
136

British military installations in Palestine, 1944.



CABLEGRAM

Rec. Jan. 13, 1944

JERUSALEM

JAN 11

NLT ARTHUR LOURIE  
342 MADISON AVE NY

REUTER REPORTS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED CAIRO EGYPTIAN MINISTERIAL  
COMMITTEE FORMED TO DISCUSS WITH BRITISH AMERICAN AUTHORITIES  
POST-WAR PURCHASE EIGHTH ARMY INSTALLATIONS BY EGYPTIAN GOVERN-  
MENT STOP HAVE DISCUSSED MATTER WITH ROBERT SZOLD NEWYORK  
PLEASE APPLY PROPER AUTHORITIES ASSURE FACILITIES FOR OUR  
PURCHASING SCHEME STOP MATERIALS BADLY NEEDED

WRHS



ELEZER KAPLAN

(MW 1/13/44)

*[Handwritten signature]*



M E M O R A N D U M

January 19th, 1944.

TO: DR. ABBA HILLEL SILVER

FROM: MAURICE M. BOUKSTEIN

Re: Conversation with Dean James Landis

By appointment I called on Dean Landis at his office in the State Department, Washington, D. C. on Friday, January 14th, 1944 at 2:30 P.M.

I opened the conversation by referring to the Conference which we had in August just prior to Dean Landis' departure for the Near East, and told him that we were now very eager to know whether he has looked into the problem of utilizing the industrial and human resources of Palestine to the fullest possible extent in connection with the war effort and also in postwar reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Dean Landis replied that unfortunately he had been unable to be in Palestine and did not, therefore, have the opportunity to go into these matters or to see any of the persons we suggested to him in order that he may obtain independent, reliable information. He stated that he saw Mr. Szold as soon as the latter arrived in Cairo on his way to Palestine and had hoped to see him again in Palestine.

It was reported to Dean Landis in Cairo that as a result of the reduction of war work in Palestine there has already occurred some unemployment; that inflation in Palestine is very bad, with the result that the cost of industrial production has become prohibitive; that it appeared that inflation in Palestine is worse than in other countries in the Near East; that the prohibitive cost of production in Palestine makes doubtful the future of Palestine as an industrial country. I stated that Jewish enterprise in Palestine never was planned on the basis of cheap labor, that the cost of labor was bound to be higher than in surrounding countries due to the emphasis on the higher standard of living, but that nevertheless, in spite of this and other obstacles, Palestine's pre-war experience established the capacity of the country to manufacture successfully for itself and for the neighboring countries.

I told him that we have received no information about unemployment in Palestine, but that on the contrary, the complaint has been that there is a shortage of labor.

Dean Landis said that while in the Near East, he was mostly concerned with procedural and administrative questions, and mentioned specifically the difficult problems he has had to deal with in connection with the flow of supplies to Persia and the general administration of the Middle East Supply Center. He touched upon the difficult transportation problems in the Near East, but pointed out that in this respect Palestine is the only country in the Near East that successfully



handles its own transportation.

Dean Landis stated that there has begun shipment of citrus fruit from Palestine to the United Kingdom. I asked him whether the shipments were substantial or merely nominal. He replied that the extent of the shipments will depend upon the attitude of the growers who, according to his information, were not behaving well by demanding excessive prices for their fruit, and added jokingly that they are behaving as badly as the California growers. I replied that he must be aware of the terrible hardships that the growers had undergone in recent years and that they were not too well treated by the Government, and, therefore, had to look out for themselves; that before the war the growers did not control the shipment of their fruit and that as a result they were at the mercy of the owners of the steamship companies (it should be remembered that Dean Landis was merely reiterating information given to him in Cairo, and, therefore, what he said reflects the atmosphere and the attitude of British and American officials there).

I said that complaints had been received from Palestine about inadequate allocations of certain critical materials and mechanical supplies, particularly machinery, trucks and automotive parts, and I asked whether he knew the situation in this regard. Dean Landis replied that on the whole he thought that the civil economy of Palestine was getting a "good break" in allocations and particularly in automotive items compared with other Near Eastern countries. He also said that the Middle East as a whole obtained better than a fair share of supplies if the problem is considered on a local basis. However, he suggested that with respect to specific problems the matter should be taken up with Mr. Fred M. Winant, who is now in Washington (Fred Winant represented the United States on the Middle East Supply Center; he is the brother of John G. Winant, United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James).

I inquired whether any disposition was being planned of the military installations in Palestine, stating that our people in Palestine would be very interested in acquiring these installations. Dean Landis replied that this problem is being worked out between the British and American authorities on the spot. Unlike Egypt, where the installations of the British Eighth Army constitute a purely British problem, in Palestine the matter is in charge of American, as well as British authorities. As I was not in possession of adequate information, I did not pursue this matter any further. Dean Landis made no specific suggestion as to what our people in Palestine should do about this matter.

I asked Dean Landis whether he could tell me what reaction he got in Cairo with respect to the attitude of the British officials on the subject of Palestine. He replied that in his opinion there is no definite British "line" on the subject; that, in fact, there are at least three actions. First, that of the old bureaucracy, whose opinions are set and whose prejudices cannot be changed; secondly, the new bureaucracy which intends to stay there, which is quite opportunistic; and, thirdly, the reaction of temporary war officials who hope to return to their civilian work as soon after the war as



possible. This latter group is by far the most intelligent and probably the most fair. He did not indicate specifically the reaction of any one of these groups, but merely stated that there is no set British "Line".

I asked him whether he was in Cairo at the time of the Conference and he replied that he was. I then asked whether he had heard about an informal, off-the-record statement made by Mr. Churchill to a number of correspondents. He replied that he had not heard anything about it, adding that he is surprised that the contents of such a statement did not "seep through". Cairo is full of "buzzings" of all sorts, he said, and it is often difficult to distinguish fact from rumor.

I asked him whether he was planning to be in Palestine shortly. He said that he is probably returning to the Near East within the next week or ten days and said that he was planning to go to Palestine as soon as he could and would undoubtedly communicate with all or at least some of the persons that we suggested to him (Kaplan, Shertok, Ben-Gurion, Hoofien). I told him that according to our latest information, every effort is being made in Palestine to gear up for immediate post-war work and that every preparation within their means is being made to provide employment for as large a number of immigrants as possible, and I suggested to him to look personally into this matter when he is in Palestine, which he promised to do.

I informed Dean Landis that Mr. Szold may be back within the next few days and he requested that Mr. Szold should communicate with him as soon as he returns because he would like to see Mr. Szold before going back to the Near East.

M. M. B.