



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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Welles, Sumner, 1944.

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MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

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THE HONORABLE SUMNER WELLES

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BY THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR ZIONIST AFFAIRS

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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.

3. 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.

