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

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Hebrew Committee of National Liberation, 1945.

CONFIDENTIAL

HEBREW COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL LIBERATION

April 2, 1945

Dr. Chaim Weizmann,  
President of the Jewish Agency for Palestine,  
77 Great Russel Street,  
London, W.1,  
England.

My dear Dr. Weizmann:

This letter, and the proposals it contains, are the result of a very exhaustive analysis of the situation and I wish to assure you that in this analysis, as well as in the preparation of our proposals, we have striven to the utmost of our ability to be impartial and not let prejudice and grievances becloud the issues or affect our thinking.

Everywhere - amongst all shades of Jewish opinion in this country, in England and even in Palestine - there is an accepted tendency to see the national disaster that has befallen our people in Europe as just one more episode in the long chain of sad episodes with which our history is studded. But it is an inescapable fact that Germany has managed to deal us a blow on a scale which surpasses anything we have endured in the past. It is an inescapable fact that the decimation of the Jewish population of Europe is not only a multiplication of several million personal tragedies; it has completely altered the position of our people in the world and it has completely altered the course of our future national existence in Palestine.

Since this is true, all the plans that were formulated prior to this national disaster, based on past experience when there were some eight million Jews living in Europe, must be altered in some way. In fact, the changes are so basic that it is clear that new plans and new formulas must be found if we are to recuperate from the mortal wounds which have been inflicted upon us.

True, there has indeed been a great intensification of Zionist activity. The Jewish National Fund and the other funds have nearly doubled their incomes. But not therein lies the solution of the present problem. For it is a fact



that the Jewish National Fund, after forty years of activity, owns only some three percent of the soil of Palestine, and it is still a fact that our population in Palestine, in twenty-five years of the most arduous and practically miraculous efforts, increased by some 500,000 people which, at best, is only about fifteen percent of the number of lives we have lost in the past few years.

And then there is also a broader question. What Germany has already done to us will indeed remain as the blackest and most barbarous crime any nation has ever committed. But it would be self-delusion to ignore the fact that at the same time it has affected our status throughout the world. All propaganda notwithstanding, the Germans did not dare do in any consequential numbers to other people what they have done to us. When they speak of "Russians," "Poles," "Greeks," and "Yugoslavs" who have been exterminated in human death factories, it is but pretense. The world knows that overwhelmingly they were Russian-Jews, Polish-Jews, Greek-Jews and Yugoslav-Jews who were exterminated. And the world was slow in either feeling or expressing a sense of shock at what was happening to us. The facts are that, even while the war against these same cannibalistic Germans is going on, Anti-Semitism is once again on the march, not only in countries like Rumania, but even in Holland, France, England and even the United States. "Kill all the Jews" has remained the slogan, even after Oswiecim and Treblinka.

To proceed in the face of such facts with the same methods and in the same tempo as in the past, to our mind, means to proceed to utter obliteration and destruction. Not only shall we never have Palestine, but even the fate of the Jews in the big, old democracies is bound to deteriorate and ultimately to reach a disastrous state. The key to the situation, however, still remains an adequate solution of the problem of the Jews in Europe, a problem which certainly cannot be solved without a swift solution of the Palestinian problem.

Every surviving Jew in Europe is sick to his soul from what he has had to endure. He has learned his lesson and is eager to proceed to Palestine the day he is liberated from the Nazis. But already months have passed since more than half a million such Jews have been prevented from going to Palestine; have been forced to remain where they are and seek some means of livelihood and existence. These are tired and worn-out people. If they are forced to make compromises and adjustments and accept again an inferior kind of life - but one which is a great relief compared with life under the Germans - they will accept it. At least, large numbers of them will. They are not better than any other nation and the majority of most nations, whether they be American, Irish, Polish or Russian, has always been willing and content to live in conditions of hardship and subjugation. (Revolution in all these countries was accomplished by a very small minority.)



The Jews of Europe today, however, still hope that the reason they cannot go to Palestine is because the war is not yet over and that as soon as it is over they will be able to proceed. Should, however, a situation develop where for six months or a year after the termination of hostilities in Europe immigration to Palestine is still on a scale of 1,000 or 2,000 a month, a situation is bound to arise in which the number of people who will be willing to go to Palestine will become pitifully small and the future of Palestine thus sealed.

Our adversaries are aware of this and it is to that end that their policy is designed. Your compatriot and co-religionist, General Sir Edward Spears, was gleefully saying in London only recently that the Palestine problem was "solved" since after the war there will be no Jews left in Europe who will want to go there.

The objective, therefore, must be to make it possible to transfer to Palestine some 500,000 Jews in the first six months of the transition period that will follow cessation of hostilities in Europe and to plan the absorption of another million in the year that will follow. Only a reasonable approximation of this goal can save us and put us on the road to recovery from the national disaster which has befallen us. All the various palliatives that are being suggested can breed only disaster.

In order to fight them and in order to make it absolutely clear to the Mandatory Government, as well as to the whole world, that we intend to exercise our international right to go to Palestine and live there, a policy must be adopted and publicly proclaimed to that effect, and plans ought to be made and launched to commence the actual transfer of large numbers of the surviving Jews of Europe into Palestine. It was being done on a considerable scale in 1937-38-39 and even during part of 1940; it can be done on a much larger scale now, British opposition notwithstanding; only that now it can and should be done openly with the assistance of the friendly governments of the United Nations, which did not recognize the Chamberlain White Paper policy and which are on record as opposing its provisions. Most important amongst those, of course, is the Government of the United States.

The Hebrew Committee of National Liberation has devised such a policy and publicly proclaimed it. It is also engaged in the execution of plans to implement it. I am sending you under separate cover the Statement of Policy which was published, together with the texts of communications from us to the Mandatory for Palestine, on the subject of the rescue of the Jews of Europe and their admittance into Palestine.



Another very crucial set of problems for which we believe a solution is required is (1) the question of the status in the world of those Jews who are citizens of free countries and who do not desire to move to Palestine; and (2) the general question of the relations between the Jewish religion and the proposed "Jewish Commonwealth".

When you speak of a Jewish Commonwealth, are you proposing the establishment of a theocratic state? Yet what else can it mean?

It is impossible to deny that we Jews are primarily a religion; at any rate, there exists a Jewish religion to which millions of people the world over actually adhere. The term "Jewish Commonwealth" therefore inevitably denotes the suggestion of a theocratic state, precisely such as would be denoted by the term "Catholic Commonwealth".

Of course, historically speaking, we Jews are descendants of the ancient Hebrew nation whose national territory was Palestine, and there are still many people of Hebrew descent in the world, particularly in Eastern Europe, who are actually members of that ancient and unrecognized Hebrew nation which never ceased to exist, though in exile for 1800 years. They lived through the centuries in exile - in "Galuth". Today they are referred to as "stateless Jews," or as members of a Jewish national minority, which comprises both the Jewish religion and Jewish nationality, and which was recognized under the terms of the Versailles Treaty in some Eastern European states, such as Czechoslovakia, Poland, Rumania, etc.

This status, however, is in sharp contradiction to the status of Jews in the western democracies such as France, and England, and particularly to their status in the United States where the Jews are solely a religious, cultural community on an equal footing with Catholics and Protestants, enjoying an absolutely full equality under the law and legally undistinguishable from any other Americans.

When Zionism was formed as a political movement, it meant the actual moving of all Jews who believed in Zionism from Czarist Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where the movement was formed, into Palestine. Today the Zionist Organization of America and the Zionist Organization of Great Britain are a direct continuation of that same movement and adhere to the same principles. Yet not even a fraction of the Zionists in the United States are actually planning to leave their country and move to Palestine. Zionism today has become, to millions of Americans, both Jews and Christians, a confusing mixture of a national, a religious and a spiritual movement.



I beg to stress again that this letter is not written in any spirit of reproach or criticism but rather with a deep-rooted desire to be of service in an hour of desperate need of the tormented Hebrews in Europe. We say, therefore, that it is impossible and unnecessary to maintain in 1945 in the United States the same principles of organization and objectives of a movement which was organized in 1886 in Czarist Russia. The world has changed greatly during these years, but there were no changes made in the structure of Jewish life in the world.

One other reason, and a very fundamental one, for the basic need for a radical change is the fact that the tireless efforts of Zionists all these years have truly brought them triumph. They have attained the major objective of their aim: the re-establishment of Hebrew national life in Palestine. This is no longer a proposal, a plan, that has to be attained. It is an accomplished fact. There is a young nation, active and alive, living on its soil in Palestine, only that nation does not exercise self-determination; it is not free; but neither are many other nations in the world today, small or large.

But this does not contradict - indeed, it augments - our basic thesis that, with the existence of a Hebrew nation in Palestine and with the existence of hundreds of thousands of Hebrews in Europe - people who have the right and a desire to rejoin their nation - the problem is no longer one of laboring towards such a goal as: "There ought to be established a national home for the Jewish people."

The goal today is to win recognition for the existing Hebrew nation amongst the nations of the world, to achieve the right of self-determination for every Hebrew in Europe whether still under Germany's yoke or in liberated territories, or whether prevented by the Mandatory for Palestine from proceeding home.

As a result of changed conditions, an entirely new structure has come into being, and Jewish life the world over must adjust itself to, and benefit from, this change.

The time has come to make clear - both for the survival of the Hebrews of Europe and the best interests of the Jews of the United States - the fundamental difference that exists between a "Hebrew" and a "Jew," in terms of the political realities of the world.

It is the difference between a nationality and a religion.

There are 700,000 Hebrews already living in Palestine. Hundreds of thousands of the surviving Jews of Europe are also Hebrews: they are those Jews who are not in Palestine today only because they have been physically prevented from going there. They have given up, or are all ready to give up, immediately,



their German, Hungarian, Rumanian, etc., citizenship. Because of their torturous predicament and in order to enable them to reach Palestine, they should be regarded as Hebrews, that is, as nationals of Palestine, even though they have not yet arrived there.

It is obvious that this is not the case with the 5,000,000 Jewish citizens of the United States. They are Americans and wish to remain Americans. They are not now Hebrews but are Americans of Hebrew ancestry. Like all other Americans, they have a national extraction (Hebrew) quite apart from and in addition to their religious affiliation, which is Jewish. Thus, I, who sign this letter, am a Hebrew who practices the Jewish religion, while Rabbi Wise is an American who practices the Jewish religion. Our religion is the same. Our nationality is different. This distinction between religion and nationality is more familiar, but not more significant, in relation to Catholicism. There are American Catholics, Spanish Catholics, English Catholics. There is no confusion there between religion on the one hand, and nationality on the other.

Yet it is precisely the widespread confusion which does exist about the nation of Hebrews and the religion of Jews which blocks effective solutions of our problem. Without such confusion, millions of American citizens of Hebrew descent could begin to live in full harmony and integration with the millions of other Americans who are also conscious and proud of the nations from which they hail.

In order to be able best to realize our platform and proposals, let us imagine that your proposed "Jewish Commonwealth" has been established. A number of questions will demand answers. These questions will include the following:

1. Does every Jew in the world automatically become a citizen of the Jewish Commonwealth? And if not, which Jews do and which do not?

2. What would be the status of Moslems and Christians who will reside in the "Jewish Commonwealth," and who might wish to enter that country? Would their nationality be "Jewish"?

3. Who would be the diplomatic representatives of the Jewish Commonwealth? Today Palestine is represented by the World Zionist Organization. Rabbi Wise is at present its leading representative here in the United States. Will he therefore be appointed the Jewish Commonwealth Minister to the United States, or will some other arrangement have to be made since he is an American citizen?



4. What will become of the Jewish Agency which was intended to represent "the interests of the Jews of the world" in Palestine? The proclamation of the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth will not eliminate the interests of the Jews of the world in Palestine. Does this mean that the Jewish Agency will proceed to negotiate with the Government of the Jewish Commonwealth on behalf of the Jews of the world? Or here again, will some other arrangements have to be made and the Jewish Agency undergo some changes?

5. What will become of the World Zionist Organization? Will it continue to exist as a sectarian international Jewish organization, or will the fact of the establishment of the Jewish Commonwealth call for some changes in its structure?

6. Finally, what will become of the World Jewish Congress? Will this too continue its existence as an international Jewish body and attempt to speak for the "Jews of the world" on all political questions, or will such representation be no longer needed by the establishment of the Jewish Commonwealth?

We believe that it is the lack of any practical answers to the above questions, as well as to many similar problems, which is the biggest obstacle standing in the way of the rescue of the Hebrews of Europe and their restoration to life, security and freedom in Palestine. We believe that if you attempted to view Jewish life the world over from the point of view of an already existing "Jewish Commonwealth," and if you attempted to face and solve the actual problems of the establishment and integration of such a commonwealth, you would find yourself solving one by one all these problems in a manner similar, if not identical, with the proposals contained in this letter.

But not only is this of urgency and of crucial importance for us Hebrews, it is essentially needed for the well-being of Jews everywhere.

The Zionist leadership owes an explanation to those millions of persons of Hebrew descent who adhere to the Jewish religion and who prefer of free choice to remain nationals of the countries in which they now live. This is of particular importance for the millions of Americans of Hebrew descent who form an integral part of the United States as the people of Dutch, Irish or British descent, and who neither have nor should have any different tie with Palestine than the others have with the countries from which they originally hailed.

Even the Hebrew national disaster in Europe and the millions of casualties it claimed have failed to secure a large-scale intervention on the part of the governments and leaders



of the United Nations. We say that this is not because of the lack of good will on the part of people like Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill, Hull, Stettinius and Eden. We say this is primarily because of the confusion and the imponderable formula of our present existence in the world.

The insistence of Jewish leaders that there exists a universal Jewish people which makes it possible for a "Jew" to be a member of the American, the Russian, the Argentine, or, for that matter, the German nation, and simultaneously also be a member of the "Jewish people" is utterly unrealistic and politically meaningless. It is because the Jewish organizations have asked the aid of the governments of the United Nations for this "Jewish people" - a politically non-existent entity - that nothing on a governmental scale has been undertaken despite millions of casualties and despite a sincere desire on the part of President Roosevelt and many other key officials to help save our people.

For example, the World Jewish Congress wants representation at the San Francisco United Nations Conference. You yourself, Dr. Weizmann, expressed your indignation that the "Jewish people" were not invited to be represented there. What Jewish people, Dr. Weizmann, and who should have been invited? Let us presume that you as President of the Jewish Agency and Dr. Wise as President of the World Jewish Congress are the two spokesmen of the "Jewish people". Do you really believe that the Government of the United States should have addressed a formal diplomatic note to you and to Dr. Wise inviting you to represent the "Jewish people" at an international conference? Could they ignore the fact that you are a British subject and ~~that~~ there is only one way in which they can deal with British subjects and that is through the British Government? Can they ignore the fact that Dr. Wise is their own national and is going to be represented in San Francisco, as all of the other Americans are, by the American delegation which was appointed by the President of the United States? Could they, particularly in the face of a rising tide of anti-Semitism in both countries, give an official recognition to the contention that "the Jews are not actually Americans but are a foreign element which is not quite a part of the country," and that the Jewish citizens of Great Britain are not actually Englishmen; they are foreigners who just happen to reside in Great Britain and are actively and politically a part of a foreign people - the "Jewish people".

Surely you must realize that the conference will be attended by representatives of governments or national authorities, each speaking for a specific national entity and surely you must see the absurdity of requesting that you, an Englishman, and Dr. Wise, an American, be given a seat at the Conference by virtue of your being heads of organizations which are composed not only of citizens of all the different United Nations (who will be represented



by their own governments), but also citizens of neutral countries, such as Sweden, Portugal and Argentina (which should not be represented at all.)

If one wanted to be exact in his logic in this matter one should stress the fact that under the policies of the Jewish organization the same equality of citizenship which the Jews have in the United States and Great Britain should be recognized for the Jews in all countries, including Rumania and Bulgaria and Italy and Germany. You, therefore, actually want to get an invitation of your own Governments to represent in San Francisco a sort of "international" of your own and a very broad-minded one, as it also includes enemy nationals.

Of course you will not be represented at San Francisco and the result will be that neither Palestine with its 700,000 Hebrews nor the surviving Hebrews of Europe will be represented in San Francisco. Just as we do not exist at all on the political map of the world. And the Jewish Organization will go on blaming the outside world while the fault is their own, for it is they who maintain and enforce a set-up which makes it impossible even for our staunchest friends such as President Roosevelt to come to the aid of our people on a truly large governmental scale.

Although most government officials have a very negative reaction to the mere existence of such bodies as the "World Jewish Congress," and the Jewish Agency, they accept the verdict of "the Jews themselves" of what they consider "an internal Jewish affair", and have done nothing about it.

Basically this is the only complaint we can have against our friends in the American Government. They should have taken the initiative and explained the political impossibility of the present set-up and advised a new and workable one. They did not because they think that Jews are capable enough of taking care of their own interests. They believe that the Morgenthau, the Frankfurters and the Rosenmans, while members of the American Government, must have good reasons for permitting a situation to continue in which they are also being politically represented before their own Government as members of another political entity - the "Jewish people" - on questions of foreign and international policy. But if they took the trouble really to look into the problem they would find that there is no reason for this state of affairs other than confusion and inertia.

What we Jews have done up to now has been to ignore all this and simultaneously demand: "Recognize the Jews as one of the United Nations," "Proclaim the Jews prisoners of war," "Give the Jews representation at the Peace Conference," "Establish a Jewish Commonwealth," and at the same time, "The Jews are the



most loyal American citizens," "The Jews are the most loyal British citizens," "The Jews are the most loyal Argentine citizens."

The results were four million dead.

The results were refusal to recognize their murder as a war crime.

The results are refusal by UNRRA to give one loaf of bread to the 400,000 surviving, starving Hebrews in Rumania whom it insists on treating on the same footing as it treats their Rumanian murderers.

The results are an absolute deadlock of the Palestinian problem, and the result, if this is going to remain our "platform", is bound to be a shifting of the conditions which brought about the disaster in Europe to other places where large numbers of Jews are congregated.

One of America's greatest statesmen, a man who still wields through his position, predominant influence on world affairs, once told me in a concise phrase: "The Jews must make up their mind as to what they are." And this, Dr. Weizmann, is the crux of the problem from which there is no escape. If we do not decide what we are we will have a continuance in various forms of the present status of the Jews the world over, hoping to survive until such time as an ideal world will be established when it will make no difference whether one has a country or a nation or a territory or a border or an army; when all human beings can live under God in true freedom and equality. I believe that such a world will eventually come to be, but if we let the Jewish situation remain as it is there is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that hardly a Jew in the world will survive to live in that era.

What is wrong with the present Jewish structure is that the "assimilationists" say that all Jews must assimilate and the "Zionists" say that all Jews are part of a political entity called the "Jewish people," and that they should sooner or later go to Palestine.

What we propose is to abandon this undemocratic and impractical point of view which calls for arbitrary enforcement of a certain status against the will of the individual. Surely, Dr. Weizmann, it is undemocratic when you try to force Mr. Rosenwald, for example, to belong to a nation to which he does not want to belong and whose existence he denies. It is just as wrong on Mr. Rosenwald's part to deny me the right to belong to the Hebrew nation and to insist that I must become a German or a Rumanian or a Santo Domingan.

It can thus be made clear that there is a Hebrew nation to which adhere only those who wish to adhere to it (as is the case



with any other nation? and not a "Jewish nation," which involves every Jew whether he wants it or not.

We want Palestine, therefore, as a free state and not "a Jewish state". It is only then that we can tell the American-Jewish Committee and the American Council for Judaism, and the Anglo-Jewish Association and all the other non and anti-Zionists, that they should have the good grace not to interfere with the affairs of a nation to which they do not belong. And it is only then that the breach will be healed and the question of "the Jewish people not agreeing amongst themselves in regard to Palestine," which has been a major obstacle all these years, will be solved and dropped.

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All that we want, as I very well know all you and your fellow Zionists want, is to bring an end to the scandal of the territorial homelessness of a great and ancient nation. If we do this we must with cold sobriety realize the fact that the Hebrew nation is not composed of all the people in the world who are commonly referred to as Jews, some thirteen or fourteen million of them. That our task is not to solve the "homelessness" of the Morgenthau's or the Lord Samuel's or the Litvinovs. We must realize that we cannot have a free state in Palestine and an international "Jewish people" at the same time. We can have one of the two, and it is up to us to make our choice. Once the independence of Palestine is secure and every Hebrew has been enabled to return there, the present Jewish problem will be transformed into the following:

1. There will be the State of Palestine (or whatever name this self-governed country might call itself): the national territory of the Hebrew nation.

Here will live several million people adhering to the Jewish, Christian, Moslem and a variety of other religions. But just as the nation inhabiting The Netherlands are the Dutch, just as the nation inhabiting Iraq are the Arabs, so the nation inhabiting Palestine is Hebrew. Palestine will have no state religion, just as there is no state religion in the United States, for to have a state religion is against the principle of freedom of religion and surely Palestine ought to have as complete a freedom of religion as is found in the United States.

2. In many countries of the world there will be people professing the Jewish Religion, but these will be purely religious communities.



The Jewish organizations will have to be purely religious or cultural organizations, for there will be no need or justification for political activities on behalf of Jews.

This framework will provide for the Jews of the United States a national designation which they alone lack among all Americans. It is because they lack such a designation that the term "Jew" is extensively used to denote national origin. This is of no little significance, nor is it a play of words. It is of great significance because the term "Jew" meaning an active affiliation with a religion, is today also construed to mean an active affiliation with a foreign nation.

When one says General Knudsen is Danish, one means he was Danish. When one says Justice Frankfurter is Jewish, one means he is Jewish. If one would say Justice Frankfurter is Hebrew, it too would mean he was Hebrew, for his Hebrew affiliation is a matter of the past, and is as possible as Knudsen's Danish affiliation, while his Jewish affiliation is an active, daily state-of-being.

Moreover, as things are today, when the Hebrew nation is so completely interwoven and intermingled with the Jewish Religion, when you say "Recognize the Jewish state," "Give the Jewish people a seat in San Francisco" (for all who say "Jewish people" actually mean "Jewish nation") you could not possibly distinguish whether you speak of David Ben Gurion, Mosche Cohen - a stateless Jew now on the Isle of Mauritius - Henry Morgenthau, or Lord Samuel, for all of them are Jews and all of them are actively practicing those things that make them Jews. I for one could never determine whether Henry Morgenthau is "more" a Jew than Ben Gurion, or vice versa. What difference can there be between them but that Henry Morgenthau is an American and David Ben Gurion is a Hebrew, and so is Mosche Cohen of Mauritius.

When we say "Recognize the Hebrew nation," "Give the Hebrews a seat in San Francisco," it clearly defines whom we speak of, and it is right to ask representation for the Hebrews because they are not otherwise represented.

The term "Hebrew" will become synonymous with "Palestinian" once the country is independent and everybody can be easily made to know that Mr. Morgenthau and Lord Samuel are not Hebrews or Palestinians, though they are Jews.

Of course, we are fully aware of the fact that this distinction cannot be made internationally known over night, but experience since the establishment of the Hebrew Committee in Washington last May has shown how rapidly and easily people understand the basic distinction and adopt it. It should certainly be strictly adhered to in all appeals and approaches to the governments of the United Nations.



We must establish now a national status for those Jews who have not accepted or are not subject to any other national sovereignty. Must the Jews of Palestine remain subjugated and the Jews in Europe remain stateless or accept forced membership in the German and Rumanian nations? Must all these be denied the right of Hebrew nationality because the Jews of America or England, and of many other lands, do not need or wish it? Why are you denying us the right to claim Hebrew nationality now? Must we have no voice of our own and accept the humiliating and disastrous status of "stateless Jews"?

I regret, Dr. Weizmann, that this letter is becoming exceedingly long. I wish I knew how to express my views in a briefer and more concise form. But it is not a memorandum or a political communication or a literary pamphlet that I am writing. I am trying to present to you and to the other leaders of the Zionist movement an analysis of the reaction of the members of the new generation of Palestine, of that Palestine that you helped bring about. Is it so hard to conceive that Palestine has produced a number of young patriots who are sincere and who really want to serve the interests of their people?

Must it be that we are, as your colleagues have been frantically and publicly describing us, a group of selfish and greedy "crooks" who are trading with everything, even with the blood of the millions of our martyrs in Europe? Must it remain a Zionist objective actively to vilify us before the American and British Governments and public opinion, at great expense and use of public funds collected for "the poor Jews of Europe"? Or is it possible that Palestine has brought forth in the past thirty years a new generation of sane, healthy and stalwart Hebrews? You have recently visited Palestine, Dr. Weizmann. You saw them there - husky, Middle-eastern lads, on the farms and in the factories, performing a Herculean task of colonization in circumstances harder than any ever undertaken before anywhere.

That new generation has also produced thousands of youths who are today smarting in British concentration camps, in Palestine, in the jungles, in Eritrea and in the Sudan to which they have been exiled. It has produced Shlomo Ben Joseph, who went singing to the gallows in 1938 though he had harmed no one. It has produced Bet Zuri and Hakim, whose composure, spirit of sacrifice and courage won them admiration, even from their British executioners.

Is it impossible to conceive that that same Hebrew generation has produced a number of men who have dedicated themselves to the service of their people; who, having faith in the inherent decency of mankind, are determined to fight for their people by means of political weapons and with the strength of the support and friendship which our national struggle is bound to receive from the people of the United States?



Must all stalwart and courageous Hebrews stay in Palestine's concentration camps and, driven to desperation, engage in assassinations, or just suffer in silence and leave the representation of our national interests solely in the hands of American and British Zionists? Is it not only logical that a number of them have come to the United States and with the help of the people of this generous and mighty nation are endeavoring to secure recognition of the nascent Hebrew nation and the independence of Palestine?

In the course of our serving the Hebrew people in the past eight years, we have always endeavored to discover the root of the obstacles that all these years have prevented a solution of the age-old problems of our people.

We ourselves spoke of the "Jewish people" and of the "Jewish Army" and of the "Jewish State," even as you and your colleagues speak today. We know now that our very successful and history-making campaign for the creation of the "Jewish Army" in this country has not created such an army, only because a "Jewish Army" is an impossibility; only because people throw into our faces "Catholic Army" and "Protestant Army" and only because if we said "Jewish Army" and meant the Jews of Palestine, the stateless Jews and volunteer Jews from neutral countries, the American Jewish leaders thundered back: "What's wrong with the American Army? Why should my son not go into the American Army but join instead the Jewish Army?"

Had we made it clear that it is a Hebrew Army that we wanted, there might have been an army two hundred thousand strong now marching into the heart of Germany.

But even at this late date you prefer to call that same Hebrew Brigade, that was formed so much as a result of our efforts, "The Jewish Brigade" so that the contribution of well over a million Jews today fighting on fields of battle the world over is confused with the one meagre "Jewish Brigade," sent to the front just when the shooting in Europe is nearly over.

In the existing confusion you insisted on, and got from the Colonial Office, the right of Englishmen of the Jewish Religion, who have been fighting and dying with the British Army since the first day of the war, to transfer to the "Jewish Brigade". You did not press the right of Americans of the Jewish Religion to transfer to the Jewish Brigade only because you knew the Americans would never consent to it. But we receive numerous requests from Zionists in England, who supported our Army Committee, that we campaign in this country to get American Jews to join the "Jewish Brigade".



We did not permit ourselves to be dominated by old notions. We learned from experience. We learned as we worked in a rapidly changing world.

Thus we learned that a mercy organization of such high standing as the International Red Cross was unable to extend any worthwhile assistance to our tormented people in Europe, not because of bad will or lack of sympathy, but because "the International Red Cross works among nations and not among religions."

We learned that United Nations leaders refrained, in international political statements on atrocities and war crimes, from mentioning the word "Jew" because of their anxiety not to segregate their own Jewish citizens. But the Nazis naturally took these omissions as direct evidence of the lack of consideration and interest on the part of the big United Nations powers, and proceeded without fear of reprisal to accelerate their campaign of extermination.

We learned that there existed American civilian organizations for giving assistance to Greeks and Yugoslavs and Poles and every other afflicted nation; that 138,000,000 Americans have been asked to contribute towards their funds, and with each contribution went an expression of sympathy and friendship for these foreign peoples. But the Hebrew nation could not receive anything because you insist on referring to us as Jews and making us subject to, and the exclusive concern of, only six million Americans who are Jews by religion. The other 132,000,000 Americans are not only not asked but are thus being prevented from giving their support to the Hebrew people.

We learned all this and we tried to find an answer. We worked hard. We experimented. We tested it with American Government officials and with officials of many of the United Nations - European and Latin American. They all agreed that our program offers a complete and practical solution; that it offers a basis on which large-scale governmental support might be given to us immediately, while the war lasts and without waiting for the settlement of our deadlock with the British over Palestine and its establishment as an independent state. They all agreed that it is an imperative step you will have to take if you want to bring the present position to an end.

The one obstacle we have not hurdled is the Jewish organizations, which stubbornly refuse even to study our plans and which, while not knowing what we actually stand for, conduct against us a vicious and bigoted campaign by far exceeding anything American anti-Semites have yet dared to say publicly about a group of Jews. Their fury was such that for a long time it was hopeless to expect logical consideration and reaction. We had the strength to resist the temptation to launch a counter-campaign of criticism against the structure and methods and weaknesses, the sins and



crimes committed by this, that or the other organization, and by this, that or the other Jewish leader.

We concentrated on the constructive job of formulating and establishing the foundation for Hebrew national sovereignty, and in this we have been most successful. Not only a large number of leading Americans in Government, in Congress and in public opinion understand and support this Committee and its program, but our point of view has been both formally and informally presented to the numerous statesmen of the United Nations who are assembled in this leading capital of the world.

What might interest you most is the fact that, despite the hysterical mud-slinging which the launching of the Hebrew Committee has provoked from the Jewish organizations and their leaders, tens of thousands of Jews joined the American League for a Free Palestine which fully endorses and supports this Committee. Together with thousands of other American members of the League they now form a formidable force. More and more Jews in this country are thus realizing the true practicability and wisdom of our proposals. And it is this situation, in addition to the ever-present urgency of the critical position of the Hebrew people in Europe, that gives us the hope that the Zionists and other Jewish leaders will now be willing at least to study with a minimum instead of a maximum degree of prejudice and old notions the contents of our analysis and our proposals for a solution.

It is for this reason that I am addressing this voluminous letter to you. I shall take the liberty to send copies of it to the members of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and to a number of Jewish leaders in this country and abroad.

\* \* \* \* \*

We firmly believe the course we advocate to be wise, just and practicable. We believe that unless we, the surviving Hebrews, act with such vigor and determination, we are betraying the millions of our dead who will have died in vain. We believe that there is very little we can expect other nations to do for us if we do not establish ourselves on a normal national basis and thus afford governments friendly to us an opportunity to help us.

Some thirty years ago Great Britain took the initiative to proclaim to the world the renaissance of our nation and its ultimate establishment in its ancient national territory. All the civilized nations of the world have recognized this historic development. Now it is up to us to materialize it, to bring it into being by a fait accompli, and not to plead and beg again for a new declaration and a new statement.



We therefore propose that the Jewish Agency for Palestine, augmented with members of the Vaad Leumi, reconstitute itself and become a representative national authority to speak for the Hebrew Nation temporarily, until such time as, in due democratic process, a more representative provisional government may be established.

(Naturally, as a Hebrew National Authority only Hebrews can be members of the new body. American, British and other nationals cannot belong, for surely they cannot serve as representatives of a Hebrew governmental authority. Eventually you too will agree to this distinction and urge its adoption. We say it must be made now for in the present condition of our nation additional delay is most detrimental.)

The headquarters of the new authority must not be on British or British-dominated territory, since it ought to be free to negotiate with the British Government as a sovereign authority. Washington would be the most appropriate place.

This will entail an open declaration to the world that the Hebrew people of Europe and Palestine have decided to assert their right of self-determination and that the Jewish Agency for Palestine has handed over its prerogatives and assets to the newly-formed Hebrew national authority which will be regarded by the Hebrew people as their provisional government-in-exile.

The Hebrew Committee of National Liberation has already established before the governments of the United Nations the foundation for such action. But, should you feel that the time has not yet come, though we believe it has, for the establishment of a provisional government, we trust you will agree that it is certainly high time for the establishment of a clearly defined, representative Hebrew national authority.

The new Hebrew authority should recognize the British Mandate over Palestine and the prerogatives of the Mandatory Power. It should advocate full cooperation with the British Administration in Palestine. The Hebrew Nation, though not recognized as such, should regard itself and act as a member of the United Nations. It is in this spirit of alliance that the new authority should seek to establish its relationship with the British Government. It should aim at an early agreement regarding Palestine's independence and the conclusion of an appropriate treaty with the British Government.

Because of the recognition which was given to the French and other Committees of National Liberation, the present United Nations organizations are officially constituted by "governments and authorities". There is, therefore, ample precedent for the constitution of and recognition for a Hebrew national authority.



In the course of this war there have existed several committees of national liberation, all of which have been recognized and later established as provisional or permanent governments of their nations. They were the French, the Yugoslav, the Italian, the Polish and the Greek Committees of National Liberation. It has thus become an accepted pattern and there are excellent chances that the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation would receive the same recognition.

While we have embarked upon this course and have made gigantic strides forward, we are well aware of the fact that the opposition to this course of action by the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the other Jewish organizations affiliated with it, as well as the opposition from non and anti-Zionist organizations, is bound to hamper and considerably slow down the attainment of our goal. We feel confident that if a concerted effort were now made in this direction, within but a few short months a Hebrew national authority, and possibly even a Hebrew provisional government, would be recognized by many if not by most nations of the world.

Our nation has been bled white and the time element is of the gravest urgency. The members of the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation are dominated - to the greatest degree a human being is capable of being dominated - solely by the desire to serve the interests of our nation. I wish therefore to inform you most solemnly and publicly that if the essence of our proposal is accepted and a Hebrew national authority is established, we, as patriotic Hebrew nationals, will hasten to recognize the authority of the newly formed government or committee, to which we will gladly transfer the assets, archives and property of the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation.

We believe that unless the Jewish Agency and the bodies associated with it deem it advisable to launch now the establishment of a Hebrew government-in-exile, they should take over the title of Hebrew Committee of National Liberation, since such pattern has been successfully established by other nations. But this decision too we propose to leave to the new authority, in which we shall endeavor to serve in whatever capacity necessary in complete disregard of personal feelings.

The very minimum development which could be initiated by you would be simply to reconstitute the Jewish Agency into a Hebrew Agency, by having its membership composed of Hebrew nationals.

(This should not preclude you personally from retaining your membership or Presidency of the new body, but it would necessitate renouncing your British nationality and accepting Hebrew nationality, which the new agency would have the power to grant. There is a fitting precedent for such procedure: Mr. De Valera, the President of Ireland, was born in the United States and gave up his



American nationality in favor of Irish nationality.)

The new Hebrew authority should immediately undertake a number of governmental tasks on behalf of the Hebrew people. These should include the following:

1. Endeavor to obtain recognition for the Hebrew Nation as a full-fledged member of the United Nations.

2. Endeavor to secure official or de facto representation in the following:

- (a) The United Nations War Crimes Commission in London.
- (b) The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in Washington.
- (c) The Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees in London.

And all other United Nations organizations and councils in which the interests of Hebrew nationals are involved.

3. Endeavor to secure immediate recognition of the new Hebrew authority by a number of European and Latin American countries, and exchange diplomatic representatives with them.

4. Secure Hebrew representation at the Peace Conference and at all other United Nations conferences in which all United Nations members participate.

5. Secure an agreement with the International Committee of the Red Cross to extend its services to Hebrew nationals.

6. Establish formal delegations in the various European capitals in order to represent Hebrew national interests there. These will supervise the extension of UNRRA aid to Hebrews as well as the return of property and the claims for compensation of all Hebrew nationals.

(UNRRA, for example, does not operate in Rumania since that country is an ex-enemy, but there are 40,000 Hebrews in Rumania who, under the UNRRA constitution, are eligible for its help.)

7. Establish a naturalization procedure and issue Hebrew passports to those in war-torn Europe who qualify for them.



(This will forever abolish the shameful and humiliating status of stateless Jews, and every Jew in Europe who does not wish to live amidst, and under the aegis of, the murderers of our nation will be able immediately to renounce his German, Rumanian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, etc., nationality and accept Hebrew nationality, even while he is preparing for his transfer into Palestine.)

This being an emergency naturalization procedure it should be available only to persons claiming it on this basis. American, British and other Jews can become Hebrews only by actually taking up residence in Palestine and complying with the naturalization laws which will be established there.)

8. Plan and immediately commence the actual transfer to Palestine of all holders of Hebrew passports.

(While the new Hebrew authority recognizes the prerogatives of the Mandatory Power in Palestine, it should not recognize the provision that sets illegal restrictions on the entry of Hebrews into Palestine. In this respect the Hebrew authority should publicly and openly endeavor to disregard the British regulation by defiantly bringing shipload upon shipload of Hebrews into the harbors and on to the beaches of Palestine. It is certain that many governments will cooperate with the new Hebrew authority in the execution of this plan.)

9. Begin direct negotiations with the various Arab states and endeavor to arrive at a friendly understanding with them.

10. Seek United Nations arbitration of our conflict with the Mandatory for Palestine, which blocked the entry of Hebrews into Palestine in flagrant violation of its accepted pledges to facilitate and assist such entry.

11. Negotiate with the Mandatory Power for the immediate utilization for settlement of the wastelands of Palestine.

(These comprise some thirty percent of Palestine's total territory. Under the terms of the Mandate they should long ago have been made available for Hebrew colonization. To illustrate the importance of this problem, one must remember that after forty years of arduous efforts the "Jewish National Fund" now owns a little under three percent.)

12. Secure an international loan to finance the tremendous tasks which the provisional government will face.

13. Endeavor to negotiate a lend-lease agreement with the Government of the United States.



14. Establish appropriate companies for the exploitation of the natural resources of our country, particularly its considerable quantities of oil.

(And many other steps that could not have been undertaken till now because of the non-existence of a Hebrew governmental body.)

Once again, Dr. Weizmann, I wish to repeat that the proposals in this letter are proffered solely through the desire to serve, and I pray that you and your colleagues will give them your fullest consideration in the same spirit rather than brush them off or try to interpret what "trick" is hidden therein or what, other than the reasons stated, moved us to bring them before you.

There is one other tendency which your Zionist colleagues in the United States have always had towards us. From the time I first met with Zionist leaders in the United States (in 1941) they have continued to tell us that we are just about at the end of our rope, and that they will see to it that in the "course of the next few weeks" we shall be completely liquidated. I have heard this threat expressed in various forms and through various stages of our work at least a dozen times, but during this time we have developed from a small Zionist-Revisionist faction into the powerful and historically significant movement we represent today.

A short time after the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation was formed last May, several of the Yiddish press jubilantly reported that "The young men from Palestine are packing their suitcases and running away." I am writing this letter to you ten months later from our headquarters in Washington. From my desk I can see the Hebrew flag waving in this street which is today the diplomatic artery of the world. The officials of the various embassies no longer stop to stare at it, for they now know the flag; they know whom it represents, and they have come to accept it.

I am telling you all this because your Zionist colleagues in the United States will probably hasten to tell you that they have managed to liquidate us; that their smear campaign has worked; that their denunciations have been effective, and that all the members of the Hebrew Committee are simultaneously going to be deported from the country, inducted into the United States Army, put in jail, or just die of plain heartbreak, and that our proposals must therefore be taken as a sign of capitulation and as an attempt to secure a dignified way out.

I hope that you will not fall a victim to this baseless sort of wishful thinking, for not in our wildest dreams did we



hope that in but a few short months the Hebrew Committee would make such gigantic strides forward. Viewed against the background of the development of the Zionist organization in this country over a period of close to fifty years, the standing, the importance and the influence that the Hebrew Committee has achieved is practically miraculous.

We have dedicated our lives to the struggle for survival which has been thrust upon the Hebrew nation, and we shall therefore make every sacrifice to assure that never again shall Hebrews die in the manner in which they have died in Europe these past years. For it is not their death but the manner of their dying which is the most shocking.

We are determined to bring to an end the humiliation and disgrace which characterizes the position of "the Jews" today. We are determined to end the confusion and chaos which dominates our position.

The forthcoming United Nations Conference at San Francisco will once again be the scene of scores of American, British and Canadian Jews milling around the lobbies as "representatives of the Jewish people". The following organizations, in addition to your own Jewish Agency, have already announced their intention to send delegations to San Francisco:

The American Jewish Conference, the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the World Jewish Congress, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Zionist Organization of America, the Agudas Israel, the Mizrachi and numerous other organizations and societies.

You, and all these good people, inspired as you are by the best intentions, must understand how futile and ridiculous this all is and how harmful.

Americans, Britons and Canadians, having no right at all to represent a foreign people, can be regarded only as beggars, tolerated as a nuisance, but they have always been excluded from the conference table. This pitiful status can achieve no other results except strengthen the anti-Semitic cry that "the Jews are a foreign body in the American nation." This is one of the many tragic aspects of the abnormal structure the Jewish organizations are maintaining.

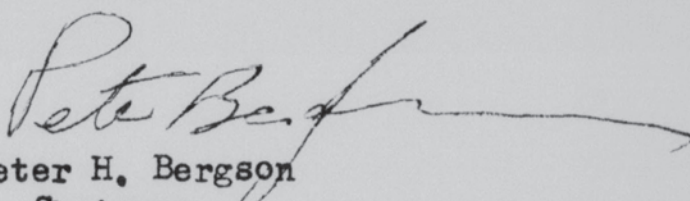
Dr. Weizmann, you and your colleagues must make the choice. Either continue the status quo, which has proved to be disastrous for us Hebrews and most harmful and potentially explosive for Jews everywhere, or recognize the realities of a changing world and accept the program contained in this letter, which provides a basis



for true equality and a free life for every Jew desiring to be an integral part of the particular nation in which he lives and to which he is happy and proud to belong, and a new, dignified and workable structure for the survival and liberation of our great and ancient nation, and its immediate restoration in an independent Palestine.

May God grant you and your colleagues the courage and the wisdom to act with foresight and determination in this hour of destiny.

Faithfully yours,

  
Peter H. Bergson  
Chairman





Press release of A. L.

File

It has been announced in the press that a resolution regarding Palestine sponsored by the self-styled Hebrew Committee of National Liberation is being introduced into Congress. We do not doubt the friendly motives of the honorable members of Congress who have been persuaded to sponsor that resolution. They undoubtedly have been led to believe that in this they are of assistance to the Jewish people. But we must point out with all the vigor at our command that the so-called Hebrew Committee of National Liberation has been repudiated by every responsible Jewish organization in the United States and abroad, including the highest Jewish authority in Palestine itself, the Jewish National Assembly, which is the democratically elected spokesman for the Jews of Palestine. It is a matter of public record that the so-called Hebrew Committee of National Liberation was repudiated by the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the democratically elected spokesman for the Jewish people, Zionist and non-Zionist alike, recognized in this capacity under Article IV of the Mandate for Palestine, confirmed by Great Britain, the United States, and 50 other nations of the world. The "Committee" has also been publicly denounced by the American Jewish Conference, which represents the overwhelming majority of American Jewry; by the American Zionist Emergency Council, which represents all major Zionist bodies in the United States; by the Palestine Labor Federation, and by a host of other representative Jewish bodies.

It should be again pointed out that the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation, headed by Mr. Peter Bergson, represents neither the Jews of Palestine, nor those of Europe, nor those of the United States. In fact, that "Committee" represents no one and is responsible to no one.

As you are no doubt aware, resolutions in support of the Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine were presented in the House and Senate by the majority and minority leaders of both houses. Action on these resolutions had to be deferred at the request of the Administration. We wish to stress most earnestly that any attempt to force action at this time by either the House or Senate on a resolution such as the one sponsored by the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation would, in our considered opinion, constitute a tragic disservice to the Jewish people.