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### **MS-4787: Abba Hillel Silver Papers, 1902-1989.**

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

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Ben-Horin, Eliahu, 1947.



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80-09 35th Avenue  
Jackson Heights

January 2, 1947

Honorable Alf M. Landon  
Topeka  
Kansas

Dear Governor:

I was very glad indeed to receive your telegram, informing me that you would address the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Minneapolis, on January 14th. I appreciate it very much.

As agreed between us, I enclose for your consideration a draft of that part of your address which will be devoted to the Palestine and Jewish problems. As you will note, I tried my best to write it in your spirit. Whether I succeeded, you would best be able to judge. However, you are welcome to take from this draft whatever you deem fit, and discard the rest.

I am sending you the draft in duplicate, and if you would care to send back to me one copy, containing any changes you may wish to make, I would hand it over to the American Christian Palestine Committee. This would enable them to release it for the press in New York immediately after your lecture in Minneapolis.

With my very best regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

EBH:MF  
Encl.

Eliahu Ben-Horin



DRAFT

. . . Let me pass on now to another problem of foreign policy -- a problem which, on the face of it, may seem small and insignificant if taken in the context of the major world issues which we now face. But it is not. It is neither small, nor insignificant. Indeed, it provides as good a probe stone of the wisdom and integrity of our foreign policy as any we could possibly find. I refer to the Palestine problem and the way we are handling the terrible Jewish tragedy in Europe.

About three years ago, I said in a broadcast that the Jewish problem is not Jewish alone; that it is essentially a Christian problem; that it is a matter for our conscience and our responsibility to provide a just, humane and adequate solution for the Jewish problem in Europe and in the world. It is needless to emphasize that what I said then had been confirmed by cruel events which took place since, and by additional suffering which the Jews have undergone in a predominantly Christian world.

However, I fail to detect either plain justice or political horsesense in the Palestinian policy of the present Administration. It is well known that America has been pro-Zionist ever since the days of President Wilson and the Balfour Declaration. Democratic and Republican Presidents, predominantly Democratic and predominantly Republican Congresses, have committed America to the support of Jewish aspirations in Palestine. In fact, President Roosevelt was probably the most outspoken in his public promises to support the creation of a Jewish Palestine. Yet, he was also the President who in secret deals with King Ibn-Saud and others, issued definitely anti-Zionist promises. It was President Roosevelt who inaugurated a policy of public pro-Zionism, secret anti-Zionism, and endless procrastination on the question of Palestine, while thousands of Jewish D.P.'s died of cold, hunger



and pogroms in intensely anti-Semitic Europe. Our State Department remained faithful to this Rooseveltian line of policy.

That this is perversion of justice, decency and fundamental American principles I feel I do not have to prove to any American audience. But what about the wisdom of such a policy?

The arguments which we hear in justification of this policy can be classified in three categories: 1) oil; 2) the possibility of a Pan-Moslem revolt in the Middle East; and 3) the threat of the Arabs inviting Soviet protection in the Middle East if we live up to our pro-Zionist commitments.

As you know, I happen to be an oil producer myself and I, therefore, closely follow developments in the oil industry here, in the Middle East and elsewhere. The truth of the matter is that much more than we need the oil reserves of the Middle East, the Moslem potentates of those countries are totally dependent on our capital, industry, trade, experience, and our political and economic protection. The royalties and various subventions which we pay to the King of Saudi-Arabia and the Sheikh of Bahrein form a major item in their national incomes. The oil which we get out of these countries, we do not need here. We have enough oil of our own and closer to our shores. We may need that oil in case of a new world war, but in time of war not availability of oil counts, but accessibility, and that oil, about <sup>8,000</sup>~~10,000~~ miles away, would be hardly accessible to us.

All this goes to show that the Arab potentates are hardly in a position to threaten us with oil sanctions because of Palestine or because of anything else. There is equally little substance, if at all, in the threat of an Arab revolt in the Middle East. I don't have enough time to go into a detailed analysis of the military strength of the Arab states. Suffice it to say that General D'Arcy, British Commander-in-chief in Palestine, in his



testimony before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, stated that the Jews of Palestine were strong enough militarily to hold Palestine for years, if need be, against a united onslaught of all the Arab countries of the Middle East. If you will remember that there are only six to seven hundred thousand Jews in Palestine, as against about sixteen million Arabs, you will admit that the British General's testimony is both an expression of his high appreciation of Jewish valor and military preparedness, as well as of his utter contempt for the war potential of the Arabs.

As to the repeated Arab threats that they might invite Soviet intervention in the Middle East, it is obviously a scarecrow for little children. The Arab kings and sheikhs may not be very educated people, but that much they know: wherever Soviet Russia comes in, political reaction and social backwardness must go out. The kings and effendis of Arabia would hardly risk losing all their positions of wealth and influence on the altar of their fight against Zionism.

Both the sense of justice and political wisdom demand that our State Department be brought into line with the American people - who have so clearly indicated their attitude on the Palestine question. This should no longer be a partisan issue. The Republican leadership of Congress should be permitted to play a part, jointly with the democratic leadership, in carrying out a more constructive and fair American policy with regard to Jewish aspirations in Palestine.



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80-09 35th Avenue

Jackson Heights

Illinois 7-4695

January 29, 1947

(BBH LETTERHEAD)

Mrs. Anne O'Hare McCormick  
The New York Times  
Times Square  
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. McCormick:

I was very glad to have had the opportunity of talking to you this morning, and I, too, shall be looking forward to further talks with you on the Middle East and Palestine.

As I promised, I enclose a reprint of the Homer Bigart dispatch to the New York Herald Tribune, describing how the British forced a number of Jews to run the gantlet in Tel-Aviv. I also attach a memorandum on the London Conference on Palestine, which is a fairly good analysis of the present situation and what can be expected of the Conference.

I take much pleasure in sending you under separate cover a copy of my book, THE MIDDLE EAST: CROSSROADS OF HISTORY, hoping that you may find it of interest. Though it was written in 1943 when the war was still in full swing, I believe that, in connection with the points you raised during our conversation, you may find the chapter called "The Jewish Spearhead" and the next one on "Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism", pertinent. The first contains material on the real intent of the Balfour Declaration, and the second presents the facts with regard to the threat of Pan-Arabic expansion, Jihad, etc.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

BBH:MF  
Encl.

Eliahu Ben-Horin



MEMORANDUM

To Harry L. Shapiro

Date January 29, 1947

From Elisha Ben-Horin

Talk With Mrs. Anne O'Hare McCormick

Today, I met Mrs. Anne O'Hare McCormick, of the New York Times, for the first time. I wrote to her many months ago, suggesting a talk on Middle Eastern problems. First, she agreed to see me for a quarter of an hour. This I declined, saying that there is little I could tell her or hear from her in 15 minutes. Then, an appointment was fixed in July, 1946, but I left on that day for Europe. Now, finally, our conversation took place. It lasted 45 minutes.

She was very cordial and sympathetic throughout our conversation, which touched on a variety of things, starting with the major problems of the Middle East and ending with the narrower Palestinian picture. I shall not repeat here what I told her (that you know well enough), but she practically agreed with me on every point. Let me just list here some of the points raised in our conversation:

1. That the present conflict in Palestine and over Palestine is purely Jewish-British, with the Arabs hardly appearing in it.
2. That the "Terror" in Palestine is simply inevitable in light of Britain's policy and the Jewish tragedy.
3. That "Terrorists" is a misnomer, for the people concerned are highly idealistic and patriotic.
4. That the original intent of the Balfour Declaration was a Jewish State with a Jewish majority in Palestine, and that nothing that happened since would justify the abolition or unfavorable modification of this pledge.
5. That the Jews do not need British protection in Palestine, but, in the long run, they would need a close association with a great power, and that they would prefer an association with the British Commonwealth of Nations.
6. That partition is not likely to provide a durable and sound solution, but a quick solution is urgently required for the present situation can not last long. (Here, I suggested to her that if Britain were to open the gates of Palestine to Jewish immigration, this would bring about an immediate improvement and provide the breathing space for working out a final solution in a healthier atmosphere.
7. That the Arabs represent no force, either as a national or religious group.

I urged her to write about the London Conference. She said that she just returned from abroad and must orientate herself again. However, I promised to send her some material (which I did - see enclosed copy of my letter), and this may serve as a reminder.

When we parted, she said that she would like to meet me again and continue our talk.



Mr. Harry L. Shapiro

February 3, 1947

Mr. Eliahu Ben-Horin

Christian Science Monitor, Boston

My conference with the editors of the Christian Science Monitor- Mr. Charles Gratke, Foreign Editor, Mr. Donovan Richardson, Chief Editorial Writer, and Mr. Carlyle Morgan, Editorial Writer on Foreign Affairs- lasted for about two hours. The three of them evinced considerable interest in the problem, and it was gratifying for me to note that Mr. Gratke recalled time and again our conversation of one year ago and what I told them on that occasion. He thus provided additional proof in support of what I said at the last meeting of the Emergency Council with regard to the importance of political education.

I first shared with them the impressions I gathered during my recent visit to Palestine, and then our conversation touched on the following points:

1. The resistance in Palestine and what is behind it.
2. Possible solutions, including partition.
3. What is the strength of the Arabs and is there any substance in the threats of an Arab-Soviet alliance.
4. The real intent of the Balfour Declaration and of the Mandate.
5. The American position.
6. The London Conference.

While they were willing to accept my analysis of every point raised, on one particular question I encountered considerable determination on the part of all three. The news from London about Churchill's speech in the House of Commons came over the wires while we were sitting and talking. The three editors found themselves in complete agreement with Churchill's formula of "Fifty-fifty". They said that America is already deeply involved in that area because of the oil interests, etc., and America should accept military co-responsibility with Britain in Palestine. I argued that prior to sending troops to Palestine, America should get an equal share with Britain not only in the liabilities but also in the assets, in the administration and determination of policy. What will be the policy which the U.S. Army in Palestine will be called upon to enforce? Should the U.S.A. send troops to Palestine at the present juncture to help the British enforce the White Paper policy, it would have catastrophic results. In other words, prior to accepting any suggestion of active American co-responsibility in Palestine, the right kind of policy has to be adopted.

Whether I convinced them on this point, I am not sure. At the end, I drew Mr. Richardson's attention to the desirability of their commenting on the London Conference in the right spirit, and I have sent him since a copy of the memorandum and other material. On the whole, I consider it a thoroughly satisfactory conference.



February 4, 1947

Dear Harry:

As you know, Laikin arranged for me appointments with the editors of the local three dailies. These are - and it is good that we have it on record for future occasions - 1. Detroit Times (a Hurst paper); 2. Detroit News (Scribbs-Howard); 3. Detroit Free Press (published by Knight, who has also papers in Dayton, Ohio and Miami, Fla).

A definite appointment was made only with John C. Manning, Editor of the D. Times, whom I have seen already this morning. The others I have to phone and fix the time. I hope to see them both this afternoon, when I may add to this report.

Manning and his assistant spent with me an hour and a half, and when I thanked him before parting for spending so much time with me, he said: "I outsmarted you, because I learned from you a great deal." They were both very friendly and presented me with a barrage of questions, starting with the immediate Palestine situation, anti-Semitism and its causes, why are Jews inclined towards communism, and ending with Britain's general and Palestine policies, Soviet Russia, etc. When, at the end, I expressed my hope that they will comment editorially on the Palestine problem, Manning said: "Indeed, we shall." He is an Irishman and Catholic and does not exactly love the British. We parted friends, with Manning taking my New York address in case he wants some further enlightenment on something that may come up.

LATER

I just came back from my interviews with the other two editors. In correction of what I said above, The Detroit News is not a Scribbs-Howard paper, but belongs independently to one of the Scribbs'. Its co-editor, Gertner, whom I went to see, knows very little about the whole business. He immediately invited Philip A. Adler, their columnist who writes a great deal about Palestine, who is a Jew and a Zionist. I sat with the two of them for half an hour and had a thoroughly satisfactory talk. They promised continuous sympathetic coverage of Palestine events. I offered Adler to put him on our mailing list and to forward him a reprint



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of my article "The Cockpit of the Middle East." Kindly ask Shulamith to do both things. Adler impressed me as an intelligent fellow who can be of considerable help. His address:

Philip A. Adler  
The Detroit News  
Detroit, Mich.

The Detroit Free Press, the Knight publication, is the most conservative paper here. I first sat for a little while with the Editor, Dale Stafford, who was sympathetic but obviously uninformed. Then, upon his suggestion, he brought me to their Editorial Writer, Royce Howes. The latter knows more on the subject and is less friendly. In addition, he seems to be frightened by internal Jewish controversy on Palestine, and feels that the less they write on Palestine the safer they are. I argued with him this point too beside the external questions in relation to Palestine. He, too, accepted willingly my suggestion that we send him some literature from time to time. I would suggest that Shulamith send him some stuff on the overwhelming ~~is~~ pro-Zionism of American Jewry; place him on the mailing list of "Palestine"; and send him a copy of my book on the Middle East with a separate letter by my secretary (Mr. B.-H. who is out of town asked me, etc. - hoping that you may find it of interest).

I am leaving tonight for Chicago, and I will give the people there your message regarding the Washington Conference on February 17th.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

EBH

P.S. I am sending a copy of this and future reports to AHS in Cleveland.



February 6, 1947

Dear Harry:

I am through with my work in Chicago, excepting for a meeting of the Emergency Council later in the day, which I am going to attend, and here is my report.

We were wrong in thinking that the invitation sent out by Berman and Silberman, which we saw in New York, was a usual Zionist luncheon. It was an invitation to the press only and to representatives of the Zionist parties. The latter all turned up as did also a few journalists: A.T. Burch, Chief Editorial Writer of the Chicago Daily News as well as a staff reporter of this paper, John McGrath, Assistant City Editor of the Chicago Sun, Meyer Zolotareff of the Chicago Herald American, and Clifton M. Utley, the leading radio commentator of Chicago. The last one, who addressed another luncheon at the same time, came immediately after our luncheon and I had an hour's talk with him. At the luncheon itself, I spoke for about an hour and then answered questions. I am not going to repeat here what I said, but my general approach there, as well as in the private talks which I had with several writers today, was that of an expert on the Middle East who feels that the news from Palestine and about Palestine is so confusing as to create bewilderment in many minds, and all I want is to clarify matters for men in my profession and to answer their questions and doubts. I added that we feel certain that there is a terrific amount of good will in America for Jewry and the Zionist cause, but what is lacking is sufficient knowledge of all the intricacies of the involved situation.

This approach goes down extremely well, and if I am asked on whose behalf I am doing it, my answer is that I serve as Adviser on Middle Eastern Affairs to AZEC, and that I am on this tour on behalf of AZEC. I wish to use this opportunity to impress upon you the importance of my having such a "loose academic" status for the effectiveness of my work in this kind of missions. The title given to me in the Annual Report of AZEC, during my absence from the States, namely that of Director of the Dept of Cultural Relations or something of this kind is not good for the purposes of the work I am called upon to do. You know that I am very little concerned about official titles, but titles and names can be helpful or harmful. I prefer the helpful ones. Please make a note of this matter and take it up with HLS at your earliest opportunity.

Both the Daily News and the Sun published stories on my press conference yesterday (clippings enclosed). The Daily News also offered to publish an interview with me next week, when I address the



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Civil Liberties Committee in Chicago (February 11th), but of course the main aim of my visit here was not getting news stories into the press but to secure favorable editorial comment. In this respect, Mr. Burch's presence yesterday was rather important. He is the chief editorial writer of the Daily News and close to its publisher - the same Col. Knight who owns the Free Press in Pittsburgh. We should make a note of that too, and see how we could approach Knight in Akron, Ohio. He is reported to be the real boss over editorial policy and to write himself editorials both on domestic and foreign issues. A.(Tony) Czarnicki, an old Pole and devoted friend of ours with whom I had lunch today and who is on the Daily News for donkey's years might be helpful in this respect.

Today, I had talks with Leon Stolz, the Chief Editorial Writer of the Chicago Tribune, a somewhat anti-Zionist Jew of the happy assimilationist type; Irving Kupcinet, Columnist of the Chicago Daily Times, also a Jew but pro-Zionist who just felt befogged by all that is taking place, and Tony Zarnicki. Burch, Utley and Stolz are the three most important contacts I made from the viewpoint of editorial comment. When Silberman succeeded in getting the appointment with Stolz for me, he felt that this in itself was an achievement. Stolz sat with me for an hour and then I had to rush for my next appointment. He was extremely interested and appreciative of my visit, and I am sure that it will be reflected in his writings. The same applies to Utley.

As you probably realize, things move so swiftly with regard to Palestine that I cannot stick to the original program of my tour. The London Conference is of very little interest today, if of any. Instead therefore, I use the tour to indoctrinate them on the broader issues of the problem. I feel sure that this will meet with HLS' and your approval.

It will be no news for you if I say that all the work of AZEC here is done by Silberman and not by Berman. Silberman is a life wire and a good mixer. I am off tonight for Kansas City, where I shall be staying at the Muehlebach Hotel.

Sincerely,

*E. B. H.*

P.S. Kindly give the enclosed note to SS.



*Kansas City, Mo.*

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

February 8, 1947

Dear Harry:

I arrived in Kansas City yesterday, and the farther I am getting from New York the colder it is: both in weather and in Zionism. You will probably forgive me if I don't report on the weather in detail, although it is damned cold out here, but let me tell you ~~about~~ my impressions and experiences in the Zionist field.

It seems that despite the gravity of our political situation, some of our people find nothing better to do than to sow dissension. Already in Detroit, Laikin told me that he understands that "Silver was not a persona grata in the State Dept" and this must be a great handicap in our political work in the U.S. As prior to that he told me that Chaim Greenberg was in Detroit the day before, it was not difficult to surmise who was the source of this piece of information. What I told Laikin, you can imagine.

However, while in Detroit I saw only Laikin, in Chicago and in Kansas City I participated in meetings of the local Emergency Councils and could learn more about the internal state of affairs and state of minds. You know, of course, about the unholy machinations of the Solomon Goldmans and the Fishers in Chicago. But there, too, I heard the echo of a recent visit by Chaim Greenberg. At the meeting of the Emergency Council, Dr. Pomerantz, the local Mapai leader, reported his private conversations with Greenberg in Chicago, who told him that he was utterly pessimistic with regard to the State Department and the possible results of our efforts there. I took this up in a big way, when I spoke at some length to the Council on my impressions in Palestine and on political work in America (describing the tasks faced by the Agency and AZEC on the N.Y. Washington front and the methods of our work). I started by saying that whatever differences there may exist between the different parties and personalities, in AZEC in N.Y. they all work harmoniously for the good of the cause. This they liked. Then, I went on to describe the abnormalcy of the pre-Congress situation and the working at cross purposes and the neglect of the UN, etc. This they liked less, but they had to take it. Then, I spoke of the State Dept



and gave them my evaluation of the problem, and even Dr. Pomerantz had to agree with me.

Chicago will be fairly well represented in Washington on the 17th, but the ZOA opposition will stay away, except Rabbi Berman. I spent my last evening in Chicago with Silberman and Nathan D. Kaplan, who told me some more of what is going on, but you know all that. By the way, the three of us listened in, in Silberman's car, to the Town Hall Debate. Macdonald was excellent, surprizingly so. There was no sign of his usual mildness and hesitancy, and he certainly did not pull his punches.

When I arrived in Kansas City, I thought that it would be wrong for me to ignore the local leaders only because I had my appointment with Haskell arranged by Landon. I also wanted to be enlightened on the local set up and relations before I went to see Haskell. Mr. Sheskin, the Shairman of the local Council, turned out to be in N.Y., but was expected back yesterday morning. I phoned Mrs Peiser, who was unpleasant and full of complaints. I then phoned Jack Brown, President of the ZOA, who promised to come over and see me. However, Sheskin in the meantime arrived and came to meet me. He turned out to be a very intelligent man with good contacts here and a personal friend of Henry Haskell, Jr. - the son of the Editor of the Kansas City Star and its Chief Editorial Writer. After Sheskin told me that the old man is half blind and takes less and less interest in the paper and that it is the Jr. who counts most in editorial policy, and that the Jr. is decidedly pro-Zionist, I agreed with him that it would be good to make sure that Jr. will sit in on my conference with Sr. Sheskin phoned from my room to Jr., who knew already about my appointment with his father and said that he intended to participate in our talk. Sheskin assured him that this would be worthwhile.

To finish with this part of my report, I had a long and very satisfactory talk yesterday with the two Haskells who were interested in what I had to tell them. It goes without saying that Sheskin's systematic cultivation of Haskell Jr. was a great help. We may confidently expect favorable editorial comment in the Star.

In the evening, Sheskin invited to his home the local Zionist leaders to meet with me. It was semi-official (meeting of the council) and half unofficial. There were three Hadassah



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ladies, including Mrs Newman, the Political Chairman, and others. As I was asked to speak broadly on the situation in Palestine and our work here, I made it clear from the outset that I intend to speak my mind freely, but I will speak on my own responsibility and not on behalf of the Council. We sat talking for several hours until after midnight. Here, I did not find any direct indications of poisonous internal campaigns, but lack of information. The question of the 17th was discussed and they will probably send a delegation, although Sheskin doubts whether he could go. He is by far the best man here - at least of these whom I saw. I will try to introduce Sheskin to Alf Landon, in order to establish a local contact. Senator Kem is today here, and Sheskin may arrange for me to meet him before I leave Kansas City tonight - for Minneapolis.

Best regards,

Cordially,





MEMORANDUM

To Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

Date February 19, 1947

From Eliahu Ben-Horin

If you will recall my memo to Mr. Shapiro on the talk I had with Mrs. Anne O'Hare McCormick, of the New York Times, and Eliahu Epstein's report about his encounter with the same lady, you will probably wonder about the discrepancy between the two conversations. As a matter of fact, I, too, am wondering about it.

In this connection, you may be interested in my enclosed memo to Mr. Lourie and the attached copy of a letter which I received from Mrs. McCormick.

My very best regards.

EBH:MF  
Encl.





MEMORANDUM

To **Mr. Arthur Lourie**

Date **February 19, 1947**

From **Eliahu Ben-Horin**

Thanks for informing me of the conversation which Eliahu Epstein has had with Mrs. Anne O'Hare McCormick. I can't understand it at all. You read my account of the talk I had with her, and I can find no explanation for her acting so differently within a few days. You may be interested in the enclosed copy of a letter which I received from Mrs. McCormick a few days ago. As you will see, although she states nothing with regard to the problems we discussed, the letter itself is extremely kind and friendly. She doesn't have to write this kind of letter to me, if she is strongly opposed to the views I hold. I think you will agree with the logic of this observation.

Best regards.

EBH:MF  
Encl.

WRHS

AMERICAN JEWISH  
ARCHIVES



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THE NEW YORK TIMES

TIMES SQUARE

New York 18

February 12, 1947

Dear Mr. Ben-Horin:

I hoped to be able to read your book before thanking you for your kindness in sending me the inscribed copy. Unfortunately, I have not had time yet, so this is to thank you in advance. I look forward with interest to reading your survey of one of the most important areas in the world.

With thanks and all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Anne O'Hare McCormick

Mr. Elishu Ben-Horin  
80-09 35th Avenue  
Jackson Heights, N. Y.



MEMORANDUM

To Mr. Harry L. Shapiro

Date February 20, 1947

From Elisha Ben-Horin

Leo Sack brought me together with Colonel Louis M. Browne, former Russian correspondent and Middle East advisor of the National City Bank, and at present a Middle East and Russian advisor of the Rockefeller interests. His present official position is that of Executive Officer of the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, which is a formation of the Chase National Bank, namely of the Rockefellers.

Leo Sack, who is friendly with Browne for many years, gave him a copy of my book on the Middle East and suggested to him that it would be of mutual interest if we met. Yesterday we had lunch, and he started by saying that he read my book and found it by far the best and most interesting analysis on the Middle East which he ever read and this was the reason why he complied with Sack's suggestion. We sat for two hours discussing a wide range of problems, with me bringing our talk back to the Middle East, oil and Palestine each time. I must admit that Col. Browne was extremely frank in his utterances. I don't know how much weight should be attached to what he told me, but he certainly seems to be a man with very varied and picturesque experiences in his past. In some respects, he led the life of an American Lawrence. According to him, he was the only American at the Foundation Congress of Kemalist Turkey, sharing a bedroom with Kemal Pasha; and he was also the only non-Russian to visit Lenin in exile and to be with the Bolshevik leaders in the Smolny Institute in Petrograd when they plotted the Bolshevik revolution. These are only a few of his experiences, but enough to give you an idea of his colorful past. By the way - and this will be not without interest for us - when I asked him at the beginning of our conversation whether he is still with the Rockefeller interests, he said that he is, although he had a chance recently to change allegiances, if he wanted. He added that he was offered the job of chief of the Arab propaganda office in Washington, but he turned it down. During the war, he acted in a responsible position in the Army Intelligence and seems to have good connections both in Army and State Department circles.

Col. Browne might tend to over-estimate the part played by big oil interests in world events and some of his contentions in this respect might sound fantastic, but he sees events in the Middle East mainly as a subsidiary in the war over oil between the various competing interests. Thus, he attaches uppermost importance in the entire situation to the recent expansion of Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony Vacuum in the Middle East. He maintains that most of the complications in the area are due to the efforts of these two companies to eliminate the restrictions imposed on them by the inter-power agreement made in connection with the Iraq oil concession. According to Browne (and substantiation for this contention could be found in the recent protests of France against the new oil deals in the Middle East) the two above companies were restricted to no more than 23.75% of oil, not only in Iraq, but any where in the Middle East. Taking this as a point of departure for his reasoning, Browne maintains that the two companies had to force Britain to annul this restriction and to agree to the expansion of the two companies, both in Saudi Arabia and in Iran. He said that he wouldn't be surprised to learn that money of these two companies was very active both on the side of the Arabs and on the side of the Jews, because these oil interests wanted trouble fomented in the Middle East. I assured him that the Jewish resistance



February 20, 1947

movement in Palestine received no money from the oil sources. He was willing to take my assurances, but he was not convinced. However, he felt certain that American oil money was instrumental in arranging the Mufti's return to the Middle East and in paying his bills. By this way of reasoning, he maintains that since the New Jersey and New York companies have achieved their objective, and are now interested in peace and quiet in the Middle East, the whole problem may now be amicably settled. In support of his theories, he mentions the fact that only after this development took place in the oil aspect of the situation, did Britain announce its intention to transfer the Palestine problem into the hands of the United Nations.

As I mentioned above, Col. Browne is inclined towards over-estimation of the role played by oil in the Middle East and in world developments in general, although I must admit that he speaks with frankness, knowledge and conviction about past events of this kind and he entertains no illusions as to the unscrupulousness of the oil magnates in pursuing their aims. I interrogated him as to the names of those who shape the policy of the Rockefeller group. He said that the members of the family, Nelson Rockefeller included, take only a superficial interest. He further said that the Standard Oil of New York, which controls the Socony Vacuum, is the major of the two companies, and that a Mr. Levi, Vice-President of Standard Oil of New York in charge of international business, is probably one of the chief policy makers.

Whether the views of Col. Browne are to be taken at their face value or with a grain of salt, I think that this is a useful contact, worth further cultivation, and I am obliged to Leo Sack for bringing us together. We parted friends, and Browne urged me to give him a ring in a couple of weeks so that we may meet again and continue our conversation.



MEMORANDUM

To Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

Date February 25, 1947

From Elishu Ben-Horin

Sidney L. Herold sent me confidentially a copy of his recent letter to Judge Hutcheson, asking me to destroy it upon perusal. However, I thought that you will be interested in reading his letter and I therefore enclose a copy, repeating Judge Herold's request to destroy it immediately.

Best regards.



EBH:MF  
Encl.



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HEROLD COUSIN & HEROLD

LAW OFFICES  
SLATTERY BUILDING  
P.O. Box 1467

SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

February 10th, 1947

PERSONAL

Honorable Joseph C. Hutcheson  
United States Circuit Judge  
Houston, Texas

Dear Joe:

Apparently the dignified and self-respecting answer of the Jewish Agency had had the result of calling the British bluff to impose technical martial law; although, as you remind me, there has been no such thing as personal liberty in Palestine for a long time because of the practical abolition of habeas corpus.

It has been a long time since you have had to practice law before Judges, and naturally, therefore, the "snatching" of a British judge excites your ire. My experience has been on the other side of the bar, and I trust that I will have at least your sympathy when I say that there have been many occasions when I would have welcomed such summary process. At least, he was returned safe and - so far as a British judge in Palestine may be given that adjective - sound. Vide, e.g., John Singleton.

I am hoping some time in the near future to sit at the table with you and exchange views with you again. At bottom, we are not far apart. We both want to see justice accomplished and liberty maintained. It is only in procedure, as I see it, that we differ. And however one may deprecate undisciplined violence, it is necessary to remember always that human liberty has never been achieved anywhere except by the use of force. This has been particularly true in all of the struggles of free peoples to emancipate themselves from British colonial policies. In saying this, I am fully aware and appreciative of the contributions that the British people have made to individual liberty. My complaint is that, despite the value they attach to liberty for Englishmen, they consider it a domestic product not for export. I wish the Irgun and the Sternists would submit to the discipline of the Haganah - a self-restraint that seems to me unparalleled in history. But perhaps both of us, if we were Palestinian Jews and still had the youthful spirit which we possessed back at the University some forty-odd years ago, might entertain some sympathy with those whose intense desire for the liberation of their people leads them to extremes that we older men, in other surroundings, now deprecate.



And is this not the more so, when we consider that simple adherence by Great Britain to her obligations - not merely to the Jews but to America as well - would automatically remove all incentives to such violence?

Is not the flouting by Britain of her pledged word the proximate cause of all the trouble?

With kindest personal regards, I am, as ever,

Your friend,





# Atlantic



## **POPPA KNOWS BEST . . . . . Bill Mauldin**

The most brilliant cartoonist to emerge from the war, and one of the most audacious spokesmen for the veteran-turned-civilian, has some sharp things to say about the American Legion, its shortcomings, and its opportunities.

## **PLANE HITS MOUNTAIN . . . Francis and Katharine Drake**

No instruments could have prevented 84 per cent of last year's flying fatalities. The human element in aviation is the most difficult to measure. What are the human errors which have contributed to those shocking headlines?

## **WHAT HOPE FOR WOMEN TEACHERS? Isabel Stephens**

Ten years from now every high school in the country will be overcrowded, but unless we take steps, there will be an acute shortage of good teachers. An Assistant Professor of Education at Wellesley explains why women no longer want to teach. It is more than a matter of pay!

## **PALESTINE: REALITIES AND ILLUSIONS Eliahu Ben-Horin**

The case for the Jewish nationalists, written without compromise by an editor who lived two decades in Palestine and who knows the trouble inside and out.

## **THE ATLANTIC REPORT on the WORLD TODAY**

**The Far East—Washington**

**London—Berlin-Moscow**







# PALESTINE: REALITIES AND ILLUSIONS

by ELIAHU BEN-HORIN

Writing in the February *Atlantic*, Professor W. T. Stace of Princeton raised the issue of whether in Palestine we are "pursuing the methods of justice or the methods of force." His article, "The Zionist Illusion," provoked instant response, and chief among the more thoughtful replies is this article by ELIAHU BEN-HORIN, who was born in Russia and immigrated in 1921 to Palestine. He lived there for two decades and became Editor of the Hebrew daily *Doar Hayom* and Editor-in-Chief of the Palestine News Service. Mr. Ben-Horin writes with an intimate knowledge of the Middle East and Palestine, which he last visited in 1946. He is the author of *The Middle East: Crossroads of History* and a contributor to leading American magazines. — THE EDITOR

## I

I HAVE never tried to climb Olympus, and I do not know how it feels to be among the gods. It must be an awesome feeling to sit there and lay down the law for all the fallible human beings walking the earth, stumbling over each other as they hurry on their way.

There is something Olympian about the boundless objectivity which Professor Stace, author of "The Zionist Illusion," in the February *Atlantic*, claims for himself. Being a philosopher, Mr. Stace is sincerely convinced of his own objectivity. He seems certain that in his analysis of the Palestine problem he has applied nothing but cold reason — which, according to his basic postulate, is the only foundation of justice in international relations. I do not claim such objectivity for myself. I fear, moreover, that no such complete objectivity exists in international or human relations, and that even Mr. Stace possesses only the normal quota.

Take two Americans and send them to China, and you are likely to get two diametrically opposed appraisals of the rights and wrongs of the Chinese situation. The same result would be obtained in the case of Spain, Soviet Russia, Greece, Yugoslavia, or any other land. Recent history offers an obvious example: the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine. Late in 1945, six Americans and six Britishers were commissioned to study the Palestine problem and make recommendations as to its solution. Sharp differences of opinion cut across the Committee, sparing neither the American half nor the British. This was only natural. Men and women with different political views, different social outlooks, backgrounds, educations, ways of reasoning, and emotional reactions cannot help

being subjective on any given issue. Do we not loathe the totalitarian state precisely because its people have no right to differ? Only in a totalitarian world could men reach that "ideal" rigidity and objectivity which Mr. Stace advises us to employ in the settlement of international problems.

If for argument's sake one were to endorse every word of "The Zionist Illusion" and agree with the author in his basic assumption that the will of any given majority should be accepted unconditionally, and that Zionism is therefore an aggressive force, it does not yet follow that Zionism is an "illusion." What about the British Empire, the French, Belgian, and Dutch colonial possessions — are they all based on the will of the local majorities, or are they all illusions?

This brings us to another question, which is, in effect, a test of Mr. Stace's objectivity. He writes that he has selected Palestine as a good case for the examination of his theories with regard to justice in international relations. Why Palestine? Why not Ceylon, where he spent some time as a British civil servant? He surely knows all the intricacies of the Ceylon situation better than he knows Palestine. Or he could have chosen the Sudan — apple of discord in the recent British-Egyptian negotiations; or Indonesia — the scene of a recent small-scale war, in which Britain actively helped Holland to suppress the fight for independence of the native majority; or Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia, Kenya, and many more lands, where small British minorities "own" the colonies and deny millions of natives not only "self-determination" but the most elementary civil and human rights. Was the choice of Palestine as



a test case altogether accidental, or does Mr. Stace, as a former British civil servant, feel disinclined to apply the yardstick of cold reason and international justice to Great Britain?

It seems, after all, that Mr. Stace is as human as the rest of us.

## 2

THE very idea of the League of Nations in the past and of the United Nations in the present is the affirmation of mankind's right to settle and adjust matters on an international scale, beyond and above national boundaries or the will of local majorities. When the Potsdam Conference determined to approve the post-war transfer of three and a half million Germans from the Sudetenland, they did not ask the local majority whether they would like it or not. When the United Nations decided the fate of Trieste, they did not ask for the approval of the people of Trieste.

Any observer of European affairs would undoubtedly agree that Hitler represented the majority of the German people. Had a scrupulously democratic election taken place in Germany at any time between the remilitarization of the Rhineland and the first setbacks suffered by the Wehrmacht on the Russian front, Hitler would have received a more overwhelming vote than Roosevelt ever obtained from his countrymen, and would then have proceeded to do exactly what he did without democratic elections. Would any of us contend that the world should unquestioningly have accepted the will of the Reich's majority regardless of the atrocities which such a Nazi majority was undoubtedly likely to commit?

It is no accident that the League of Nations was brought into being by the same political philosophy which outlawed imperialism and aggression and proclaimed the right of self-determination for all nations, large and small. The Woodrow Wilson who was the author of the famous Fourteen Points was also the father of the League of Nations idea. Strangely enough, "The Zionist Illusion" never mentions the basic fact that the Zionist enterprise in Palestine and Jewish aspirations with regard to Palestine received the approval of the League of Nations; that the League of Nations not only endorsed the Balfour Declaration but took over Palestine primarily in order to bring about the materialization of that declaration; that Britain was entrusted with the administration of the Mandate on behalf of the League of Nations; that it was only after civilized mankind, through the

League of Nations, had given the Jewish people the green light to go ahead that they poured into Palestine their sweat and blood, their youth and money, their skill and hopes. The League of Nations Mandate is still the only constitutional basis for the administration of Palestine and the only legal international covenant defining mankind's intentions as to the future of Palestine.

Nor can an unbiased mind entertain any doubts as to the real intents of the Balfour Declaration and of the Mandate. Although these documents employed the somewhat nebulous term of "national home," Lord Balfour himself, David Lloyd George, Britain's Prime Minister at the time of the Declaration, as well as Winston Churchill, President Wilson, Field Marshal Jan Smuts, and others who took an active part in the framing of the Declaration, went on record as asserting that what was promised to the Jewish people was the gradual establishment of a Jewish majority in Palestine, thus transforming Palestine into a predominantly Jewish state. Even the anti-Zionist Royal Commission, headed by Lord Peel in 1937, could not help confirming this fact.

Were the statesmen responsible for the Balfour Declaration and the representatives of fifty-two nations in the League of Nations so ignorant as not to know that there was an Arab majority in the Holy Land?

As a matter of fact, there were eight Arabs to each Jew in Palestine three decades ago, whereas today the proportion is only two to one. It was in full awareness of this fact that the highest body of organized humanity decided that it would be right and just to establish such an internationally guaranteed regime in Palestine as would facilitate Jewish immigration and colonization with a view to ultimately creating there a Jewish majority and transforming the Arabs into a minority.

This and nothing else is the basic element in the Palestine issue. All the other elements — the historic connection of Jews and Arabs with the Holy Land, the objections of the present-day Arab majority, the fact that Jewish colonization benefits the Arabs, the suffering of the Jewish displaced persons in Europe, and the disinclination of all the nations in the world to accept these refugees into their own countries — are subsidiary.

"A promise to steal ought not to be kept." This sounds like good, ethical reasoning. But can the embodiment of the collective conscience of the world — in this case, the League of Nations — be so lightheartedly accused of conniving in theft?



Has any one of us the right to imply that mankind as a whole is wrong and he alone right?

Formally the Balfour Declaration was a purely British pledge, but all the Allied powers were responsible for it. The United States was actively involved, for President Wilson had coöperated in the negotiations which led to the issuance of the Declaration. Britain and her allies, as the victors in World War I, were in the position of being able to dispose of the spoils of war. However, they handed over the spoils to the League of Nations, and it was the League, now the trustee on behalf of humanity, which made the decisions regarding the various territories of the former Ottoman Empire.

Palestine had not been an Arab state either prior to the First World War or ever in history. It was a Jewish state in antiquity, a Crusaders' kingdom for a short period in the Middle Ages, but never an Arab state. The Arabs formed a majority of the population for a long time (not for two thousand years as Mr. Stace erroneously writes, but for about half that period), yet for the last five hundred years they were a subjugated people living in provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

The Arabs, like the Jews, received pledges during the First World War, and they received them — never questioning their validity on ethical or other grounds — from exactly the same party that issued the Balfour Declaration. It was the Allied victory that transformed the Arab subjects of Ottoman tyranny into rulers of several independent Arab states. At present, there are seven such states with kings or presidents, with membership in the United Nations and all the paraphernalia of statehood. The total area of the seven Arab states amounts to well over one million square miles, whereas the area of Western Palestine is only 10,000 square miles — in other words, less than one per cent of that part of the Ottoman Empire which was liberated by the Allies in World War I.

### 3

WHAT have the Arabs done with the enormous territories handed over to them for possession and rule? And what have the Jews achieved in the small area which was promised them but never actually placed at their disposal?

These questions may be secondary elements in the Palestine and Middle East picture, but factual examination of them will prove most illuminating. In the years since the end of World War I, the high rate of illiteracy has remained almost sta-

tionary in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Trans-Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and even in Egypt, affecting from 80 to 95 per cent and more of the population. Abject poverty, unsanitary conditions of life, diseases of all descriptions without medical help, a high rate of mortality especially among children, a sub-human level of existence — these are the hopeless lot of over 90 per cent of the masses in the Arab lands. Wealth, absolute power, harems, and luxury are the exclusive possession of about 2 per cent of the population. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been poured into the Arab lands in royalties for oil concessions. All this wealth has gone into the pockets of the kings, sheiks, and effendis — none of it for the betterment of the working masses. Western civilization is barred from the independent Arab states as tightly as it was in the days of the Turkish sultans.

Is this the kind of "self-determination" that spells fulfillment of the noble dream Woodrow Wilson had thirty years ago, or that holds out promise for the better world which the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations proclaimed in our days? "Independence," "self-determination," "self-government," and "majority rule" are no fetishes and should not be treated as such. It is the essence of the thing that counts, not the pretty slogans. In essence, one cannot even say that "the Arabs made a mess of it." They — namely, the Arab ruling cliques — never wanted self-determination for their peoples. They wanted "self-determination" only for themselves. They wanted absolute freedom for the shameless exploitation of the Arab masses, for the preservation of a feudalistic society, reactionary and antisocial, in the twentieth century. And they got all they wanted.

What the Jews made of Palestine is supposed to be common knowledge. But it is not. People take it for granted that the Jews have done wonders in Palestine, and immediately shrug this off as something self-understood. Few realize the extent of Jewish achievement in Palestine, that the Jews actually performed the greatest colonization achievement of the twentieth century. This the Jewish people did without having any powers of statehood or compulsion, and despite the active opposition of the Mandatory power, which (contrary to the prescriptions of the Mandate) prevented Jewish immigration instead of facilitating it, hindered Jewish settlement on the land instead of helping it. The Jewish enterprise in Palestine may also claim the rare distinction of being about the only colonization process in history which not only did not displace or exterminate the native



population, but greatly benefited it economically, socially, and culturally, and bolstered its rate of natural increase.

These benefits conferred by Zionism on the Palestinian Arabs do not in themselves justify Zionism, but they undoubtedly throw a very favorable light on the ethics of Zionist aims and methods. The Jewish people have done their full share towards the realization of Wilson's idea of self-determination for small peoples. Thus far they have proved to be the only people in the Middle East which neither made a mess of, nor misused for reactionary and antisocial purposes, the opportunity offered by the League of Nations.

In the deep social cleavage between Jewish Palestine and the Arab potentates, one may find the main explanation for the opposition of the ruling cliques in Arabia to Zionism. It is, moreover, in relation to this aspect of the Middle East problem — the social aspect — that Great Britain and, to some extent, America are committing their greatest mistake in foreign policy.

I was sitting in the Foreign Office in London, talking to one of Mr. Bevin's top assistants. It was late in July of last year, and I was then on my way from the United States to Palestine. We were discussing British-Soviet relations in and over the Middle East and the broader lines of Britain's Palestine policy.

On this occasion I formulated Britain's situation in the Middle East in the following terms: "These are your alternatives. You can adopt a pro-Arab orientation in the Middle East, which means, of course, backing the reactionaries who rule the Arab states and the Arab League. Or you can back the march of civilization into the Middle East with Jewish Palestine as its advance guard. You can ride one of these two horses but not both of them at the same time. You must take your choice."

Despite its Labor Government, Britain seems to have made its choice in favor of the Ibn Sauds and the Amin el Husseinis. Why the feudal barons of Arabia fight Zionism is obvious. Zionism is a serious threat to their absolutist power over the Arab masses; it is a living indictment of their way of life; it is an ever present call for progress in the Middle East. But why is Labor Britain so determined to block Zionism, contrary to the obligations of Great Britain and to the solemn pledges of the Labor Party during the last thirty years? Is it fear of Russia? Fear of Arab threats of a pro-Soviet orientation? Is it because of the oil interests? Or is it a continuation of traditional British muddling?

Nobody knows better than the British that the Arab states in the Middle East, with the Arab League at the top, represent no tangible force in economics, industry, culture, politics, or war potential. The British know also that the Arab states lack the fundamentals of nationhood and statehood, let alone the necessary prerequisites for Pan-Arabic expansion. Most of their kings, sheiks, and politicians are directly or indirectly on the payroll of the British Exchequer. They are puppets of Britain, and they know it.

The British are neither pro-Arab nor anti-Jewish. They are pro-British. They use the Arab argument in the Palestine controversy for their own ends, caring little about the interests of the Arabs. They cannot possibly be afraid of the Arab threats, for they know that there is no substance in them, but they are not above using these threats to impress others, especially America.

Bartley C. Crum, one of the American members of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine, said in an address last year that John D. Rockefeller, Jr., would sooner turn to Stalin to ask for his intervention in reducing his income tax in America, than Ibn Saud and other Arab kings would call for Soviet intervention in the Middle East. There is nothing I could add to that. When the kings of Arabia are ready to commit suicide, they will turn to the Kremlin. For the time being, King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan goes to Ankara and concludes a pact with Turkey, openly directed against Soviet Russia. For the time being, the Arab League appeals to Arab lands to settle in their territory 100,000 ex-Soviet Caucasian Moslems who joined the Wehrmacht during the German invasion of Russia and are now in Allied prison camps. Don't these and similar facts speak louder than words as to the probability that the Arab rulers will jump into the open arms of Russia?

#### 4

THE problem of oil in the Middle East is equally misinterpreted. I wish I had enough space in this article to "explode" the "oil argument," based as it is on misinformation and misdirection of public opinion. I can only touch on it here.

For England, which has no petroleum resources at home, Middle Eastern oil is the main source of supply and therefore extremely important. But even for England, oil is only one ingredient in the general strategic importance of the Middle East. In time of war, it is not formal ownership of oil concessions that counts, but their accessibility.



In other words, it is only when Britain controls the seas and can bring oil from the Persian Gulf to any place of battle that Middle East oil can be decisive in the fortunes of war.

This is even truer of America. This country has enough domestic oil for many generations to come, as far as peacetime needs are concerned. Should it have to oil a new world war, the American-owned concessions in Saudi Arabia or in Bahrein, 10,000 miles away from our shores, would be of little avail unless America should establish strategic bases in the Middle East and naval stations all along the route, strong enough to secure the accessibility of these oil resources.

These are the realities reflecting the maneuvering of the great powers for strategic and oil positions in the Middle East, with Britain and the United States aligned *de facto*, if not officially, against Soviet Russia. All this has little to do with justice in international relations or with Jewish and Arab rights in Palestine. Jews and Arabs, kings and politicians, historic pledges and contemporary conferences, are no more than pawns in a much bigger game of power politics. It is here, rather than in the Jewish-Arab controversy over Palestine, that one should look for the very real danger of a new world-wide conflagration. In this crucial fight between the major powers, the desires and preferences of the Arab potentates are of no consequence. They have no choice in the matter. They cannot turn to the Kremlin, because they would then lose all their power, wealth, and influence. They need the oil royalties which form the major item in their incomes, and they are entirely dependent on the Western powers politically, economically, and militarily.

Wise statesmanship on the part of Great Britain and America could have used these stern realities in order to entrench Western democratic influence in the Middle East. There is obviously only one way to do it: namely, to make Middle Eastern oil a means of progress in the Middle East. The capital, skill, and political and economic power which Britain and the United States are pouring into the Arab lands could have been used in the interests of the masses of the population in those countries. Seventy-five cents, if not ninety-five cents, of each dollar paid in oil royalties, subventions, grants, and interest-free loans should have created schools, hospitals, maternity clinics, sanitary dwellings, roads, irrigation, and general improvement of conditions. Five per cent should have sufficed for the upkeep of the harems of Ibn Saud and the sheiks of Bahrein and Kuwait.

However, both Britain and the United States

can hardly be said to be acting with wise statesmanship in the Middle East. All they want is oil, and beyond that they do not care. They come to the Middle East to take, not to give. They have no long-range policy. From a short-range viewpoint they consider it good business to make deals with the feudal barons of Arabia and thus help them to perpetuate their regime of tyranny and exploitation of the Arab masses. British and American policy-makers are too shortsighted to see that it is they who leave no choice for the underdog in the Middle East but to turn, sooner or later, to Russia. Britain and America, fearful of Soviet expansion, actually pave the way for that expansion.

Badly exploited, chronically undernourished, poverty and sickness ridden human masses must become more and more susceptible to Soviet propaganda. The day may come when the present reactionary orientation of British or American policies in the Middle East will backfire with such strength as to upset the British-American cart entirely.

## 5

THE fiasco of the recent London Conference on Palestine led to the official announcement that Britain will hand over the Palestine problem to the United Nations without any recommendations. One is driven to the unhappy conclusion that this is an act of desperation rather than of constructive planning on Britain's part. Breaking the Palestine Mandate and blocking Zionist progress in Palestine have proved too costly in terms of military manpower and unfavorable public opinion: the nearly 100,000 soldiers kept in Palestine could be used to good advantage in British factories and mines.

Thus, after twenty-five years, the Palestine Mandate may return to the jurisdiction of organized mankind. Whether the question comes before the Security Council, the General Assembly, or the Trusteeship Council, it will have to be analyzed and decided on its intrinsic merits, and not on the exigencies of politics. Since, ultimately, it is the great powers that will determine the fate of Palestine in the UN, the Western democracies will have an opportunity to revise their entire approach to Middle Eastern problems.

If the Middle Eastern situation, the forces at play there, the claims and counterclaims and the crisscross interests of the great powers are seen in the right perspective, Palestine emerges as one of the focal points in the entire picture. A Jewish



Palestine would offer the natural base of operations for the march of civilization in the Middle East. No other country in that part of the world can provide such a base. A Jewish Palestine would be the fulfillment of mankind's pledges to the Jewish people, would provide the solution for one of the most tragic problems of our times, and would remove a bad irritant in international relations. No other country could or would offer such a lasting and stable solution.

The Zionist idea and the problem of the Jewish displaced persons in Europe are not identical. Zionism, as the supreme expression of Jewish national renaissance, political, cultural, and spiritual, existed long before Hitler arose to fame and power in Germany. The Zionist prognosis of the Jewish position in Europe and in the world amounts to this: as long as the Jews are a minority everywhere and a majority nowhere, Jewish defenselessness and the Jewish tragedy will not end. The Zionist remedy therefore was and still is to regain nationhood and statehood for the Jewish people. It was this Zionist aspiration that was endorsed by the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine Mandate of the League of Nations.

The cruel extermination of 40 per cent of the Jewish people by the Nazis only served to confirm the prophetic prognosis of Zionism as to the insecurity of the Jewish position in the world. The pitiful situation of the remnants of European Jewry, who cannot stay in Europe and who are unwanted by the world at large, lends additional urgency to the Zionist demands to open the gates of Palestine. However, the demands themselves are not based on the existence of Jewish displaced persons in Europe, but on the legitimate rights of the Jewish people under the Mandate.

Zionism offers the only realistic solution of the Jewish problem. One looks in vain in "The Zionist Illusion" for a practical solution of the Jewish problem, "greathearted" or otherwise. One finds there a frontal attack on Zionism and a negation of the justice of the Zionist solution of the Jewish question, but not an alternative solution. On the contrary, starting with the desirability of "all the underpopulated countries in the world" amending their immigration policies, so as to absorb the homeless Jews of Europe, Mr. Stace soon arrives at the conclusion that "we have to face the plain truth, however unpleasant it may be, — however shameful if you like, — that none of the great nations want these refugees." There he lets the matter rest, and returns to his concluding jibes at Zionism. Where is the alternative?

It does not exist. Neither Mr. Stace nor any-

one else can suggest a solution of the Jewish problem outside of Palestine. By that I mean, of course, a tangible, workable solution, not mere lip service and emotional orations on Jewish suffering.

Madagascar, Uganda, Southern Rhodesia, British Guiana, and the many other territories mentioned from time to time as possible alternatives to Palestine fade out of the picture as soon as you analyze them in practical terms. What is more, all these territories have native and European populations utterly unwilling to give up their present positions or even to make room for the Jews. Nor can the Jewish people claim any rights with regard to all these territories, as it can in the case of Palestine.

We have Professor Stace's testimony to the effect that none of the great nations wants to absorb any sizable number of Jews. Nor is there any small land available for Jewish colonization. At this late hour in their tragic history, the Jews would be pursuing a dangerous illusion if they pinned their hopes to a new dispersion among peoples who frankly do not welcome them.

Palestine is no illusion. If there is anything tangible in Jewish life and in individual and national Jewish hopes, it is Palestine. Despite the insecurity of daily life and the political uncertainty as to the ultimate status of the country, Palestine is the one land on God's earth where a Jew feels completely at home. Even Jews coming from Western democratic lands react thus in Palestine. Palestine is the only land capable of bringing out the best in the Jew: his idealism, his devotion to the earth, constructive search for social justice, and great colonizing ability. Jews tried to colonize in Argentina late in the last century, and failed. Jewish colonization in Soviet Biro-Bidjan and in the Dominican Republic cannot boast of great achievement. Only Palestine provides the ground for truly magnificent Jewish colonization.

It is true that against the background of Arab backwardness and neglect, present-day Jewish Palestine may seem like a mirage in the desert. This is about the only illusory feature one can detect in Jewish Palestine and in Zionism. Otherwise, Zionism is the one stark reality to which the Jewish people can cling in their despair and helplessness. It is also the only forceful and dynamic reality capable of bringing the Middle East back to civilization.

(Readers are directed to *Atlantic Repartee*, where there is further discussion of this controversial issue. — THE EDITOR)



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April 3, 1947

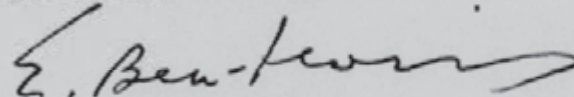
Dr. Abba Hillel Silver  
The Temple  
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Dr. Silver:

I herewith send for your files a copy of the  
cable which, with your approval, I sent today to Dr. Jan  
Jina in Prague.

I am  
With best wishes for Pesach and kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,



Eliahu Ben-Horin

EBH:SR  
Enc



NIGHT LETTER

RCA

DR JAN JINA  
PRESIDENTIAL PALACE  
PRAGUE

MY FRIENDS HERE ASKED ME TO CABLE YOU THIS URGENT REQUEST FOR YOUR KIND  
SUBMISSION TO THE PRESIDENT STOP VIEW RECENT DEVELOPMENTS PALESTINE SITUATION  
AND FORTHCOMING SPECIAL UNITED NATIONS SESSION ON PALESTINE PROBLEM WOULD  
GREATLY APPRECIATE IF PRESIDENT REVIEW HOW HIS EFFORTS ALONG LINES OUR  
SERIMOVA USFI CONVERSATION STOP KINDLY CABLE ME AT 80-09 35TH AVENUE  
JACKSON HEIGHTS NEW YORK WHETHER WE MAY COUNT ON PRESIDENT'S INTERVENTION  
NOW BEST REGARDS

ELIAHU BEL-HORIN



## MEMORANDUM

To Dr. Abba Hillel Silver

Date 23 April 1947

From E. Ben-Horin

### Negotiations with the Oil Companies

Sidney Herold and Herman Taubman arrived in New York a few days ago to resume negotiations with the oil companies. They are still on the job, but by now a certain amount of information and highlights have been accumulated as a result of their talks, and I want to report to you about it.

Their first interview was with Mr. Eugene Hollman, president of the Standard Oil of New Jersey, and personal friend of Judge Herold. The impressions of Messrs. Herold and Taubman from their talk with Hollman could be summed up as follows:

(A) Last year when they discussed the Palestine problem with the same Mr. Hollman, the latter offered them all his sympathy and understanding, pointing out however that the Standard Oil of New Jersey having no share whatsoever in the business of the Arabian-American Oil Company is in no position to influence matters one way or another. This time Hollman admitted that they are about to enter officially into Aramco and that they are very much concerned about all the aspects of the Middle Eastern situation, including the Palestine question, Jews, Arabs, etc. He added that they are now making a survey of the Saudi-Arabian concession and also of the Middle Eastern situation. Their men are about to return from the Middle East and then he will be in a better position to judge or to venture any opinions on the subject. He once again reassured us of his sympathies with Jewish claims and suffering.

(B) Mr. Hollman seemed to be greatly concerned with the Brewster Senate investigation. When the name of Brewster was mentioned he became very much alive. He knew that Brewster was in Cairo, and was rather upset when Herold told him that he just came back, thus showing that we are also following closely the investigation.

Here is the place to mention that Senator Brewster met John D. Rockefeller, Jr. some time ago and spoke to him about the oil business in the Middle East and the negative effects of Aramco's pro-Arab and anti-Zionist influences on American public opinion. This line of argumentation was followed up by Mr. Herold in a talk with Hollman. Our line of reasoning on this subject, the soundness of which was confirmed by the reaction of Hollman as well as the reaction of other people to whom Herold and Taubman subsequently spoke, was that Standard Oil of New Jersey and the Rockefeller family are very much susceptible to the reactions of public opinion; that they lay great weight on keeping their record clean in the eyes of the people. How true this conception is could be seen from an utterance made by another man of the New Jersey Company, whose name I cannot mention at this stage, who said that the Jewish-Zionists' criticism of Aramco activities on behalf of the Arabs was one of the reasons why the Standard Oil of California, together with the Texas Company, invited the participation of the Standard Oil of New Jersey in Aramco. In other words, the California Company wanted to find political cover under the broad and clean wings of the New Jersey Company.



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(C) Prior to their going to meet Hollman, we decided to suggest to him that matters reached such a stage that a thorough discussion should be held between the Standard Oil of New Jersey and the Zionists. What the three of us, Herold, Taubman and myself, had in mind was a conference in which the top executives of the Standard Oil of New Jersey would take part on the one hand and on our part, in addition to Herold and Taubman, Emanuel Neumann and I would participate. This was submitted to Hollman who said that he is now awaiting the return from the Middle East of Mr. John Suman, a vice-president of their company, in charge of foreign operations. After Suman returns and submits his report such a conference will eventually be arranged. From subsequent developments it is to be assumed that this conference will eventually take place after several weeks because it will take that long for the New Jersey people to study Suman's Middle Eastern survey.

(D) Hollman admitted that Aramco up to now went out of its way to please and back up Ibn Saud and his policies, adding that this belongs to the past when they had no influence in Aramco. In this connection the matter of over-entertainment of the Arab princes was mentioned, but Herold pointed out that this was a minor matter as compared with the anti-Zionist influence of Aramco on the State Department. Hollman, as well as in later talks with other representatives of the New Jersey Company, kind of assured our people that they will prevent such policies or such influences in the future when they enter Aramco.

Mr. Taubman had a long talk with Mr. McCollum, vice-president of the New Jersey Company, formerly in charge of foreign operations and now the liaison man between the New Jersey Company and all its subsidiaries. Mr. McCollum is an old friend of Mr. Taubman and speaking under four eyes he was frank and outspoken.

One item which might be of considerable importance in the future argumentation on the question of oil was this: Mr. McCollum is going to address, May 7th, the board of the Independent Petroleum Producers (of which Mr. Taubman is a member) on the question of American oil reserves, and he is going to state there that America has enough oil reserves and there is no justification for the allegations that in a few years time America will run short of oil. Such a statement, coming from a top executive of the greatest oil company, may have a very favorable influence from our viewpoint. As you are undoubtedly aware of it, the pro-Arab argumentation of American policies was nourished by the scare of a shortage of oil aimed at the creation of a conviction that the United States will have to depend to a very great extent on Arab oil even for domestic purposes.

Even more than Hollman, McCollum spoke of their desire and intention to keep in the future the record of Aramco clean, of their sympathies for the Jewish cause. He took it for granted that the Aramco people in the past were helping the Arabs, but he wanted actual proof of such deeds or acts on the part of Aramco. You may be interested to know his reaction to the Haifa oil explosions. The New Jersey Company, as you know, is partner in the Iraq Petroleum Company; nevertheless, he shrugged off this matter as something self-understood, saying that the boys of the resistance in Palestine could not be expected to know the difference between Standard Oil of New Jersey or Standard Oil of California.



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He said, as Hollman said before, that they are vitally interested in peace and stability in the Middle East, and for this reason too they would be interested in the satisfaction of the Jewish claims and aspirations. McCollum said that he was convinced that the Jews and Arabs in Palestine could and would live peacefully together if it were not for outside interferences.

How seriously the New Jersey Company takes us can be seen from the fact that immediately after the talk of Herold and Taubman with Hollman the matter was reported to the board of executives and was discussed there. McCollum, whom Mr. Taubman saw two days after the talk with Hollman, was already fully informed about this conversation and said that the matter was discussed at their daily board meeting.

(E) Following the above talks Messrs. Herold and Taubman and myself went to Washington to meet there a number of people. I reported to you orally part of the information given to Leo Sack and myself by Senator Wheeler, the part relating to the Senator's interview yesterday with the president. Sack and I were lunching with Wheeler and we spent about an hour and a half with him discussing the Senate investigation. First of all, you will be interested to know that Wheeler found my memorandum excellent, and is therefore disposed to lean on us heavily for guidance and supply of material for the investigation. He told us of a meeting he had with the Senate Investigation Committee, at which meeting he outlined the plan of the investigation very much along the lines suggested in my memorandum. The reaction of the members of the committee was on the whole favorable, although some of them, specifically Senator Hatch, were trying to soft-pedal the broader conception of the investigation. However, there is reason to believe that this conception may be accepted. Last night Herold and Taubman were to see Senator Brewster and when they return to New York we may know more about it.

Wheeler told us that the investigation will probably be resumed not before the first of June. When Leo and I drew his attention to the fact that from our viewpoint it would be desirable to advance the investigation so that it should coincide in time with the UN session on Palestine, for obviously ~~replacing~~ replacing the State Department on the spot in the investigation may soften their attitude in the UN, he said that he was perfectly willing to cooperate with us but unless he finds a way to speed up the preparation of material he could not resume the investigation with a half-baked case in hand. Sack and he then discussed certain possibilities of personnel which may bring about a speedier preparation of the material.

Wheeler once again asked me to see to it that he gets closer cooperation of Herbert Feis, and discussed this matter again with Feis when, together with Herold and Taubman, we called on him later in the day.

Leo Sack and my impressions of our talk with Wheeler and of his report--which should be treated in very strict confidence--of his conversation with the President the same morning were to the effect that the White House and the Department of State are very much concerned about the Brewster investigation. We know from other sources that the Department of State is actively working on the preparation of the files for the investigation committee. As to the political aspect of Truman's utterance to Wheeler on the question of Palestine,



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there is nothing I can add to what I told you this morning.

Herbert Feis, to whom I introduced Herold and Taubman, is perfectly willing to go along with us on the matter of oil as far as he possibly can, and I feel sure that his cooperation will be of considerable value.

Yesterday Herold and Taubman were to see Senator Brewster, and this morning Abe Fortas in Washington. This afternoon they are meeting in New York Mr. Lawrence Levy, a former vice-president of Standard Oil of New York, in charge of foreign operations, who was recently retired. This will be our first conference with him, but according to information received by Mr. Taubman from a mutual friend, Mr. Levy is supposed to be the right type of Jew and he may turn out to be helpful in this situation.

You will receive from me a further report about the above talks.

Best regards.

ABH.

