

**A Historical Survey of Proposals to  
Transfer Arabs from Palestine  
1895 - 1947**

**by Chaim SIMONS**

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## **A Historical Survey of Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine 1895 - 1947**

by

Rabbi Dr. Chaim Simons  
P.O. Box 1775  
Kiryat Arba  
Israel  
Tel: 02-9961252

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CHAIM SIMONS was born in London in 1942. At the age of 20, he was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Science with First Class Honours in Chemistry and Physics from the University of London. Three years later he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry from the same University. At a later date, he was awarded a Bachelor degree in Educational Technology. He also possesses a Rabbinical Diploma and is a qualified teacher with decades of experience in Education, which includes the setting and marking of Matriculation examinations. In addition to his books on Population Transfer, Rabbi Dr. Simons is also the author of a number of papers on Rabbinical subjects which have been published in scholarly journals, and has prepared pupils workbooks which link together religious and scientific knowledge.

### **Who said the following?**

- 1) I favour compulsory transfer (of Arabs). I see nothing unethical in it.
- 2) The Jews ... will help in getting Arabs out of Galilee.
- 3) Palestine should be for the Jews and no Arabs should be in it.
- 4) Western Palestine should be handed over completely to the Jews, clear of Arab population...

For the answers, read this book... you will get some surprises!!

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## **Abbreviations**

BGA Ben-Gurion Archives  
CZA Central Zionist Archives  
HH Herbert Hoover Presidential Library  
ISA Israel State Archives  
LSE London School of Economics Archives  
Mapai Labour Party (Mapai) Archives  
NA National Archives Washington  
PRO Public Record Office London  
SU Sydney University Archives  
WA Weizmann Archives

## INTRODUCTION

What do Theodor Herzl, David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann, all outstanding Zionist leaders, have in common with such diverse personalities as U.S. Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Herbert Hoover and British anti-Zionist Harry St. John Philby. All these statesmen - and many others - have advanced proposals for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. These proposals are the subject of this book.

One is sure to ask, how and when did I become interested in such a subject? It was during the 1970s when I was Director of Jewish Studies at a Jewish High School in the North of England. This was the period when Arab students at the various British Universities began to utilise the campuses to propagate anti-Israel propaganda. The Jewish students at the Universities were the first line of Israel's defense, but at the time they had not been briefed on how to answer the Arab students. I therefore brought out a booklet entitled "How to Answer Anti-Israel Propaganda" and this booklet was used with some success on the campuses.

Whilst researching this booklet, I came across an anti-Zionist book which devoted a couple of pages to show that there had been various proposals in the past to transfer Arabs from Palestine. I must admit, that at the time, this came as quite a surprise to me, and I decided that when I had some time available I would look more deeply into the question. I assumed that there were just a few stray statements on this subject and that after I had researched them, I would publish an article on the topic.

However, after I began research in 1984, I soon discovered that it was not just "a few stray statements" but that the transfer of Arabs from Palestine was definite policy not only of the Zionist leaders, but also of many leading individual non-Jews (including some who were pro-Arab!), non-Jewish organisations and even some Arabs.

The material I uncovered during my research was sufficient for a book and in 1988 my book "International Proposals to Transfer Arabs from Palestine, 1895-1947, A Historical Survey" was published.

There is no end to research! I therefore continued to research this subject and discovered additional information. This was especially so in the case of Edward Norman's transfer plan, and therefore at the beginning of 1991, I published an expanded version of this section of my book under the title "Edward Norman's Plan to Transfer Arabs from Palestine to Iraq." Further research merited the bringing out a supplement to my book (of 1988) and this was published in January 1993.

In May 1994, I combined and integrated all the material appearing in my various books on this subject, and together with the latest material which I had researched until that time, brought out a book which I called "HERZL TO EDEN".

In September 1997 I brought out "Supplement Number 1" to "Herzl to Eden".

I have now integrated this supplement into my book which I am now putting on the INTERNET. As I uncover new material, I add it at the appropriate place in the book.

This study examines the transfer proposals put forward from 1895 to 1947. Chronologically the earliest proposal appearing in my book was made by Theodor Herzl and the latest by Anthony Eden - hence the title "HERZL TO EDEN". Contemporary arguments both for and against the various plans are discussed, and historical background material is



included, with brief biographies of prominent personalities.

The study is based almost entirely on primary sources, including hitherto unpublished documents obtained from archives in Israel, the United States, Great Britain and Australia. Diaries, memoirs, historical works, and newspaper files complement the archival material.

The issue of population transfer is a very delicate subject. For this reason, many proposers confined the exposition of their ideas to diaries, private correspondence and closed meetings. In public they either ignored the subject of transfer or spoke against it. Even those who did propose various schemes were often reluctant to specifically suggest compulsory transfer. They relied on various euphemistic expressions to convey their intentions regarding compulsion.

I have therefore made it an important aim of this work to ascertain the private views of the proposers on this subject. The wording of their proposals has also been carefully analysed to determine whether the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine was intended to be compulsory or voluntary.

One of the striking things to come to light during this research is the attempt to rewrite history and pretend that the Zionist leaders were completely opposed to the transfer of Arabs, even to the extent of censoring portions of official minutes and amending of documents! This rewriting is reminiscent of the Russian Encyclopaedia. After Beria's execution, the publishers of this encyclopaedia wrote to its subscribers, suggesting they cut out the pages dealing with "Beria" and in their place insert the enclosed pages on the "Bering straits" - which had the same alphabetical sequence! - (BERIa, BERIng).

The reader of this book will notice that its format is closer to that of an encyclopaedia than a work set in an integrated historical framework. When I wrote my first book on this subject, I carefully weighed up these two alternative formats, and came to the conclusion that to keep the various transfer plans distinct, the encyclopaedic format was preferable. My continued research on this subject has in fact reinforced my opinion on this point. However, there are in fact link ups between some of the proposals which were made and these are pointed out in the text.

Finally, I will be more than happy to receive comments, observations, corrections and further information on this subject from my readers.

Chaim Simons  
P.O.B. 1775  
Kiryat Arba  
Israel  
Tel: 02-9961252

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Braham Mark (Private papers), Rose Bay, New South Wales  
British Council Library, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv  
British Labour Party Archives, Manchester  
British Library of Political and Economic Science, London  
British Newspaper Library, London  
Central Zionist Archives and Library, Jerusalem  
Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge  
Columbia University, New York  
Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, New York  
Haifa Municipal Archives  
Hebrew University Library, Mount Scopus, Jerusalem  
Herbert Hoover Library, Iowa  
Institute for Researching the Labour Movement Library, Tel-Aviv  
Israel State Archives, Jerusalem  
Jabotinsky Archives, Tel-Aviv  
Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem  
Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad Archives, Yad Tabenkin, Efal  
Kiryat Arba Municipal Library  
Kiryat Arba Religious School Library  
Labour Party, London  
Labour Party (Mapai) Archives, Bet Berl, Kfar Saba  
Lehi Archives, Tel-Aviv  
Library of Congress, Washington D.C.  
Liverpool Trades Council Archives  
Marks and Spencer Archives, London  
National Archives, Washington D.C.  
Nuffield College, Oxford  
Princeton University Library, New Jersey  
Public Record Office, London  
Sydney University Library  
Tel-Aviv University Library  
Temple, Cleveland, Ohio  
Weizmann Archives, Rehovot  
Zionist Archives, New York

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Throughout this book the term "Palestine" has been used for Eretz-Israel. No ideological or political significance should be inferred from this.

## A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The era of "Modern Zionism" can be said to have begun towards the end of the 19th century with the "Hovevei Zion", the "First Aliyah", and Theodor Herzl.

In one of the first entries in his private diary dated June 1895, (even before he had decided on the final location of the Jewish State), Herzl wrote that it would be necessary to remove the non-Jews from such a state. Herzl apparently realised that it would not be prudent to publicise such an idea, since there is not a hint of it in his famous book "The Jewish State", which was published just a few months later.

In contrast, Nachman Syrkin, who was one of the founders of "Socialist Zionism", had no inhibitions about making public the possibility of transfer of Arabs from Palestine, and such a proposal appears in his booklet published in 1898.

In the same year, Herzl visited Palestine and saw the country at first hand. A few years later in his unpublished "Draft Charter" for Palestine he wrote that the Jews would have the right to transfer Arabs to other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Another person to visit Palestine at that period was the Anglo-Jewish writer Israel Zangwill, who, after a few years reflection, proposed such transfer in lectures which he gave in the U.S.A. and Britain in 1904 and 1905. One should note that the public pronouncements on this question by both Syrkin and Zangwill did not give rise to any adverse comments.

At this period, the Zionist movement was still in its infancy and proposals for transfer were made by only a few individuals, particularly Zangwill. Following the rejection of Uganda as the location for a Jewish Homeland in 1905, Zangwill left the Zionist movement, and it seems that no further proposals for Arab transfer were put forward for a number of years.

It was in the early 1910s that two leading Zionists, Arthur Ruppin and Leo Motzkin put forward transfer proposals, the former in a private letter and the latter in the course of a lecture to a Conference of German Zionists which was subsequently published in a German Jewish newspaper. However, the main proposer of transfer at this period was Zangwill, who, after he had returned to the Zionist fold, wrote a number of articles and delivered a number of lectures on this subject.

At the end of 1918, following one of Zangwill's articles, a public condemnation of his proposals by several prominent Anglo-Jews, appeared for the first time in the British-Jewish press. One should remember, however, that this was the period of the Balfour Declaration. A number of prominent Anglo-Jews from families who were well-established in Britain, were vigorously opposed to the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine and as a result of their efforts, the final text of the Balfour Declaration was less favourable to the Zionist aspirations. The Anglo-Jews publicly opposing Zangwill's transfer proposals largely came from these well-established families. To their great credit, the press did not prevent Zangwill from using their columns to propagate his ideas on Arab transfer - "freedom of expression" was sacred at that period!

Following the termination of the First World War, Fridtjof Nansen, proposed a compulsory transfer of population between Greece and Turkey involving nearly two million people and this proposal was subsequently implemented by the League of Nations. The success

of this population exchange and the resultant friendly relations between Greece and Turkey, gave a "boost" to the solution of population exchange to solve regional problems and this example was later to be used in proposing Arab transfer from Palestine.

Apart from some further proposals (one of them quite drastic!) by Zangwill in the early 1920s, no further proposals seem to have been made until about 1930.

In 1929, there were serious Arab pogroms in many places in Palestine, resulting in the murder of well over a hundred Jews and this made the transfer of Arabs from Palestine more attractive to the Jewish and even non-Jewish public.

The original Mandate for Palestine had included the area of Transjordan. However, in order to solve inter-Arab feuding, the provisions of the Mandate over the area of Transjordan were suspended and Zionist colonisation was forbidden there. These factors led in 1930 to a number of proposals being made to transfer Arabs, to Transjordan. These included proposals by bodies such as the Jewish National Fund (J.N.F.), by individuals such as Weizmann and Ben-Gurion, and by non-Jews, such as Drummond Shiels who was then British Assistant Colonial Secretary. Such transfer was particularly suggested for those Arabs in Western Palestine who were living on land being purchased by the Zionists. In fact, even before this time such Arabs were often transferred. Many Kibbutzim of "Hashomer Hazair", an extreme left-wing movement, who would publicly vehemently condemn Arab transfer, were established on land from which Arabs had been transferred!

One person connected with Arab transfer, who until quite recently had hardly been heard of, was an American Jew named Edward Norman. Norman made a very strong principle of not letting his name be publicised in connection with his transfer proposal. Only when Weizmann's letters and Ben-Gurion's memoirs began to be published, did people see the name of Edward Norman and his transfer proposal. Norman worked on his plan to transfer Arabs from Palestine to Iraq, from 1933 onwards for about 15 years. Without doubt, there is more archival material on Norman's plan than on any other transfer plan on the subject. In the course of his endeavours Norman regularly met or corresponded with the high echelons in both the British and U.S. administrations and also with the top Zionist leaders.

In 1936, a campaign of Arab terrorism began, considerably disrupting life in Palestine. This resulted in the British Government's setting up of a Royal Commission comprising six highly respected gentlemen under the chairmanship of Lord Peel. After visiting Palestine and taking evidence from over one hundred witnesses, they returned to England to produce their Report, which was unanimous and consisted of over 400 pages. Amongst their recommendations was the transfer of Arabs from the proposed Jewish State. For the Arabs living in the Plains of Palestine, such transfer could be compulsory.

The British Government found themselves in general agreement with the recommendations of this Commission and they made no objections whatsoever to the compulsory transfer proposal.

The Peel Commission recommendations were thoroughly debated in a number of forums both Jewish and non-Jewish. Some of the Zionist leaders also confided their secret thoughts on the subject to their private diaries and in confidential correspondence and closed meetings. Their comments on compulsory transfer were interesting:

Ben-Gurion's observations in his private diary on compulsory transfer were extremely enthusiastic and he stressed the importance of Arab transfer from the Jewish State. Weizmann in his letters and meetings of that period displayed a similar enthusiasm on this subject. At the 20th Zionist Congress which took place about a month after the publication of this Report, many of the participants spoke in favour of transfer, although when the "official" minutes were published, many of their comments on transfer were omitted! Berl Katznelson, who was known as the "conscience" of the Jewish Labour Party, spoke up strongly in favour of transfer at a meeting of the "Council of World Unity" (the amalgamated Zionist Socialist parties) held a few weeks before the 20th Zionist Congress. In contrast, Jabotinsky, leader of the Revisionist movement came out very strongly against transfer. This in fact had been his stand for decades.

When debated in the British Parliament, several members of Parliament, who were members of the pro-Arab lobby, came out in favour of, and even exceeded, the

recommendations of the Commission on the question of Arab transfer. They realised that an Arab presence in a Jewish State would be undesirable and cause friction in the future.

In November 1937, the Jewish Agency set up a Committee for Transfer of Arabs and during the course of the following seven months this Committee regularly met, and assembled information and statistical data, in order to work out a programme for the compulsory transfer of Arabs from Palestine.

In the summer of 1937, the Arabs in Palestine resumed and even intensified their acts of terror and assassinations and the British Government began a policy "to extricate themselves" from the recommendations of the Peel Commission. They began by stating in a "Despatch" dated December 1937 that they had in no way accepted the recommendation of the Peel Commission on compulsory transfer! This was a complete revision of history, and furthermore, early drafts of this very same "Despatch" did not contain this "disclaimer" on compulsory transfer!!

One should note that even after the British Government had retracted from the acceptance of compulsory transfer, the Jewish Agency Committee on Transfer continued to prepare plans for compulsory transfer

To complete their retraction from the Peel Commission recommendations, the British Government set up a new Commission under Sir John Woodhead - wags called it the "Re-Peel" Commission!! This Commission's resultant Report was followed by a White Paper very severely limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine.

Although at this period, the British Government became vehemently anti-transfer of Arabs, the U.S. Government was moving in the opposite direction. This can be illustrated by the reactions of officials of the U.S. government who were doing all they could to help Edward Norman advance his transfer plan, whilst at the same time British officials were doing all they could to squelch it. However, in all fairness, one must remember that whereas the British Government was the Mandatory Power with the responsibility to maintain order, the American Government could stand on the sidelines and watch! Even the American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt at that period came out strongly in favour of Arab transfer.

Although the British Government were then strongly opposed to transfer, it is interesting to note that Sir Harold MacMichael, who was the British High Commissioner for Palestine, and could thus see the situation at first hand, was in favour of Arab transfer.

Another interesting phenomenon of the late 1930s and early 1940s was the conviction of some pro-Arabists that the transfer of Arabs from Palestine was the only solution to the Arab-Jewish conflict. The classic example is that of the pro-Arabist Harry St. John Philby, who worked for several years on his plan (enthusiastically supported by top members of the Zionist leadership) to transfer almost all the Arabs from Palestine. Philby had several meetings with King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia to try to persuade him to accept such a plan. Some historians suggest that at the beginning of the Second World War, the King was in favour of this plan. Even an Arab, Mojli Amin who was a member of the Arab Defense Committee for Palestine, put forward his own memorandum advocating Arab transfer.

Towards the end of the 1930s, Iraq completed an irrigation system but was sadly lacking in population. It thus became a popular destination for potential Arab transferees from Palestine. Amongst those proposing Iraq, was Ben-Gurion, who in 1938-39 often put forward the idea of Arab transfer to that country. Support for this plan of Ben-Gurion's came from, amongst others, the Hadassah Executive of America.

Another plan worked on in 1939 and discussed in earnest by the Zionist leadership and the Druze was the transfer of the Druze from Palestine to the area Jebel Druze in Syria.

Towards the end of 1939, the Second World War began, and already at the beginning of 1942, reports of the mass murder of European Jewry began to reach the West. Possibly due to this fact, many non-Jews began to speak out in public or publish articles in favour of the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. Prominent Jews also came out in favour, although generally they would only do so in closed forums! Even some members of "Brit Shalom" who outwardly advocated a Bi-National (Jewish-Arab) State in Palestine proposed voluntary Arab transfer from Palestine.

At the beginning of the Second World War, there was a split in the Revisionist

movement with the formation of Lehi. The views of Lehi regarding transfer did not follow the line of the main-stream Revisionists, and they included in their "Principles of Renaissance" one which advocated the transfer of the "stranger" from Palestine.

However, even the main-stream Revisionists, who until this time had followed Jabotinsky's strong opposition to transfer (although some historians now suggest that in private he supported transfer) began to change their views on this subject. A committee known as the "American Resettlement Committee" was established (at the same address as the American Revisionists Headquarters!) and in 1943 they placed a whole-page advertisement in the "New York Times" proposing the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. Furthermore, during the 1940s, the Revisionists endorsed the principle of Arab transfer, certainly on a voluntary basis.

Although a number of prominent Jews and non-Jews were publicly coming out in favour of Arab transfer during the Second World War, at this period, the positive attitude of the U.S. administration to this question underwent a change. Edward Norman found that the enthusiasm of the U.S. Government towards transfer in the late 1930s had completely evaporated by 1942. Possibly the oil factor of the Middle East which was rapidly becoming more significant during the course of the Second World War was a reason for this. However, one should mention that throughout this period President Roosevelt would periodically make statements to his senior officials which were very strongly in favour of compulsory Arab transfer from Palestine.

Also during the latter part of the war, former U.S. President Herbert Hoover (encouraged privately by leading American Zionists) began to propose the transfer of Arabs. Towards the end of 1945, in a bout of enthusiasm, he prepared a statement on this question which was sent to hundreds of American newspapers. However, to his annoyance very few indeed deigned to publish it, and those who did were mainly the New York Yiddish press.

On the other side of the Atlantic, about a year and a half before the end of the Second World War, the British Labour Party commissioned one of its members, Hugh Dalton, to prepare a document on "Labour and the International Post-War Settlement". In this document, Dalton included a section on Palestine which included a paragraph "encouraging" Arabs to leave Palestine. This document was examined by the various committees and sub-committees of the Party and was finally passed at the Annual Party Conference of 1944 with almost no opposition. Encouraging Arabs to leave Palestine thus became part of the Party's policy and it remained as such until after the general election of 1945, when the Labour Party was elected to power in a landslide victory. In commenting on this Labour Party resolution in public, the Zionist leaders said that transfer of Arabs was "inconsistent with the Zionist programme". However, from a study of their private opinions which are now open to historians, one can see that they were quite happy with this transfer proposal! The Jewish Press in Britain and in the U.S. were on the whole favourable to the paragraph advocating Arab transfer.

Following the Labour Party victory in 1945, Ernest Bevin was appointed Foreign Secretary. The senior civil servants in the Foreign Office who had a long tradition of anti-Zionism, succeeded in persuading Bevin to continue with the policy of the White Paper, rather than implementing the terms of this Resolution.

The years following the Second World War saw a deterioration in the situation in Palestine. Finally the matter was turned over to the United Nations who sent an international committee to Palestine and on 29 November 1947 the U.N. voted on the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

From this period until the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948 and also during the months that followed, about half a million Arabs left, some by their own free-will, others being driven out by the Jews. Until this day, debates and arguments continue on allowing these Arabs to return.

SECTION 1

**PROPOSALS BY INDIVIDUAL JEWS**

## THEODOR HERZL

Theodor Herzl, father of political Zionism and founder of the World Zionist Organisation was born in 1860. Following his general education, Herzl studied law in Vienna. However, a year after gaining his doctorate, he began a career in journalism.

The growth of anti-Semitism in France stirred Herzl's interest in the Jewish problem and the Dreyfus case convinced him that the only solution was for the Jews to leave the various anti-Semitic countries in which they resided and be resettled in a country of their own. He therefore decided to apply himself to the realisation of this ideal.

### Herzl's Diaries

Herzl had kept a diary as a young lawyer in the 1880s, but in May 1895, he started keeping a diary devoted entirely to the Jewish cause.

On 12 June 1895, Herzl confided to his diary his programme for the removal of the indigenous non-Jewish population from the Jewish State and the expropriation of private property by the Jewish State.

In those days, countries consisted of the few rich landowners and the multitude of poor, and Herzl had plans for each of these classes of population. With regard to the landowners, Herzl wrote in his diary: "When we occupy the land, we shall bring immediate benefits to the state that receives us. We must expropriate gently, the private property on the estates assigned to us." <sup>(1)</sup> For the remainder of the population, he wrote in his diary on the same day: "We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries whilst denying it any employment in our own country." <sup>(2)</sup> We can thus see that the means Herzl envisaged to transfer non-Jews out of the Jewish State, was to deny them sources of livelihood in the Jewish State, and find them employment elsewhere.

In the above extract, it is noticeable that Herzl did not use the words "Palestine" or "Arabs". As can be seen from his book "The Jewish State" (*Der Judenstaat*) which was also written (or at least drafted) in the summer of 1895, Herzl had not yet decided on the final location of the Jewish State. "Shall we choose Palestine or Argentina?" wrote Herzl, and listed the advantages of each of these two locations. <sup>(3)</sup> Although Herzl did not state this in his book, Argentina may have suggested itself to him, because of the then recent purchase by Baron Maurice de Hirsch of a very large tract of land in Argentina to resettle three million Jews. At that time, Herzl was trying to interest Hirsch in his ideas. However, we are mainly interested in Herzl's plan "to spirit the penniless (indigenous) population across the border."

Herzl was also vague about the "transit countries" to which the non-Jewish poor would be spirited. One of Herzl's biographers, Desmond Stewart, analyses this term in connection with both Argentina and Palestine. In the case of the former, Stewart comments, "There are no transit countries, only an ocean between Western Europe (where Herzl envisaged the Jewish migration as starting) and the coast of Latin America." With regard to Palestine, there would also be no "transit countries" since Herzl (from an entry in his diary) envisaged the settlers arriving at Jaffa by ship. Hence Stewart concludes, "All that is clear is that most of the natives will have to leave." <sup>(4)</sup>

Herzl realised that secrecy and discretion were necessary to put these ideas into practice. His diary entry thus continues, "The property-owners will come over to our side. Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly

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<sup>1</sup> / Theodor Herzl, Handwritten Diary entry 12 June 1895, (CZA H ii B i) ; The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl, trans. Harry Zohn, (New York, 1960), (henceforth Herzl Diaries), vol.1, p.88.

<sup>2</sup> / ) Ibid. ; Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> / Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, trans. Sylvie D'Avigdor, (London, 1946), (henceforth Herzl Jewish State), p.30.

<sup>4</sup> / Desmond Stewart, *Theodor Herzl*, (London, 1974), pp.191-92.



and circumspectly. Let the owners of immovable property believe that they are cheating us, selling us things for more than they are worth. But we are not going to sell them anything back." (1)

Herzl described his methods of expropriation. "The voluntary expropriation will be accomplished through our secret agents. The Company would pay excessive prices." Herzl was determined that once property had been acquired it would be retained in the hands of the Jews. "We shall then sell only to Jews, and all real estate will be traded only among Jews," he said. As a qualified lawyer, Herzl realised that he would not be able to declare sales to non-Jews invalid. He therefore took precautions to avoid resale to non-Jews, as he wrote, "If the owner wants to sell the property, we shall have the right to buy it back at our original sale price." (2)

Herzl realised that some property owners would, for sentimental reasons, be reluctant to part with their properties and in such cases these people "will be offered a complete transportation to any place they wish, like our own people. This offer will be made only when all others have been rejected." (3)

The phrase "like our own people" is amplified by Herzl in his book "The Jewish State", where he explains how the "Jewish Company" will arrange the exchange of non-transferable goods of Jews moving to the Jewish State. "For a house it will offer a house in the new country, and for land, land in the new country; everything being, if possible, transferred to the new soil in the same state as it was in the old." (4) Thus we can see, that in Herzl's programme, as propounded in his diary, "in the last instance" non-Jewish estate owners in the Jewish State would be offered equivalent housing and land outside the area of the Jewish State.

Herzl says that in the case of the estate owners not accepting this offer, no harm would be done to them. The Jewish State would "set the entire old world a wonderful example" since the Jewish leaders would "respectfully tolerate persons of other faiths and protect their property, their honor, and their freedom with the harshest means of coercion." (5)

However, on the same day that he wrote the above, Herzl also noted down in his diary, several unpleasant and dangerous tasks for "the natives" prior to their transfer: "If we move into a region where there are wild animals to which Jews are not accustomed - big snakes etc. - I shall use the natives, prior to giving them employment in the transit countries, for the extermination of these animals. High premiums for snake skins, etc, as well as their spawn." (6)

During the subsequent days, Herzl wrote an "Address to the Rothschilds" (which was to be the first draft of his book "The Jewish State"). Here, however, he omitted to mention the tasks for "the natives"! (7) A few months later in January 1896, Herzl wrote an article in "The Jewish Chronicle" of London entitled a "Solution to the Jewish Question" (8) and in February his book was published. In neither of these works did Herzl suggest using the indigenous peoples to rid the country of its wild beasts! "Supposing, for example, we were obliged to clear a country of wild beasts", wrote Herzl, "we should organise a large and lively hunting party, drive the animals together and throw a melinite bomb into their midst." (9)

Even if it is suggested that Herzl's diary entry proposing the use of "natives" to clear the country of snakes and wild beasts, was merely recognition of their superior skills at such tasks, the question remains as to why this solution was not proposed in his book, (which was written at about the same period), omitting, if desired, the phrase regarding "the natives" subsequent transfer.

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1 / Herzl, Handwritten Diary entry 12 June 1895, op. cit. Herzl Diaries, vol.1, p.88.

2 / Ibid. ; Ibid., p.89.

3 / Ibid. ; Ibid., p.90.

4 / Herzl Jewish State, p.34.

5 / Herzl, Handwritten Diary entry 12 June 1895, op. cit. ; Herzl Diaries, vol.1, p.88.

6 / Ibid. ; Ibid., p.98.

7 / Herzl Diaries, vol.1, pp.129-83.

8 / Theodor Herzl, A "Solution of the Jewish Question", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 17 January 1896, p.12.

9 / Herzl Jewish State, pp.28-29.

### Interpretations of Herzl's Diary Entry

Up to the 1970s, the various biographers of Herzl had been unaware of (or had suppressed!) Herzl's transfer plans. The first biographer to discuss them was Desmond Stewart, whose book entitled "Theodor Herzl" was published in 1974.

In attempting to analyse Herzl's approach to the non-Jewish inhabitants of the proposed Jewish State, Stewart linked Herzl's thoughts on "how to obtain the territorial basis for a (Jewish) state with British actions in Africa."

It must be remembered that this was the period when European powers, especially Britain, were acquiring colonies in the African continent. Herzl had studied the methods used by Cecil Rhodes, the British Empire builder to separate certain African tribes from control of their land. Stewart considered that "Herzl's stencil for obtaining a territory and clearing it for settlement was cut after the Rhodesian model" but added that "one problem - that of the native population - presented itself in a more urgent form to Herzl than to Rhodes." He explained that this was due to Herzl's envisaging the settling of "millions of Jews" in the Jewish State "all at once", whereas the settlement of Rhodesia "would be limited and over a protracted period", since Britain already had many "Homes". (1)

Stewart is not completely accurate here, since Herzl had written in "The Jewish State" that the departure of the Jews from their countries of residence would not be sudden. "It will", he said, "be gradual, continuous and will cover many decades." (2) However, it is certainly correct, that whereas the Jews were to have only the one Home, the British already had many colonies.

Stewart considered that from the reference books, almost certainly available in his Paris newspaper office, Herzl was fully aware of the extent of the non-Jewish population in Palestine, when on 12 June 1895, he devoted many pages in his diary to his plans for the removal of the natives. (3)

The historian Joseph Nedava disagreed with Stewart, whom he described as a "hostile biographer" (of Herzl). In his study, "Herzl and the Arab Problem", Nedava rejected Stewart's suggestion that Herzl was basing his plan for the indigenous population on the African model. Instead, Nedava, in explaining the phrase "to spirit the penniless population across the border", argued that Herzl realised that if he were to be faced with a "landless proleteriat in a newly developing colonising project" it would be "highly dangerous" and would "lead to catastrophe." Herzl was therefore "not adverse to driving the principle to its logical conclusion and entertain the idea of evacuating the landless to another country after providing for their integration there." The expropriation of private property was in order to "avoid ruinous speculation." (4)

Stewart, however, had largely based his "Rhodesian Model" theory on the meeting between Herzl and Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1898. (5) Of this meeting, the Kaiser wrote (in his unpublished memoirs), that Herzl's blueprints for large-scale settlement in Palestine would "culminate in a plan to create a 'Jewish Chartered Company' for Palestine patterned after the 'British Chartered Company in South Africa'." (6) Nedava made no attempt to explain the Kaiser's remarks.

The "British Chartered Company in South Africa", (British South Africa Company), governed part of south Central Africa and amongst its objects was "to encourage emigration and colonisation". It received a Royal Charter from Queen Victoria in October 1889, at the instigation of Cecil Rhodes, who became its managing director.

Stewart pointed out that whereas Rhodes gained Royal support in legalising his colonisation methods in Africa, Herzl foresaw that the extreme measures he advocated in

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1 / Stewart, Theodor Herzl, op. cit., pp.188-91.

2 / Herzl Jewish State, p.28.

3 / Stewart, Theodor Herzl, op. cit., p.191.

4 / Joseph Nedava, "Herzl and the Arab Problem", Forum (on the Jewish People, Zionism and Israel), (Jerusalem), no.2 (27), 1977, p.69.

5 / Stewart, Theodor Herzl, op. cit., p.188.

6 / Alex Bein, "Memoirs and Documents about Herzl's Meetings with the Kaiser", Herzl Year Book, vol.6, (New York, 1965), p.61.

planning colonisation in the Jewish State would "temporarily alienate civilised opinion." <sup>(1)</sup> He wrote in his diary, "At first, incidentally, people will avoid us. We are in bad odor." Herzl realised however, that this unpleasantness would only be a transient phenomenon and was worth the price. He then added, "By the time of reshaping of world opinion in our favor has been completed, we shall be firmly established in our country, no longer fearing the influx of foreigners, and receiving our visitors with aristocratic benevolence and proud amicability." <sup>(2)</sup>

In his book "The Jewish State", Herzl had propounded a similar idea regarding the Jews from the Jewish State returning to their previous countries of residence. He wrote, "If some of them (Jews) return, they will receive the same favourable welcome and treatment at the hands of civilised nations as is accorded to all foreign visitors." <sup>(3)</sup>

Stewart's biography of Herzl was carefully researched and during the period 1971-72, he exchanged a considerable amount of correspondence with Mark Braham, a man who had written about Herzl in his book "Jews Don't Hate". A number of these letters dealt with Herzl's plans for the transfer of the indigenous population from the proposed Jewish State.

Although Braham would describe himself as an "anti-Zionist", <sup>(4)</sup> the Press Officer of the British Zionist Federation wrote to him giving a different assessment: "You certainly present our case extremely eloquently and as a Zionist I find there are only a very few trivial and minor points on which I would disagree with you." <sup>(5)</sup>

This exchange of correspondence began in March 1971, when Stewart wrote to Braham telling him that Braham's "interpretation of the character and motivation of Herzl was similar" to his, and Stewart thus wanted to consult with him whilst preparing his book. This put Braham in a quandary. On the one hand, since Stewart was not sympathetic towards Zionism, non-cooperation could lead to Stewart producing "a work that was bound to be slanted against Zionism and Israel." On the other hand, cooperation might possibly "be an influence of moderation on what might otherwise become an unbalanced and dangerous work." Braham chose the second alternative and when Stewart's book was published realised that he had made the right choice. <sup>(6)</sup>

Stewart would send Braham typescript of the various chapters of his book when they were ready, which he would then read. However, Braham commented that after he had read the chapter dealing with Herzl's transfer proposals, he read no more of the typescript. As Braham said, "I began to feel that my position was untenable. I found myself in the position where I became counsel for the defence for Herzl in a desperate search to explain the entries." <sup>(7)</sup> As we shall see, in course of the following months Braham kept putting forward different reasons in his correspondence with Stewart, in order to try and play down or talk away Herzl's transfer plans.

Stewart finished in "rough draft" the chapter dealing with Herzl's transfer plans in early May 1972, and presumably immediately sent Braham a copy. On 18 May Braham gave Stewart the following answer to Herzl's transfer plans: He felt that Herzl was "not concerned with shifting the Arabs as such; his concern is to shift the poor and he fully expects the 'property owners' to 'come over to our side'. This fits neatly into his basic plan to destroy the Jew and create a new nation, a middle class paradise, liberal, secular and European. He had no use for the Arab tribesmen, not because they were Arabs, but because they were gypsies." <sup>(8)</sup>

Just over a week later, (it seems that he had not yet received Braham's letter), Stewart asked in a postscript, "Are there any Talmudic quotations ruling out the kind of policy of force

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<sup>1</sup> / Stewart, Theodor Herzl, op. cit., p.192.

<sup>2</sup> / Herzl, Handwritten Diary entry 12 June 1895, op. cit. ; Herzl Diaries, pp.88-89.

<sup>3</sup> / Herzl Jewish State, p.20.

<sup>4</sup> / Braham to Stewart, 31 July 1972, (SU).

<sup>5</sup> / Jacobs to Braham, 31 October 1973, (SU).

<sup>6</sup> / "Theodor Herzl: Artist and Politician" A paper by Mark Braham as presented to the Adult Jewish Study Circle, Rose Bay, New South Wales Australia, for Discussion on 14 and 28 May 1974 (henceforth Paper), p.1, (papers of Mark Braham).

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid., p.2.

<sup>8</sup> / Braham to Stewart, "Around Pentecost" (18 May) 1972, (SU).

& deception which Herzl assumed would be necessary for dealing with the 'natives' - whether in Argentina or Palestine?" (1) There is no record of Braham answering this question!

In early July 1972, Braham went to Jews' College Library in London to look up Herzl's diary, in particular the reference for 12 June 1895 - the date that Herzl had proposed transfer. He informed Stewart that the impression that he got from these diary entries was that "Herzl was simply setting down a formula in the abstract for setting up a state in a territory inhabited by 'natives'," and that his attitude towards non-Europeans was the typical 19th century European attitude with Herzl being a typical example. (2) In a paper presented by Braham to an Adult Jewish Study Circle in New South Wales, Australia in May 1974, he brought further evidence of this attitude, by mentioning a case in 1837, just a generation prior to Herzl, where "the Australian responsible for the Myall Creek murders had pleaded in court that they did not know it was against the law to shoot aborigines." (3)

Stewart in his book had compared Herzl to Rhodes, but Braham held that Herzl had "an immense respect for the rule of law" and this fact set him above Rhodes. (4) However, support for this assessment by Stewart comes from the biography of Herzl by Jacob de Haas, who personally knew and worked with Herzl. In this biography we see that Herzl was in fact an admirer and supporter of Rhodes's ideas. (5)

Later in his letter, Braham considered that Herzl's "scheme to buy the land at excessive prices and in secrecy" was "the classic ploy of property developers and businesses whose stock in trade is to pay what appears to be a handsome price for a piece of land without disclosing its true potential. My conclusion is that Herzl was a coloniser, certainly; there is no doubt he intended to create a state over the heads of the indigenous population - but by stealth rather than force of arms." (6)

In his reply to this letter, Stewart wrote that he agreed with almost everything Braham wrote on this subject in his letter, adding "but it is also very close to what I wrote!" (7)

Braham had realised his limitations and thus searched for a Jewish scholar who could advise him "about problems" beyond his "limited capacity". (8) The scholar he found was Bruno Marmorstein,(9) who at that time was Chairman of the Board of Governors of Jews' College, and a few weeks earlier with the "willing cooperation" of Stewart (10) had passed on to him the typescript for an opinion. Before reading Stewart's draft, Marmorstein had "been ignorant of the existence of these entries (as 99 Jews out of every 100 undoubtedly are)." (11) Braham also commented that he himself did not really believe they existed until he had checked it out a few weeks earlier. He had in the past put down the rumours he had heard about such entries to the "propaganda of the kind one associates with anti-Semites." (12)

In his reply, Stewart wrote that he was not surprised "that Bruno Marmorstein and 99% of Jews everywhere are ignorant of the passage about spiriting the poor across the frontiers." He then went on to try and link Herzl's transfer schemes with "the whole series of laws passed by the Zionist state immediately after the 1948 exodus. Laws by which even temporarily abandoned property was made over to Israel; laws by which whole areas were proclaimed military zones and the Arabs moved out 'for security reasons'; you must read Sabri

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1 / Stewart to Braham, 26 May 1972, (SU).

2 / Braham to Stewart, 6 July 1972, (SU).

3 / Paper, p.3 ; Mark Braham, "Some skeletons in the Zionist Cupboard", Jewish Tribune, (London), 27 December 1974, p.5.

4 /Braham to Stewart, 6 July 1972, op. cit.

5 / Jacob de Haas, Theodor Herzl, A Biographical Study, vol. ii, (Chicago, 1927), p.38.

6 / Braham to Stewart, 6 July 1972, op. cit.

7 / Stewart to Braham, 21 July 1972, (SU).

8 / Paper, p.1.

9 / Braham to Stewart, 6 July 1972, (SU).

10 / Paper, p.3.

11 / Braham to Stewart, 19 July 1972, (SU).

12 / Paper, p.3 ; Jewish Tribune, op. cit.

Jirjis for this; he is an Israeli Arab lawyer who gives all the details of operations which are in the spirit of Herzl's diaries." (1)

On receiving this letter from Stewart, Braham wrote to David Jacobs, Press Officer of the British Zionist Federation, bringing these quotes from Herzl's diary and Stewart's argument that "the Arab refugee problem has its origins in Herzl's Diaries." (2) He felt confident that Jacobs "had come across these entries in the Diaries and had some explanation - perhaps a mistranslation or ambiguity." (3) Braham certainly did not expect the answer which Jacobs immediately sent him: "I feel it is very unlikely that these quotes [from Herzl's diaries] are in fact genuine." (4)

In a letter to Stewart, Braham reported on his correspondence with Jacobs adding, "His reply, enclosed, will astonish you as much as it did me, I am sure. When I said that 99 out of every 100 Jews would not be aware of this material it was a serious underestimate. Imagine, the PR officer of what is probably the second most important Zionist Federation in the world doubts the validity of the quotes. And this is perfectly genuine, quite obviously." He then commented on the success of the suppression of these quotes from Herzl's diary: "I really did not suspect that the efforts of the Zionist editors had been quite so successful: I once remarked, half jokingly ... that there certainly was a Zionist conspiracy - against the Jews! I begin to think so on this score." (5)

Several months later, Braham reported to Jacobs how he was "approaching the problem of some of these outrageous entries in the Herzl Diaries." He argued that modern Zionism began half a century before Herzl. Herzl's grandfather Simon Loeb Herzl had been a member of Rabbi Alkalai's congregation in Semlin and the source of his Zionism was in fact from his grandfather. When Theodor Herzl came on the scene, Zionism was already a worldwide movement. Braham argued that "Herzl was something of an irresponsible artist and much of his Diary contains ill-considered, almost idle, jottings. ... The Zionist movement should consider cutting Herzl down to size; the alternative is to risk having these entries thrown up as 'inspired words of the prophet'." (6)

In 1989, Shabtai Teveth came to a different conclusion from Braham regarding Herzl's plans for Arab transfer: "In retrospect it appears perfectly logical that this notion of an all-encompassing Jewish transfer in Herzl's thinking would be accompanied - if only for the sake of symmetry - by a parallel and just as comprehensive a transfer or 'evacuation' of Arabs." (7) If in fact Teveth's reasoning is correct, Herzl "for the sake of symmetry" would have included Arab transfer in his published book "The Jewish State", in the same way as he included Jewish transfer. However, as we know, Herzl "hid" his plans for Arab transfer in the pages of his private diary!

### **Herzl's True Thoughts**

Do Herzl's diaries accurately reflect his thoughts? An article written by Harry Zohn, the English translator of his diaries, clearly gives a definite affirmative answer. Zohn writes that the Herzl diaries are a "remarkably frank record of the incorruptible, outspoken Herzl who detested dissimulation and self-deception and who noted on the very first pages that his diary entries would be valueless if he attempted to play the hypocrite with himself. The Diaries are therefore a voluminous and unblushing compendium of Herzl's triumphs and tragedies, not merely in the arena of world politics but on a personal plane as well, presenting Herzl from within." (8) Similar views are expressed by Alex Bein in his

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1 / Stewart to Braham, 22 July 1972, (SU).

2 / Braham to Jacobs, 27 July 1972, (SU).

3 / Paper, p.3; Jewish Tribune, op. cit.

4 / Jacobs to Braham, 28 July 1972, (SU).

5 / Braham to Stewart, 31 July 1972, op. cit.

6 / Braham to Jacobs, 16 October 1972, (SU).

7 / Shabtai Teveth, The Evolution of "Transfer" in Zionist Thinking, (Tel Aviv, 1989), p.2 ; Ha'arezt, (Tel-Aviv), 23 September 1988, p.5 bet.

8 / Harry Zohn, "The Herzl Diaries", Herzl Year Book, vol.3, (New York, 1960), p.208.

biography of Herzl. <sup>(1)</sup>

Unlike his books, Herzl's diaries were not intended for publication during his lifetime. Soon after his death, the question of publishing his diaries arose.

David Wolffsohn, Herzl's successor as President of the World Zionist Organisation, quoted Max Nordau, who, in emphatically opposing their publication, said, "You will ruin Herzl's name if you publish his diaries. Whoever reads them is bound to believe that he was a fool and a swindler." <sup>(2)</sup> This statement is not elaborated upon, but possibly relates to Herzl's views, as propounded in his diary, on the appropriate treatment for the indigenous population of the proposed Jewish State, since Nordau was strongly against prominent Zionist figures putting forward transfer proposals in public.

We can see this from a letter which he wrote in 1919 to the Anglo-Jewish writer, Israel Zangwill, who was a strong supporter of transfer of the Arabs. Nordau described Zangwill's stand on the Arab question as "regrettable". He wrote, "It's no use qualifying your scheme as your own individual idea - we have not to count on the good faith of our eternal enemies, and henceforward they will quote you as their authority for the accusation that, not you Israel Zangwill, but the Jews, all the Jews, are an intolerant lot dreaming only violence and high-handed dealings and expulsion of non-Jews." <sup>(3)</sup>

The original letter of Nordau's has not been traced, although from a number of postcards and letters exchanged between the two of them at that period, <sup>(4)</sup> we know that they were in regular contact.

We do however have the reply sent by Zangwill to Nordau on 28 January. In this letter, he pointed out that Nordau "somewhat misconceived my attitude on the Arab question". He added that at the same time he had "received a similar castigation from my old friend, Judge Sulzberger, of America." Zangwill was however so firm in his opinion on the Arab question that he wrote, "but not even both these stars in their courses fighting against me have altered my conviction that I am absolutely in the right." He then asked Nordau for his "own solution of this vexing question, which, to my mind, is the destruction of Zionism." <sup>(5)</sup>

When, a few years later, which was nineteen years after Herzl's death, his diaries were first published, Joseph Bloch, the great fighter of anti-Semitism, was "appalled". <sup>(6)</sup>

### Herzl's Letter to Al-Khalidi

Herzl's public attitude (which is quite different from his private views!) towards the indigenous population is illustrated in a letter he wrote to Youssuf Zia Al-Khalidi, Mayor of Jerusalem, in 1899.

At the beginning of March 1899, Al-Khalidi had written to Zadok Kahn, Chief Rabbi of France, saying that the Zionists' case was just but could not be implemented in Palestine due to the opposition of the Turks and the local population. Al-Khalidi suggested that the Jews would do better if they went elsewhere. <sup>(7)</sup> Rabbi Kahn forwarded the letter to Herzl and suggested that he make an authoritative reply.

On 19 March, Herzl replied to Al-Khalidi in a letter which was both meek and reassuring. "You see another difficulty, Excellency, in the existence of the non-Jewish population in Palestine. But who would think of sending them away?" wrote Herzl, "It is their well-being, their individual wealth which we increase by bringing in our own." He went on to point out that Jewish colonisation would cause the value of Arab land to rise five or ten-fold in the course of a few months. <sup>(8)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Alex Bein, Theodore Herzl, A Biography, trans. Maurice Samuel, (Cleveland, 1962), pp.134-35.

<sup>2</sup> / David Wolffsohn, Diary entry 7(?) November 1906, p.2, (CZA W 35/3).

<sup>3</sup> / Nordau to Zangwill, 15 January 1919, quoted by Joseph Nedava, "British Plans for the Resettlement of Palestinian Arabs", Forum (on the Jewish People, Zionism, and Israel), (Jerusalem), no.42/43, Winter 1981, p.106.

<sup>4</sup> / Postcards and letters may be found in CZA A120/509.

<sup>5</sup> / Zangwill to Nordau, 28 January 1919, (CZA A120/509).

<sup>6</sup> / Braham to Jacobs, 16 October 1972, (SU).

<sup>7</sup> / Youssuf Zia Al-Khalidi to Rabbi Zadok Kahn, 1 March 1899, (CZA H iii D 13).

<sup>8</sup> / Theodor Herzl to Youssuf Zia Al-Khalidi, 19 March 1899, (CZA H iii D 13); Walid Khalidi, ed., From Haven to Conquest, (Beirut, 1971), p.92.

Another example of Herzl's public pronouncements on this subject arose in May 1903, during the course of a discussion on the question of the purchase of the Jezreel valley. Herzl is reported to have remarked, "One cannot displace these poor Arab farmers from the soil." (1)

### Herzl's Charter

Amongst the Herzl papers at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, is Herzl's Draft Charter. (2) This document is typewritten with some handwritten amendments. It is undated and is in German.

One of Herzl's objectives was to gain a Charter for Palestine. He felt that this should precede colonisation of the country. Until the British conquest, towards the end of the First World War, Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire. Herzl considered that the Zionist movement's diplomatic achievements depended on Turkey, which at that time was in chronic financial difficulties and Herzl's strategy was therefore centred on a plan to gain the approval of the Sultan.

On 15 May 1901, a long-planned audience with the Sultan finally took place, but Herzl did not mention his proposed Charter at this meeting. However, at a meeting held a few days later with the Sultan's representatives, Herzl "propounded the Charter ... for the first time" and he "contented" himself "with their listening to all these suggestions". One of the Sultan's representatives then went to inform the Sultan of Herzl's proposals and he returned to inform Herzl that the Sultan expects to receive Herzl's "definite proposals within a month" (3).

From Herzl's diary, we can see that on 29 May 1901, which was two weeks after his meeting with the Sultan, Arminius Vambery, (a Hungarian Orientalist, who worked closely with Herzl), met with Herzl in Germany. After giving Vambery a report, Vambery responded that "we shall have the Charter this very year". He informed Herzl that he planned to go to Constantinople that September and that "meanwhile he [Vambery] would like me [Herzl] to make a draft of the Charter which he intends to present to the Sultan and get it signed by him without any Secretary or Minister finding out about it". (4)

The next mention of this Charter in Herzl's diary is dated 21 August 1901 and is a copy of a letter Herzl sent to Vambery. He wrote: "I am herewith returning to you Draft I, which met with your approval, because I have a copy of it". We can thus see that some time prior to this date, Herzl had sent Vambery a copy of his draft Charter and asked Vambery for his comments. Vambery had expressed satisfaction and returned this draft to Herzl. However, since Herzl already had a copy, he sent it back to Vambery. The draft Charter was in German and it would seem that Vambery had suggested preparing a French translation, since Herzl continues his letter to Vambery: "Translating it into French is pointless, because it probably will not be practicable in this form".

In order to implement his plan, Herzl wrote in his letter that "first of all he [the Sultan] must give the Charter, specifically, to the Jewish Colonial Trust for the formation of the *Compagnie Ottomane-Juive pour l'Asie Mineure, la Palestine et la Syrie* [Ottoman-Jewish Company for Asia Minor, Palestine and Syria]. To give the whole thing a financially sound character, the Jewish Colonial Trust could deposit a security of, say, one million francs as soon as the Charter is delivered to us, and this earnest would be forfeited to the Turkish treasury if the Company was not founded within a certain period of time".

Herzl concluded by saying that "Draft I would therefore have to serve only as a preamble, and you will certainly know yourself the most appropriate manner in which it can be used". (5)

Walid Khalidi, (a founder of the Institute for Palestine Studies and its General Secretary), concluded that the draft Charter was "drawn up sometime between the summer of

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1 / Adolf Friedemann, *Das Leben Theodor Herzls*, (Berlin, 1914), p.22.

2 / CZA H vi A 2.

3 / Herzl Diaries, vol.3. pp.1135-36.

4 / Herzl Diaries, vol.3. p.1144.

5 / Herzl Diaries, vol.3. pp.1173-74.

1901 and early 1902".<sup>(1)</sup> However, from the above diary entry, it seems to have been written before August 1901. It is of course possible that the draft Charter in the Central Zionist Archives is a latter draft, although there does not seem to be any evidence to support the existence of such a later draft.

The contents of Herzl's Charter deal with the privileges, rights and obligations concerning the colonisation of Palestine and Syria.<sup>(2)</sup> [Until after the end of the First World War, there were no actual borders between the regions of Palestine and Syria - it was all part of the Ottoman Empire. "Palestine and Syria" was the term used when planning Jewish settlement during this period.]

Included in Herzl's Charter were paragraphs dealing with the loan which the Company would make to the Sultan; the right of the Company to bring Jewish immigrants into the region; the option to acquire certain categories of lands in the region; autonomy; Jewish military defence units and the appointment of a Governor and a Chief Justice for the area.

Paragraph 3 of this Charter reads, "The right to exchange economic enclaves in the area - with the exception of the Holy Places or places of worship - by compensating the owners with equally large and equally qualitative plots in other provinces and lands throughout the Ottoman Empire. The emigration costs are to be paid to the owners and they are to receive an advance for building necessary housing and buying necessary utensils to be repaid in instalments over a number of years, the security being the plots they received in exchange."<sup>(3)</sup>

This paragraph in Herzl's Charter conferred the right to acquire certain (Arab) lands in Palestine and Syria, giving in exchange comparative plots of land within the Ottoman Empire, while financially assisting the previous owners with emigration and resettlement. For example, under Herzl's proposals, the Jews would have the right to transfer an Arab from Jaffa to Constantinople, provided they paid his transfer expenses and gave him an equivalent parcel of land at his new destination.

It is not absolutely clear whether Herzl was referring to a "right" to transfer Arabs compulsorily or merely assist their voluntary transfer. The wording in his Charter strongly indicates transfer of a compulsory nature. This opinion is also held by David Hirst in his book "The Gun and the Olive Branch" where he writes, "Article Three of the draft charter would have granted the Jews the right to deport the native population."<sup>(4)</sup> An almost identical wording is used by the Dutch Orientalist, Van Der Hoeven Leonhard.<sup>(5)</sup> However, when assessing the weight to be attached to these opinions, it should be remembered that these two authors show an anti-Zionist bias. It is also just conceivable that this Charter refers to a voluntary transfer and the "right" is that granted by Turkey, (who in the past had put many obstacles in the way of Jewish settlement in Palestine), allowing the Jews to exchange land after its owners had agreed to move out of Palestine. However in January 1901, just a few months prior to Herzl writing this Charter, the Ottoman administration had removed many of the restrictions on Jews regarding the purchase of land and the building on it, in Palestine,<sup>(6)</sup> and this thus strengthens the argument that it was intended to be a compulsory transfer. Furthermore, restrictive expressions such as "equally large and equally qualitative plots" are used; were the exchange by agreement with the owners, they might have preferred monetary compensation, or a larger quantity of land of a lower quality. From all this we might conclude that the intentions of Herzl were for compulsory transfer.

Throughout his Zionist career, Herzl had strong feelings that the Holy Places must be given extraterritorial status and it is therefore fully understandable that he immediately

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<sup>1</sup> / Walid Khalidi, "The Jewish-Ottoman Land Company: Herzl's Blueprint for the Colonization of Palestine", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Berkeley), vol.XXII no.2 (Winter 1993) p.30.

<sup>2</sup> / Theodor Herzl, *Uebereinkommen uber die Privilegien, Rechte, Schuldigkeiten u. Pflichten der Judische-Ottomanischen Land-Compagnie (J.O.L.C.) zur Besiedelung von Palastina und Syrien*, (CZA H vi A 2); Adolf Bohm, *Die Zionistische Bewegung*, (Berlin, 1935), pp.705ff; Khalidi, *Jewish-Ottoman Land Company*, op.cit., pp.44-47, (English translation).

<sup>3</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.2; *Ibid.*, p.706; *Ibid.*, p.44-45.

<sup>4</sup> / David Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, (New York, 1977), p.18.

<sup>5</sup> / L.M.C. Van Der Hoeven Leonhard, "Shlomo and David, Palestine, 1907", *From Haven to Conquest*, op.cit., p.119.

<sup>6</sup> / Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, (Berkeley, 1976), p.15.



excluded them from this "right".<sup>(1)</sup>

This Charter was unrealised, since the Jewish bankers whom Herzl approached for the loan for the Sultan told him to return when he had an agreement with the Sultan and the Sultan told Herzl that he would only negotiate after he had the loan!

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that David Wolffsohn when composing a charter for Palestine in 1907, followed the points made by Herzl in his charter, except that he completely omitted the paragraph giving the right to transfer Arabs out of Palestine into some other part of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>(2)</sup> It is of course possible that Wolffsohn disagreed with this transfer plan of Herzl's. On the other hand, he may of been influenced by Nordau's appeal not to publish Herzl's diaries, an appeal which we saw earlier, was quoted by Wolffsohn in his diary.

## DAVID BEN-GURION

David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister and Defence Minister of the State of Israel was born in Plonsk in 1886 and at the age of twenty emigrated to Palestine. His numerous Zionist activities included directing the New York branch of the Hehalutz organisation in 1915 where he trained young Jews to settle in Palestine. Four years later he called upon Jewish workers in Palestine and the Diaspora to unite in forming a political force that would direct the Zionist movement towards the establishment of a new Jewish socialist society in Palestine. Amongst the various offices which he held, before the establishment of the Jewish State, were Secretary General of the Histadrut and Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive.

### Ben-Gurion's Transfer Proposals

On 9 July 1936, Ben-Gurion and Shertok met with the High Commissioner of Palestine, Sir Arthur Wauchope at Government House, Jerusalem. Shertok recorded a note of the conversation. At this meeting they discussed the embargo on immigration, Cantonisation and Transjordan, and the reopening of the Port of Jaffa. While discussing the subject of Transjordan, "Mr. Ben-Gurion asked whether the Government would make it possible for Arab cultivators displaced through Jewish land purchase in western Palestine to be settled in Transjordan", adding that if Transjordan was closed to Jewish settlement, it surely could not be closed to Arabs.<sup>(3)</sup> The High Commissioner thought that this was "a good idea", but his advisers contended that since Transjordan was such a poor country, it was impossible to increase its population without at the same time increasing its capital resources. The High Commissioner asked "whether the Jews would be prepared to spend money on the settlement of such Palestinian Arabs in Transjordan." Ben-Gurion replied that this could be considered.

Shertok "remarked that the Jewish colonising agencies were in any case spending money in providing for the tenants or cultivators who had to be shifted as a result of Jewish land purchase either by the payment of compensation or through the provision of alternative land. They would gladly spend that money on the settlement of these people in Transjordan."<sup>(4)</sup> From Shertok's words "had to be shifted," it would appear that such transfers could be compulsory, and his assertion that the Jews would "gladly spend... money to settle the displaced Arabs in Transjordan" suggests preference for resettling the Arabs in this region,

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<sup>1</sup> / Herzl Jewish State, p.30; The Writings of Herzl, (Jerusalem, 1961), vol.7, p.74; Herzl Diaries, vol.4, p.1603.

<sup>2</sup> / Notebook of David Wolffsohn, undated entry (between 5 October 1907 and 10 November 1907), "Wolffsohn's Charter" pp.18-21 (French text), pp.22-26 (German text), (CZA W10) ; Paul Alsberg, The Policy of the Zionist Executive in the Period between the Death of Herzl and the Outbreak of World War I, Doctoral Thesis, (Hebrew University, Jerusalem, [n.d.] (1958)), p.24 (summary of Charter in Hebrew) ; Ben Halpern, The Idea of the Jewish State, (Cambridge Mass, 1969), pp.263-64, (brief summary of Charter in English).

<sup>3</sup> / Note on Conversation between Ben-Gurion, Shertok and High Commissioner, 9 July 1936, p.5, (CZA S25/19).

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid.

rather than in another part of Palestine.

In a report on the meeting made to the Jewish Agency Executive on the following day by Ben-Gurion himself, he said that he had told the High Commissioner that "if at present Jews are not permitted to settle in Transjordan; at least give us permission to purchase land in Transjordan and settle there Arabs from Palestine from whom we are buying land." (1)

Ben-Gurion also wrote of this proposal in a letter to Zalman Rubashov (later Shazar) on 17 July. There Ben-Gurion added that the High Commissioner had previously been strongly opposed to Jews purchasing land in Transjordan for the resettlement of Arabs from Palestine, but that he no longer opposed it. (2) This indicated that it was not Ben-Gurion's first attempt at enlisting the High Commissioner's support for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Transjordan.

We do know that such an attempt was made in July 1933 and that the High Commissioner had opposed it. The village of Rumman in Transjordan was up for sale or long-term lease, and Moshe Shertok "suggested that the [Palestine] Government may like to purchase the property for settlement thereon of 'landless Arabs'". (3) In answer, the High Commissioner wrote that "The Palestine Government has no intention of entertaining the suggestion that these lands might be purchased for the purpose of resettling Arabs who have been rendered landless in Palestine as a result of the change from Arab to Jewish landlords ... Any attempt on the part of the Palestine Government to transfer Palestinian Arabs to new holdings in Trans-Jordan would be looked upon as tantamount to expulsion of the existing inhabitants of this country." (4) However, as we shall see later, after the start of the Arab rebellion in Palestine in 1936, the very same High Commissioner himself ordered the "repatriation" of Arabs whose "presence in Palestine" was "considered undesirable"!

On 10 November 1936, at a meeting of the Zionist General Council, held in preparation for the arrival of the Peel Commission, Ben-Gurion made a long statement which included his same transfer proposal. (5)

Nearly seven months later, in May 1937, Ben-Gurion had a meeting with some colleagues amongst whom was included Pinhas Rutenberg. Rutenberg was a Russo-Jewish electrical engineer and founder and director of the Palestine Electric Company, who had set up a hydro-electric power station in Transjordan to harness the waters of the upper Jordan and the Yarmuk rivers. On the political level, he had co-operated in the 1930s with a number of other Jewish personalities, including Magnes and Smilensky (two strong opponents of Arab transfer), in search of a programme for Arab-Jewish understanding.

At this meeting on 5 May, it was concluded that "We see need... to pressure the British Government" on the possibility of Jewish settlement in Transjordan, "or at least the possibility of purchasing land for the purpose of settling Arabs from Western Palestine who will agree to transfer to Transjordan." (6) This was the first time that Ben-Gurion, in putting forward this transfer proposal, had included the element of agreement by the Arabs. However, this is not necessarily Ben-Gurion's own personal opinion but a joint statement as evidenced by the opening "We see" (our emphasis).

At another meeting held a month later, between Ben-Gurion and Rutenberg a joint letter was prepared which mentioned this transfer proposal and included the element of Arab consent. (7) However, in the interval between these two meetings, Ben-Gurion again mentioned this proposal, not this time in Rutenberg's presence and without this time including the need for Arab consent! (8)

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes of Meeting Jewish Agency Executive, Jerusalem, (henceforth Minutes J.A. Exec.), vol.25/3, no.65a, 10 July 1936, p.3, (CZA).

<sup>2</sup> / Ben-Gurion to Zalman Rubashov (Shazar), 17 July 1936, (BGA) ; David Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, (henceforth Ben-Gurion Memoirs), vol.3, (Tel-Aviv, 1973), p.343.

<sup>3</sup> / Andrews to Chief Secretary, 10 July 1933, (PRO CO 733/231/17249).

<sup>4</sup> / Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister, 22 July 1933, (PRO CO 733/231/17249).

<sup>5</sup> / Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, op. cit., p.491.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., vol.4, (Tel-Aviv, 1974), p.175.

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid., p.207.

<sup>8</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 15 May 1937, (BGA) ; Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol.4, op. cit., p.177.

Ben-Gurion's transfer proposals were not limited to transferring Arabs to Transjordan. In December 1937, he entered in his diary a proposal to transfer Arabs - this time from Palestine to Syria. On 9 December, Ben-Gurion had a meeting with Yehoshua Henkin, a major purchaser of land in Palestine for the Jewish National Fund, and questioned him regarding the purchase of land in Upper Galilee and in the North of Palestine. <sup>(1)</sup>

Four days later, Joseph Nachmani, another land purchaser, handed Ben-Gurion a detailed list of lands which could be purchased in Upper Galilee, together with survey of the number of tenant farmers and Bedouin currently working on these lands. <sup>(2)</sup> Whereupon Ben-Gurion commented in his diary, "At present there are difficulties regarding the purchase of land; there is the question of the Arab tenant farmers and the Bedouin; there are political difficulties." In Northern Syria, in particular the el-Jezireh area, there were wide open spaces settled by Kurds and non-Arab tribes. Ben-Gurion's proposal was that, "By agreement with the Syrian government it would be possible to transfer large numbers of tenant farmers and Bedouin to Northern Syria. The land there is cheap and plentiful." If the Arab tenant-farmers were to be transferred from the Galilean Hills, the Jewish farmers would be able to establish orchards and grow tobacco there. <sup>(3)</sup>

In this proposal, Ben-Gurion does not specify whether the Arab tenant-farmers and Bedouin would have to give their consent to their proposed transfer to Northern Syria where the land was "cheap and plentiful."

As we can see, the above-mentioned proposals suggested by Ben-Gurion were for transfer of Arabs just from Palestine west of the Jordan river. However, two years earlier, in the summer of 1934, Ben-Gurion put forward a proposal which would have involved transferring Arabs from Transjordan as well as from Palestine west of the Jordan.

This proposal was made in a meeting with the Arab leader Shekib Arslan, who at the time was living in Geneva. At this meeting, Ben-Gurion suggested that "if the Arabs would leave Palestine and Transjordan to the Jews, they could count on Jewish help, not only in resettling the displaced Palestinians, but for Arab causes in other countries." Ben-Gurion's proposal received a "summary rejection" by Arslan! <sup>(4)</sup>

### **Enthusiastic Reaction to Transfer Proposal**

On 3 July 1937, Ben-Gurion, who was at the time in London, received a summary of the Peel Report from Moshe Shertok, in Cairo. The same day, Ben-Gurion wrote a letter back to Shertok commenting on the Report's recommendations. He told Shertok that one paragraph remained unclear - the transfer of the Arab population. "Is the proposal a voluntary one or a compulsory one? It is difficult for me to believe in a compulsory transfer, and it is difficult for me to believe in a transfer by agreement." <sup>(5)</sup> Towards the evening of 6 July, Ben-Gurion received a full copy of the Report and by the afternoon of 10 July he had completed his first reading. On 11 July, he noted in his diary that the proposal to transfer the Arabs out of the proposed Jewish State would give a bargaining counter. "If the Arabs agree to give us the Dead Sea and the Negev - it may be worth our while to forgo their compulsory transfer from the plains, as proposed by the Commission."

Ben-Gurion considered that the implementation of this transfer proposal presented "great difficulties and it is doubtful whether the British will implement it, even assuming that Abdullah, (the ruler of Transjordan) agrees to it." Ben-Gurion considered that Abdullah would undoubtedly be interested in such a transfer of Arabs both for financial and other reasons. <sup>(6)</sup>

Abdullah, one of the sons of Sherif Hussein of Mecca, had, in 1921, moved into

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<sup>1</sup> / Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, vol.4, op. cit., p.465.

<sup>2</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, *Handwritten Diary entry 13 December 1937*, (BGA) ; Ben-Gurion *Memoirs*, vol.4, op. cit., pp.471-72.

<sup>3</sup> / *Ibid.* ; *Ibid.*, p.472.

<sup>4</sup> / Sir Geoffrey Furlonge, *Palestine is My Country*, (New York, 1969), p.105.

<sup>5</sup> / Ben-Gurion *Memoirs*, vol.4, op. cit., p.278.

<sup>6</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, *Handwritten Diary entry 11 July 1937*, (BGA) ; Ben-Gurion *Memoirs*, vol.4, op. cit., pp.296-97.

Transjordan with a band of guerilla Arabs, declaring his intention to recover Syria, from which his brother Feisal had been driven out by the French. Winston Churchill, then British Colonial Secretary, went to the Middle East to meet with Abdullah and promised him recognition as Emir of Transjordan, provided that he did not violate the frontier with Syria. At his meeting with Churchill, Abdullah had asked whether the British Government's policy was to "establish a Jewish Kingdom west of the Jordan and to turn out the non-Jewish population?" Abdullah said, "The Allies appeared to think that men could be cut down and transplanted in the same way as trees." The High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel, who had accompanied Churchill replied that "there was no intention either to cut down or to transplant but only to plant new ones." Churchill said that there was a "great deal of groundless apprehension among the Arabs in Palestine" and that their rights would be strictly preserved." (1)

In July 1937, Ben-Gurion, writing in his diary on the Peel transfer proposal, continued, "We should not assume that it is definitely impossible. If it were put into effect, it would be of tremendous advantage to us." Transfer would enable vast numbers of Jews to settle on land previously occupied by Arabs. "For every transferred Arab, one could settle four Jews on the land," and even more Jews in non-agrarian occupations. In fact, Ben-Gurion considered it very doubtful whether within the entire Negev, one could settle even half the number of Jews that could be contained within the lesser area proposed by the Peel Commission for the Jewish State, were the Arabs to be transferred from this area.

Ben-Gurion concluded that the choice between the addition of the Negev to the proposed Jewish State or the compulsory transfer of the Arabs from the Plains was not easy. "But if the Government rejects the Commission's proposal for compulsory transfer - which is almost certain - then we will have an additional and weighty argument in favour of our claim on the Negev." (2)

At that time, there were already a number of Jewish settlements on the eastern side of the River Jordan. These were situated between the Sea of Galilee and the junction between the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers. Geographically, these settlements were in Transjordan, but in fact this small area of land was outside the boundaries of Transjordan as they had been fixed in 1922. According to the Peel Commission's recommendations the area of these settlements was to become part of the Arab State and its Jewish inhabitants transferred to the Jewish State. The Zionists made an immediate appeal for this small area to be incorporated within the boundaries of the Jewish State. (3) However, as Ben-Gurion noted in his diary, "In the event of the compulsory transfer being rejected by the Government, we will remain in Transjordan - even if the border suggested by the Commission, north of the Yarmuk-Jordan junction is not rectified." (4)

By 12 July, Ben-Gurion had already come out strongly in favour of immediate implementation of the compulsory transfer of Arabs from the Jewish State. "In my notes on the Report immediately after my first reading (of 10.7.37), I ignored a central point whose importance is far greater than all the other advantages and outweighs all the deficiencies and drawbacks in the Report and, if it does not remain a dead letter, is likely to give us something which we have never had, ... namely the compulsory transfer of Arabs from the Plains."

According to Ben-Gurion, he initially ignored this transfer proposal because of a "pre-conceived notion" that compulsory transfer could never take place. However, on further study of the Peel's Commission's conclusions, the crucial importance of the transfer proposal became clear to Ben-Gurion. He concluded that the primary obstacle to the realisation of this proposal was a lack of appreciation among the Jewish community, of the importance of a compulsory transfer.

"With the removal of the Arabs from the Plains, we are getting for the first time in our

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1 / Martin Gilbert, Winston S. Churchill, vol.iv, 1917-1922, (London, 1975), p.561.

2 / Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 11 July 1937, op. cit.; Ben-Gurion Memoirs, vol.4, op. cit., p.297.

3 / en-Gurion Memoirs, vol.4, op. cit., pp.283, 295.

4 / Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 11 July 1937, op. cit.; Ben-Gurion Memoirs, vol.4, op. cit., p.297.

history a truly Jewish State," continued Ben-Gurion. He explained the advantages which would accrue from such a transfer. There could be large scale Jewish settlement entirely within the autonomous Jewish State. Hitherto insoluble difficulties would disappear revealing hitherto unimagined possibilities.

Ben-Gurion insisted that the transfer proposal could not succeed without a firm recognition that transfer was both possible and desirable. He envisaged great difficulties in the forceful removal of something in the region of one hundred thousand Arabs from the villages in which they had been living for hundreds of years and he queried whether the English would have the courage to carry it through. "Of course they will not do it," wrote Ben-Gurion, "if we do not will it and if we do not urge them with all our might and main." He feared that even if the pressure were maintained, the English might falter but "any wavering on our part as to the necessity of this transfer, any doubt on our part as to the possibility of its achievement, any hesitation on our part as to the justice of it, are likely to lose us a historic opportunity which will not reoccur."

Ben-Gurion continued, "We must insist on the implementation of this proposal with all our strength, heart and soul, since of all the proposals of the Commission, this is the (only) one which can compensate us for the amputation of the remaining parts of Palestine."

Ben-Gurion considered that this transfer proposal would also benefit the Arab cause, since Transjordan was in need of increased population, development and money.

On the previous day, Ben-Gurion had been considering forgoing the transfer proposal in exchange for the inclusion of the Negev within the borders of the proposed Jewish State. After further consideration, he came to exactly the opposite conclusion. "The transfer paragraph is in my eyes more important than all our demands for additional land."

Ben-Gurion concluded his diary entry on this subject with a reiteration of the need for an immediate implementation of the transfer proposal. "If we are not able to remove the Arabs from our midst now and transfer them to the Arab area as the British Royal commission has suggested to England, then we will not be able to do it easily (if at all) after the establishment of the State." He explained that the Arabs, if left in the future Jewish State, would acquire rights as a minority group and gain the sympathy extended to minorities by a world hostile to the Jews. Therefore "we must do this (transfer) now - and the first and perhaps decisive step is preparing ourselves to implement it." (1)

In his diary entry for 17 July, Ben-Gurion listed the advantages and disadvantages of the Peel Commission's partition proposals. Amongst the advantages, he included, "All the Plains in the Jewish State will be cleared of their Arab residents." (2)

The Report of the Peel Commission recommended that whereas the transfer of Arabs from the Plains was in the last resort to be compulsory, the transfer of Arabs from the Galilee should be on a voluntary basis. Ben-Gurion listed this last restriction as one of the disadvantages of the Peel Report, "The Arabs in the Galilean-hills who wish to remain in the Jewish state cannot be removed by force." (3) We can thus see that Ben-Gurion would have liked the right to remove these Galilean Arabs compulsorily in the same way as the Arabs of the Plains. He also considered that one of the disadvantages of the Report was "The compulsory transfer of all Jews from the 'Arab State'." (4)

At the end of 1937, the British Government retracted from its support of the Peel Commission's recommendation on compulsory transfer. In his writings and speeches during 1938, Ben-Gurion showed his disappointment over this retraction.

In September 1938, he wrote in his diary, "One should remember that the cancelling of the compulsory transfer (proposal) decreased our possibilities and serves as a great legacy for the Arabs." (5)

A few weeks later, in a letter written to his children from London, Ben-Gurion observed

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1 / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 12 July 1937, (BGA) ; Ibid., pp.297-99.

2 / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 17 July 1937, (CZA S25/179/10) ; Ibid., p.306.

3 / Ibid. ; Ibid., p.305.

4 / Ibid. ; Ibid.

5 / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 19 September 1938, (BGA) ; Ibid., vol.5, (Tel-Aviv, 1987), p.256.

that within a few weeks, the Woodhead Commission would publish its report. Whilst describing the possible recommendations that the Commission might make, Ben-Gurion observed, "In my opinion, the suggestion of the Peel Commission was on the whole good, provided that they were also to implement the transfer (of Arabs) from all the Plains as the 'Royal Commission' suggested." (1)

#### **Ben-Gurion's Letters to his Son Amos**

In a long letter sent from Paris in 27 July 1937 to his sixteen year old son Amos, David Ben-Gurion wrote that the partition plan of the Peel Commission differed from the plan which he had suggested to the Mapai Central Committee, both for the better and for the worse. He then listed these differences.

Ben-Gurion approved of the Peel Commission's recommendation that all the Arabs living on the Coastal Plain, the Jezreel Valley and the Jordan Valley be removed and transferred to Transjordan or some other place within the proposed Arab State. "By this means the Jews will receive these valleys completely free of Arabs and hence the possibility of Jewish settlement will grow considerably. This proposal has an enormous advantage and is equivalent in my opinion to the Negev (if it is put into practice)."

Ben-Gurion wrote that when he weighed up the advantages and disadvantages of the Peel Report as against his own plan, he found in general that the former was better. He considered that in two important things "whose value cannot be estimated" the proposals of the Peel Commission excelled. The first was the inclusion of the Galilee in the Jewish State and the second was the proposal to transfer the Arabs from the valleys. "We were not able nor permitted to express such an idea, since we never wanted to drive out the Arabs. But since the British are diverting part of Palestine which had been promised to us, to the Arab State, it is only fair that the Arabs in our State be transferred to the Arab area." (2)

A few months later, in a further letter which he wrote to his son from London, Ben-Gurion displayed more extreme views. Writing about the Negev, Ben-Gurion suggested that the Arabs might say that "it is better that the Negev should remain desolate than that the Jews should live in it." Ben-Gurion felt that a situation where large tracts of land capable of absorbing large numbers of Jews were remaining empty, while Jews were being barred from returning to their land under the Arab pretext of insufficient room for both peoples, was unacceptable. Ben-Gurion's answer was simple, "We must expel Arabs and take their place." He explained that the Jews' aspirations were founded on the assumption that there was sufficient room in Palestine for both Jews and Arabs but "if we have to use force - not to dispossess the Arabs of the Negev and Transjordan, but to guarantee our right to settle in those places - then we will have force at our disposal." (3)

The above paragraph is quoted (in English translation) exactly as it appears in Ben-Gurion's handwritten letter, and also in the typewritten copy, both of which are to be found in Ben-Gurion's Archives in Sede Boker. It is from this text that Shabtai Teveth has quoted in the English version of his book "Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs." (4) In the Hebrew version of his book, however, four Hebrew words have been added making it read, "We do not want and do not need to expel Arabs and take their place." (5); these same additional four words (together with the previous two and a half lines) are in fact crossed out in Ben-Gurion's handwritten letter! In the published edition of this letter,(6) the Editor (and, according to Shabtai Teveth, with the consent of Ben-Gurion(7)) completely omitted this sentence!

From the mid-1990s, a number of historians began to study in depth the "crossings out" in this letter of Ben-Gurion's. In his book "Fabricating Israeli History", Efraim Karsh, Professor

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1 / Ben-Gurion to his Children, 7 October 1938, (BGA) ; Ben-Gurion, Letters to Paula, (Tel-Aviv, 1968), p.247.

2 / Ben-Gurion Memoirs, vol.4, op. cit., pp.330-31.

3 / David Ben-Gurion to Amos Ben-Gurion, 5 October 1937, handwritten letter, (BGA) ; typewritten copy of same letter, p.3, (BGA).

4 / Shabtai Teveth, Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs, English ed., (New York, 1985), p.189.

5 / Shabtai Teveth, Ben-Gurion and the Palestinian Arabs, Hebrew ed., (Jerusalem, 1985), p.314.

6 / Ben-Gurion, Letters to Paula, op. cit., p.213.

7 / Shabtai Teveth, "Nikayon Kapayim v'Shichtuv Mismachim", Alpayim, (Tel-Aviv), vol.14 (1997), p.178.

of Mediterranean Studies at the University of London, argued that Ben-Gurion only intended to cross out the previous sentence but "in so doing, most probably due to an abrupt brush of the pen, he erased the critical [four Hebrew] words." (1)

In an article in the journal "Alpayim", Benny Morris wrote that "between 1937 and the 1970s, someone - presumably not Ben-Gurion himself - 'vandalised' the original letter" by crossing out several lines of it. He added that the Archives of the Israel Defence Forces had, with the aid of modern technology, managed to decipher these crossed out words. (2) In a later article, Morris slightly modified this statement and wrote that these three lines had been crossed out "by Ben-Gurion or someone else, subsequently." (3)

These views of Morris's were ridiculed by Shabtai Teveth. Teveth indicated that one did not require the Archives of the Israel Defence Forces to decipher what was written under the crossing out - it could be read, albeit with a little difficulty, by just looking at the letter. In addition, a letter which he had received from these Archives stated that they had not even attempted to use modern technology to decipher it, since it was unnecessary in this case!. Teveth also regarded as absurd the idea that someone other than Ben-Gurion had done this crossing out. Also, the appropriate page of Ben-Gurion's letter had been sent to the Criminal Investigation Department of the Israel Police in order to determine at what date these lines had been crossed out, but they were unable to do so. (4)

In conclusion, one must therefore say that this particular quote on transfer by Ben-Gurion is problematic!

In his book, Karsh also wrote that Ben-Gurion had constantly and completely opposed the transfer of Arabs. (5) In answer, Morris gives a number of examples of how Ben-Gurion supported the transfer of Arabs from Palestine, and he wrote: "But at no point during the 1930s and 1940s did Ben-Gurion ever go on record against the idea or policy of transfer. On the contrary, Ben-Gurion left a paper trail a mile long as to his actual thinking, and no amount of ignoring, twisting and turning, manipulation, contortion, and distortion can blow it away." (6)

Furthermore Karsh claimed that the Zionist leaders also opposed transfer(7) and on this Morris answered: "Karsh can shout until he is blue in the face that the Zionist leaders in the 1930s and 1940s rejected all thought of transfer: Mountains of evidence speak to the contrary." (8)

### **Ben-Gurion's Plan to Transfer Arabs to Iraq**

Towards the end of 1938, Ben-Gurion began to work out details of a plan to transfer Arabs from Palestine to Iraq.

In a diary entry dated 10 December 1938 - during the period when preparations were in hand for the St. James's Palace [London] Conference - Ben-Gurion wrote that the Jews would come to this conference with maximalistic claims. They would suggest that the Feisal-Weizmann agreement of 1919 should serve as a basis for negotiation and would stand by their demand that at least all of Western Palestine be handed over to the Jews.

Ben-Gurion then continued, "We will offer to Iraq ten million pounds to transfer one hundred thousand Arab families from Palestine to Iraq. Were it not for Ibn-Saud and Egypt, there would perhaps be a chance for this proposal. However, whether or not there is a chance, we should approach them with this extensive plan." (9)

On the following day, Ben-Gurion put forward this plan at a meeting of the Jewish

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1 / Efraim Karsh, *Fabricating Israeli History, The 'New Historians'*, (London, 1997), p.50.

2 / Benny Morris, "Mabat Chadash al Mismachim Tzioniim Mercaziim", *Alpayim*, (Tel-Aviv), vol.12 (1996), pp.76-77, fn.4.

3 / Benny Morris, "Refabricating 1948", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Berkeley), vol.XXVII no.2 (Winter 1998), p.84.

4 / Teveth, *Alpayim*, op.cit., pp.179-81.

5 / Karsh, *Fabricating Israeli History*, op.cit., pp.43 et seq.

6 / Morris, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, op.cit., pp.85-86.

7 / Karsh, *Fabricating Israeli History*, op.cit., pp. 37 et seq.

8 / Morris, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, op.cit., p.87.

9 / David Ben-Gurion, *Handwritten Diary entry 10 December 1938*, (BGA) ; David Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, vol.5, op.cit., p.404.

Agency Executive. He said that he did not know whether Iraq would be prepared to accept it "but if it were just Iraq, perhaps they would listen to us. Iraq needs a much larger Arab colonisation and obviously they would not loathe the millions [of pounds]." The problem, as Ben-Gurion saw it, was the presence of Ibn-Saud and Egypt at the forthcoming London Conference. A miracle would be required to come to an agreement with the Arabs. <sup>(1)</sup>

Nearly two weeks later, in a letter to Eliezer Kaplan, Ben-Gurion wrote that on the previous day, a meeting of the Advisory Council of the Jewish Agency had taken place and before his (Ben-Gurion's) arrival, the non-Zionists had agreed that the Jews demand Palestine for themselves and also "they agreed to the proposal that Iraq be given ten million (pounds sterling) on condition they they receive one hundred thousand Arab families from Palestine." <sup>(2)</sup>

At the beginning of 1939, Ben-Gurion had a meeting with Maurice Hexter, a non-Zionist member of the Executive of the Jewish Agency, and he wrote a report of this meeting in his diary. He told Hexter that at that time they had only general ideas and the non-Zionists had agreed to them. These included the demand for Western Palestine and "the suggestion to grant large financial support to Iraq for the purpose of transferring Arabs from Palestine." In reply, Hexter had stated that he did not believe in the possibility of transfer. Ben-Gurion answered that neither did he see at that time this suggestion as the most practical, not because it was not possible but because the political situation and the conditions for negotiation were not suitable. He considered that King Ibn-Saud of Saudi Arabia would be strongly opposed to such a proposal, even if Iraq would be inclined to agree, since Ibn-Saud would not be interested in the strengthening of Iraq militarily. He did not even suppose that Iraq under the prevailing conditions, would agree to such a suggestion. However, Ben-Gurion concluded, "But there is a moral and strategic value to this suggestion." <sup>(3)</sup>

On 11 January 1939, Ben-Gurion who was at the time in New York, had a meeting with the Hadassah executive. In his diary he wrote that "they accepted with great satisfaction my comments on our 'programme': Western Palestine; the proposal of transfer to Iraq; no yielding on the question of Aliyah." <sup>(4)</sup>

In an undated (early 1939) document headed "Future Policy", Ben-Gurion again put forward a plan for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. "A proposal should be made to Iraq and to Saudi Arabia for ten million pounds to transfer 100,000 Arab families from Palestine." <sup>(5)</sup> The document continues with the reaction of Dr. Selig Brodetsky, Head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency in London, who agreed that the Jews "should, as suggested by Mr. Ben-Gurion approach the Arab States, with the proposal of taking Arabs out of Palestine, but the scheme should perhaps not be linked to the conception of compulsory transfer." <sup>(6)</sup> It would seem from this answer of Brodetsky, that Ben-Gurion had intended his transfer of Arabs to be of a compulsory nature.

At that period, there were a number of people were putting forward proposals for the transfer of Arabs to Iraq. At a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive in London, chaired by Ben-Gurion, arrangements for the St. James's Palace Conference were being discussed. Whilst discussing the contents of the opening statement to be presented by the Zionists, Dr. Nahum Goldmann referred to such a possible transfer. "If there were to be a transfer of Arabs to Irak, then they might help to float a loan to Irak. But he did not know if the Arabs needed their help so much." <sup>(7)</sup>

## The Early 1940s

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes J.A. Exec., 11 December 1938, p.6, (CZA).

<sup>2</sup> / Ben-Gurion to Kaplan, 21 December 1938, (BGA) ; Ben-Gurion Memoirs, vol.5, op. cit., p.422.

<sup>3</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 2 January 1939, (BGA) ; David Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol.6, (Tel-Aviv, 1987), p.65.

<sup>4</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 11 January 1939, (BGA) ; Ben-Gurion Memoirs, vol.6, op. cit., p.88.

<sup>5</sup> / Document headed Future Policy, [n.d.] (early 1939), p.1, (CZA S25/7643). (

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., p.2.

<sup>7</sup> / (Draft) Minutes of the Fourteenth Meeting of the (Jewish Agency) Executive (London), 1 February 1939, page h, (CZA S25/7643).



As we shall see elsewhere in this work, when during the 1940s, Ben-Gurion would propose transfer of Arabs, his words would be tailored to the receiving audience! Another example of this occurred in 1941, when he put forward in a memorandum his "Outlines of Zionist Policy". It should be noted that this document was in the English language and thus intended for the Diaspora.

He included in the memorandum a discussion on the possible transfer of Arabs. Ben-Gurion began by pointing out that although some people in England and America "advocate the transfer of the Palestinian Arabs to Iraq and Syria as the best solution of the so-called 'Arab Question', we must consider first whether such a transfer is practicable, and secondly whether it is indispensable". He felt that "complete transfer without compulsion - and ruthless compulsion at that - is hardly imaginable." Although there were "sections of the non-Jewish population of Palestine which would not mind being transferred, under favourable conditions", the majority would not do so voluntarily.

Ben-Gurion commented that although at that period "the idea of transfer of population is steadily gaining in popularity ... it would, however, be unsafe and unwise on our part to advocate, or even expect, a compulsory transfer of Arabs from Palestine." Since the Arabs (who were "more inclined to the Nazis" than to the Allies) were "formally ... 'friends' of the allies, especially of Great Britain ... it can, therefore, hardly be expected that a victorious England will undertake the compulsory transfer of Arabs from Palestine merely for the benefit of the Jewish people. It would thus be a mistake, politically and even morally, for us to advocate a compulsory transfer of the Arabs."

He then went on to discuss a voluntary transfer and felt that "it would be rash to assert that in no circumstances and under no conditions can such a transfer take place". Ben-Gurion put forward various ideas how, and to what extent, such a voluntary transfer could take place, and that the Zionists should "work out plans" accordingly. (1)

It would seem from this document, that Ben-Gurion would have loved to have proposed a compulsory transfer. However it would have been politically imprudent and also bad for public-relations to propose compulsory transfer at a time when one is not in a position to implement it.

A copy of this "Private and Confidential" memorandum was "extracted" from Ben-Gurion's "luggage when he left England for America" by, presumably, agents of the British Foreign Office! This memorandum was read by civil servants of the Foreign Office and four of them appended their comments. (2) However, none of them made any mention of his remarks on Arab transfer.

About three years later, at a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem, Ben-Gurion specifically did not reject transfer of Arabs on ethical or political, grounds but only on tactical grounds. In his speech to this forum he said: "I am against that any suggestion of transfer should come from our side. I do not reject transfer on ethical grounds and I do not reject it on political grounds; if there was a chance for its realisation. With regards to the Druze it is possible. With their consent, it is possible to transfer all the Druze to the Jebel Druze. The others - I don't know. But it must not be a Jewish proposal. If such a suggestion would come from Iraq and Syria, we could join in. If such a suggestion would come from the British, we would say to them: go (yourselves) to the Arabs; don't send us. If we were to suggest it, the Arabs would reject it and the non-Jews will say that there is no room for the Jews in Palestine." (3). As we shall see later in this work, during the 1940s, when the Jews were fighting to get immigration quotas to Palestine lifted, they were very concerned that any proposal for Arab transfer from Palestine, could be interpreted that there was a lack of room in Palestine, and thus give an excuse for continuing to limit Jewish immigration into Palestine.

### **Ben-Gurion's Path to Pragmatism**

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<sup>1</sup> / Ben-Gurion, Memorandum "Outlines of Zionist Policy", 15 October 1941, pp.15-17, (CZA Z4/14.632).

<sup>2</sup> / Departmental Comments of British Foreign Office on Ben-Gurion's memorandum "Outlines of Zionist Policy", December 1941, (PRO FO 371/127129 E8556).

<sup>3</sup> / Minutes J.A. Exec., 20 June 1944, p.35, (CZA).

Ben-Gurion's transfer proposals during the 1930s and 1940s, especially in his letters to his son and in his diary entries, indicate a complete reversal of the opinions he expressed on this question during the First World War, when he was in the United States.

In March 1915, Ben-Gurion and Yitzchak Ben-Zvi (later to be second President of the State of Israel) were deported by the Turks from Palestine. They went to the United States, where they remained for the next three years. The early part of this period was spent touring thirty-five cities recruiting for the Hehalutz organisation.

In a communication postmarked Omaha, Nebraska, 14 February 1916, Ben-Gurion sent Ben-Zvi, then in New York, some brief notes on Jewish settlement in Palestine. He included a number of observations on the Arabs of Palestine. They "object to Jewish settlement... But this cannot stop us," he wrote. We did not come to expel the Arabs, but to build up the land for ourselves." Ben-Gurion considered that the Arabs were incapable of building up the country and "they do not have the power to expel us - this the Arabs must understand. Then we will be able to work together." (1)

Two years later, early in 1918, a few months after the publication of the Balfour Declaration, Ben-Gurion published an article entitled "The Rights of Jews and Others in Palestine", in which he wrote that the historic area of Palestine was not unpopulated. On the two sides of the Jordan there were just over a million people, three quarters of whom lived on the west side. "Under no condition may we harm the rights of these inhabitants. Only 'Dreamers of the Ghetto' like Zangwill can imagine that Palestine will be given to the Jews with the additional right to remove the non-Jews from the country." Here, Ben-Gurion's predictions were wrong. Only two decades later, this was precisely what the six respected Englishman comprising the Peel Commission were to recommend unanimously (with respect to a part of Palestine)!

Ben-Gurion not only did not believe that any country would agree to such a transfer, but felt that even if the power to achieve such a transfer were to be given to the Jewish establishment, "the Jews have neither the right nor ability to utilise it. It is not proper nor possible to deport the country's present inhabitants." Ben-Gurion felt that any attempt to implement such a transfer would be "damaging and reactionary." (2)

In his political biography on Ben-Gurion, Michael Bar-Zohar comments on Ben-Gurion's change of attitude on transfer. Bar-Zohar writes, "And therefore in place of Ben-Gurion's humanist thesis ten years earlier which absolutely disqualified the expulsion (of Arabs), there now appears a more harsh theory; the expulsion is permissible on condition that the evacuated Arabs are settled in new places and receive the means of rehabilitation." In such an event, Ben-Gurion was prepared to abandon principles which he himself had sanctified and adopt a more realistic but less idealistic approach. (3)

So long as the British ruled Palestine, Ben-Gurion could only talk about this subject - he could not act. In May 1948, the British left the country and Ben-Gurion was made Prime Minister.

During the battle for the capture of the cities Lod and Ramleh, Ben-Gurion met with his army chiefs. The Commander of the Palmach, Yigal Allon asked him, "What shall we do with the Arabs?" Ben-Gurion answered (or according to another version, gestured with his hands), "expel them". This was immediately communicated to the Army Headquarters and the expulsion implemented. (4)

In the case of Nazareth, however, Ben-Gurion only arrived after its capture. On seeing so many Arabs, he asked, "Why are there so many Arabs? Why didn't you expel them?" (5)

Attempts were also made to persuade Arabs to remain in Palestine, and this was not to Ben-Gurion's liking! On 1 May, two weeks before the establishment of the State of Israel,

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1 / Notes sent by Ben-Gurion to Ben-Zvi, from Omaha Nebraska, 14 February 1916, (CZA A 116/40/1).

2 / David Ben-Gurion, *Anakhnu veshekhenu*, (Tel-Aviv, 1931), pp.31-32.

3 / Michael Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion - A political Biography*, (Tel-Aviv, 1975), vol.1, p.410.

4 / Benny Morris, "Operation Dani and the Palestinian Exodus from Lydda and Ramle in 1948", *The Middle East Journal*, (Washington D.C.), vol.40, no.1, Winter 1986, p.91 ; Bar-Zohar, op. cit., vol.2, p.775.

5 / Bar-Zohar, op. cit., p.776.

Ben-Gurion paid a visit to Haifa, which was then in its final stage of capture by the Jews. He asked for a meeting with Abba Hushi who was the central figure of Mapai in Haifa. On being told that Hushi was busy trying to persuade Arabs in the city to remain, Ben-Gurion asked, "Doesn't he have anything more important to do?" (1)

## CHAIM WEIZMANN

Chaim Weizmann, first President of the State of Israel, was born in Motol near Pinsk in 1874. He was a delegate from the second Zionist Congress onwards and was opposed to the Uganda plan. During the First World War, Weizmann worked hard to achieve support for Zionist aims and his efforts culminated in the Balfour Declaration. From 1920 until 1946 (with a break of four years), he was President of the World Zionist Organisation, but there was much opposition from within to his approach.

In the period immediately following the Balfour Declaration, Weizmann spoke out publicly against transferring the Arabs from Palestine. In an address given to the Zionist Conference in London in September 1919, Weizmann stated, "We cannot go into the country like Junkers, we cannot afford to drive out other people. We who have been driven out ourselves cannot drive out others. We shall be the last people to drive off the Fella from his land; we shall establish normal relations between us and them. The Arabs will live among us; they won't suffer; they will live among us as Jews do here in England. This is our attitude towards the Arabs. Any other attitude is criminal, childish, impolitic, stupid." (2)

However, a decade or so later, Weizmann's attitude on this subject changed and during the 30s and 40s, he often put forward in private his own plans, or gave support to plans involving the transfer of Arabs from Palestine.

### Weizmann's First Transfer Proposal

Following the massacres by the Arabs of 133 Jews in Palestine in the summer of 1929, the British Government set up a Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Shaw to investigate the situation in Palestine. Whilst this Commission was preparing its report, Weizmann had a meeting in the House of Commons on 4 March 1930, with Dr. Drummond Shiels, the British Assistant Colonial Secretary.

According to Weizmann, at this meeting Shiels said that "some radical solution must be found, and he didn't see why one should not really make Palestine a National Home for the Jews and tell it frankly to the Arabs, pointing out to them that in Transjordan and Mesopotamia [Iraq] they had vast territories where they could develop their life and civilisation without let or hinderance, but that the Jews were entitled to work in Palestine unmolested, and that in the end it would be good for all parties concerned."

Weizmann was in agreement with Shiel's transfer proposal, since he answered that "a solution like that was a courageous and statesmanlike attempt to grapple with a problem which had been tackled hitherto halfheartedly.... Some [Arabs from Palestine] might flow off into the neighbouring countries, and this quasi exchange of population could be encouraged and fostered... It only required careful preparation and goodwill." (3)

Two days later, Weizmann met with the Colonial Secretary, Lord Passfield. The latter said that he had not yet seen the Shaw Report, but he had heard that "the only grave question it had revealed was the problem of tenants on the land which had been acquired by Zionists". This could in time "produce a landless proletariat" which in turn could be "a cause of unrest in the country". Passfield hinted that a solution of this problem was the transfer of

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<sup>1</sup> / "Hamahapach", Al Hamishmar, (Tel-Aviv), 5 April 1985, Pesach supplement, p.29 ; Yoram Nimrod, Patterns of Israeli-Arab Relations: The Formative Years, 1947 - 1950, Doctoral Thesis, (Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1985), p.268.

<sup>2</sup> / Chaim Weizmann, Zionist Policy - an address, London, 21 September 1919, p.15.

<sup>3</sup> / Interview between Dr. Weizmann and Dr. D. Shiels, 4 March 1930, p.3, (WA).

Arabs to Transjordan by saying that one "had to stabilise conditions in the country... Transjordan might be a way out."

Weizmann pointed out that the root of the trouble was that "in the dead of night Transjordan had been separated from Palestine" and that Jews were now prevented from settling there. He continued, "Now that one found oneself in difficulties in Palestine, surely if we could not cross the Jordan the Arabs could. And this was applicable to Iraq." Passfield answered "that he was convinced he would have to consider a solution in that direction." <sup>(1)</sup>

It would seem that Weizmann did not confine these ideas just to conversations, but acted in secret to implement them. This we can conclude from a telegram marked "Confidential" sent by him to a certain Felix Green in June 1930. In it he asks to be sent "all available information about Vadizorka and Hauran in Transjordan. Quality and available land. Density nature population." <sup>(2)</sup>

It was at this period, that in a letter to Felix Warburg, Weizmann wrote that one of the Arab leaders had sent him a message that in his [the Arab leader's] opinion, "Transjordan can be built up, and with opportunities created there this country could be placed at the disposal of Arabs who may choose to leave Palestine." In order to perform such a development [and hence a transfer of Arabs!], the government of Transjordan would require "a loan of one million pounds, to be guaranteed in a proper business way." <sup>(3)</sup> In a further letter written by Weizmann to Warburg a few weeks later, he wrote that he had "meanwhile been discussing" such a loan, with, amongst others, Baron Edmond de-Rothschild, "and they are all greatly in favour of the idea and would be prepared to work out the details of such a scheme when it becomes really alive. In my opinion, the whole solution of our difficulties lies in such a scheme." <sup>(4)</sup>

We might mention here that at that period, Weizmann was not the only Zionist leader proposing transfer of Arabs to Transjordan. In his diary Ben-Gurion wrote, "there is Transjordan, in it is available space. It is possible to transfer there the Arabs from Palestine." <sup>(5)</sup>

The Shaw Report was published at the end of March 1930, and a further report by Sir John Hope Simpson dealing with "Immigration, Land Settlement and Development" in October of that same year. The findings and recommendations of these two reports were embodied in the British Government's Statement of Policy popularly known as the "Passfield White Paper" and was issued simultaneously with the Hope Simpson Report. This White Paper would effectively have put an end to the rebuilding of the Jewish National Home in Palestine.

A few weeks later, Weizmann had an article published in the "Week End Review". In this article, he challenged the White Paper by pointing out that whereas under the terms of the Mandate, Jews had first claim to "State lands for the purpose of close settlement", the British Government now wanted to do the opposite and give landless Arabs first priority.

As a solution to this, Weizmann put forward the idea of transferring Arabs from Palestine to Transjordan. He first pointed out that Transjordan is legally part of Palestine, has a cultivatable area equal in size and that its people were of the same race, language and culture and were thus indistinguishable from the Arabs of Western Palestine. He then continued, "It is separated from Western Palestine only by a narrow stream [Jordan River] ... it would be just as easy for landless Arabs or cultivators from congested areas to migrate to Transjordan as to migrate from one part of Western Palestine to another." <sup>(6)</sup>

At that period, pressure was being put on the British Government by both Jews and non-Jews to modify its policy, and as a result of this pressure the Government issued a new document (the MacDonald letter), to serve as an authoritative interpretation of the Passfield

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<sup>1</sup> / The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Series B - Papers, (Jerusalem, 1983), (henceforth Weizmann Papers), vol.1, paper 116, pp.591-92.

<sup>2</sup> / Telegram, Weizmann to Green, 23 June 1930, (WA).

<sup>3</sup> / Weizmann to Felix Warburg, 15 May 1930, pp.5-6, (WA).

<sup>4</sup> / Weizmann to Felix Warburg, 17 June 1930, p.2, (WA).

<sup>5</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry, 24 June 1930, p.11, (BGA).

<sup>6</sup> / Chaim Weizmann, "The Palestine White Paper", Typewritten copy of article appearing in "Week-End Review" dated 1 November 1930, (WA) ; Weizmann Papers, vol.1, paper 120, pp.605-06.

White Paper. A committee composed of members of the Government and of the Jewish Agency had several joint meetings in order to reach agreement on the contents of this letter.

Towards the end of one of these meetings, held at the Foreign Office in London on 5 December 1930, Weizmann again put forward his proposal on the transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Transjordan. He asked the meeting that "consideration be given to the development of the Negev as well as the country east of the Jordan". He pointed out that Transjordan was "practically an empty country" which was slightly larger in cultivatable area than western Palestine. Weizmann considered that "Transjordania afforded a vast reserve for colonization, and for the trans-migration of Arabs from the congested area cis-Jordan (western Palestine) to vacant lands in Trans-Jordania", adding that no real effort in this direction had yet been made. It should be noted that although Weizmann referred to the development of both the Negev and Transjordan the "trans-migration of Arabs" from Palestine was to be to Transjordan only.

The Foreign Secretary, Arthur Henderson, stated that "some actual agreement with the Arabs on this question was essential." Weizmann pointed out that it was in the interests of the projected pipe line and railway from Iraq to Haifa to develop and to settle a stable population in Transjordan, and added that the Arab Prime Minister of Transjordan had recently agreed with him that this was a practicable proposition, provided that some sort of assistance was offered by Britain. Henderson then admitted that "this proposal was worthy of consideration", adding that it was a "big question" which involved "big difficulties." <sup>(1)</sup>

About that period, a similar proposal was put forward by the Executive of the Zionist Organisation working together with a special Political Committee which had been set up to deal with the Passfield White Paper. This we know from a memorandum written by Felix Rosenbleuth (later Pinhas Rosen, the first Minister of Justice of the State of Israel) for the Executive of the Jewish Agency. In this memorandum, Rosenbleuth "summarizes the conclusions arrived at by the Zionist Executive and the Political Committee." On the question of Transjordan the memorandum states: "Half of this area [Transjordan] should be allotted for the settlement of Arabs from those districts of Western Palestine which are regarded as congested, while the other half is to be reserved for the colonisation of landless Jews." <sup>(2)</sup> Another Zionist organisation to come out in favour of Arab transfer to Transjordan was the Directorate of the Jewish National Fund. <sup>(3)</sup>

We have already shown that the idea of transferring Arabs from Western Palestine to Transjordan, was not limited to Zionist leaders. Further confirmation of this fact comes from Chaim Arlosoroff, who in a lecture to the Mapai Council in May 1930, reported on talks he had had in London. He said that the British government "considers Transjordan as if it was a reserve land for the transfer of Arabs whose land [in Western Palestine] had been purchased from them [by the Jews]." He also got the impression that "they think that also the Jews will participate financially in the resettlement of Arabs in Transjordan."

Arlosoroff told the Mapai Council that he thought that this approach would substantiate the main conclusion of the Shaw report, that in Western Palestine there was no available land. This would be political suicide for the Zionists. "Also our friends will thus begin to think that the Jews will not be able to manage in Palestine without export of Arabs." <sup>(4)</sup>

Arlosoroff was however not against the principle of transfer of Arabs from place to place. This we can see in a letter which he wrote to Weizmann in December 1932, in which he put forward a proposal for transfer of Arabs. He was dealing with the proposed purchase of lands in the Huleh area, and he pointed out that they were at the time owned by Effendis, most of whom were living in Syria and Lebanon. Arlosoroff wrote, "There are about twenty-

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes of Meeting between Members of Cabinet and Representatives of Jewish Organisations, Foreign Office London, 5 December 1930, C.P.I. (30) 3rd Conference, p.13, (CZA L9/376).

<sup>2</sup> / Memorandum by Felix Rosenblueth "To the Executive of the Jewish Agency", 26/27 November 1930, p.1, Addendum entitled Transjordan, (CZA A185/130).

<sup>3</sup> / Minutes of Directorate of Jewish National Fund (JNF), 29 April 1931, p.12, (CZA).

<sup>4</sup> / Lecture by Arlosoroff on the Situation in Zionism, (May 1930), pp.3-4, (Mapai, file 22/1).

seven villages on these lands with a population of about 1200 families. If these lands pass into our hands it would be possible to transfer part of the [Arab] people to other lands." (1)

Weizmann's transfer plans were however, (in private at least!), much bolder than those of Arlosoroff's. When in March 1931 Weizmann visited Palestine, he had a meeting with the then High Commissioner, Sir John Chancellor, who was an anti-Zionist. At this meeting Weizmann again put forward his suggestion for transferring Arabs from Palestine to Transjordan.

The question of developing land for settlement had come up when Weizmann "referred to the question of the development of Trans-Jordan. He believed that there was much to be done in that country and that the Amir Abdullah could be persuaded to agree to the Development Commission expending some of its funds on developing land in Trans-Jordan for the settlement of the Palestinian Arabs."

Chancellor, however, did not agree with the feasibility of such a plan and told Weizmann "that was quite out of the question at the present time." He explained that "the Trans-Jordanians were very narrow and provincial in their outlook. They regarded Palestinian Arabs as foreigners; and the feeling among them was at present so strong on the subject that any suggestion for the development of Trans-Jordan for the benefit of the Palestinian settlers would be most inopportune." (2)

Although willing in private meetings to advocate Arab transfer, Weizmann's public utterances on transfer during this period were quite different. In a published interview between Weizmann and representatives of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, given at the beginning of July 1931, Weizmann said, "I have no sympathy or understanding for the demand for a Jewish majority (in Palestine)... The world will construe this demand only in one sense that we want to acquire a majority in order to drive out the Arabs." (3)

#### **Weizmann and the British Colonial Secretary**

On 19 July 1937, about a fortnight after the publication of the Peel Report on Palestine, Weizmann had a secret meeting with the British Colonial Secretary, William Ormsby-Gore, and his deputy, Lord Dufferin. At this meeting, they discussed a number of subjects connected with the Peel partition plan, including sovereignty; the inclusion of the new Jewish suburbs of Jerusalem within the Jewish State; the potash and the Rutenberg electric works; the transfer of population and the transition period. After this meeting, Weizmann wrote a document recording the substance of the meeting.

A few weeks later in Zurich, Meir Grossman, leader of the Jewish State Party, (which was a splinter group of the Revisionists), informed the twentieth Zionist Congress, then debating the Peel Report, that he had evidence that Weizmann had already agreed to the partition proposals. "I have in my hand a document which contains the details of a conversation held between Weizmann and Ormsby-Gore. In this conversation they discussed the conditions under which - if accepted - Weizmann would support the partition proposals." Grossman went on to accuse Weizmann of two-faced politics, claiming that without permission of the Congress or the Zionist General Council, Weizmann had gone to the British Government and prejudiced the Congress's deliberations. "I find Weizmann guilty of a severe breach of discipline." (4)

The purloined document was reproduced in full a few days later by "The Jewish Chronicle". The document began by describing how Ormsby-Gore had asked Weizmann what his attitude was towards the Peel Commission's proposals, now that he had had time to read the Report. Weizmann replied that he had come to Ormsby-Gore in order to clarify a number of points. The Jews were perplexed and a great number of them were against the partition plan and that it would be his duty to explain his attitude at the forthcoming Zionist Congress.

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1 / Arlosoroff to Weizmann, 26 December 1932, (CZA S25/795).

2 / Note of Interview given to Dr. Weizmann by the High Commissioner, 20 March 1931, pp.5-6, (PRO CO 733/203 87139).

3 / "A Jewish Majority", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 10 July 1931, p.28.

4 / Official Minutes of 20th Zionist Congress (Zurich 1937), p.93.

Amongst its proposals, the Peel Commission had recommended a transfer of population, compulsory if necessary. Paragraph 3 of Weizmann's document dealt with this and showed his complete identification with this proposal.

"3. Transfer of the Arab population: I said that the whole success of the scheme depended upon whether the Government genuinely did or did not wish to carry out this recommendation. The transfer could be carried out only by the British Government, and not by the Jews. I explained the reasons why we considered this proposal of such importance. Mr. Ormsby-Gore said that he was proposing to set up a Committee for the twofold purpose (a) of funding land for the transferees (they hoped to find land in Transjordan, and possibly also in the Negev), and (b) of arranging the actual terms of the transfer. He mentioned the name of Sir John Campbell, who had had much experience in connection with transfers of population between Greece and Turkey, and who knew all about the matter. He agreed that once Galilee was given to the Jews, and not the Negev, the position would be very difficult without transfer."

Weizmann's document concluded by noting that towards the end of his interview, Ormsby-Gore had asked him what his own personal opinion was. Weizmann told Ormsby-Gore that "if the points which I had raised in the interview were settled to our satisfaction, I personally would look with favour on the scheme." Weizmann informed Ormsby-Gore that he would repeat in confidence the contents of this interview to his closest friends in Zurich and to all the members of the Permanent Mandates Commission.

The document was said to be signed "Ch. W." and dated 19.7.37. <sup>(1)</sup>

A few days later on 17 August, the British daily newspaper, the "Evening Standard", printed an almost full-page article headed "The Admirals are After Me About Haifa - What Ormsby-Gore is alleged to have told Weizmann." [Under the Peel Commission's recommendations, the port of Haifa was eventually to become part of the proposed Jewish State.]

The "Evening Standard" correspondent wrote that on 17 August, he had discussed the publication of the document by continental telephone with Weizmann who was in Zurich. Weizmann had replied that he knew that a document had been published which was said to be his report of a conversation between himself and Ormsby-Gore adding that he had not seen the publication and could therefore not vouch for its accuracy.

"I did, in fact, make a confidential report of a conversation with Mr. Ormsby-Gore. If this document is that report, I do not know how Mr. Grossman obtained it. He had no business to publish it. There is nothing in it which needs to be hidden, but it is a report of a private conversation between the Secretary of State and myself and nobody has the right to disclose it." In conclusion, Weizmann said that he intended to get a copy of the document, to find out how Grossman obtained it, and then take appropriate measures. Ormsby-Gore declined to comment on the document.

Meir Grossman had told the Zurich correspondent of the "Evening Standard" that he had received the document which he had produced at the Zionist Congress from a source which he could not disclose and had published it in Zurich in a newspaper circulating solely to Congress members. <sup>(2)</sup> An internal Colonial Office note (signature of author illegible!) confirmed that the report of this confidential conversation between Weizmann and the Colonial Secretary "is being circulated as a pamphlet in Geneva." <sup>(3)</sup>

In her diary entry for 7 August 1937, Blanche Dugdale, one of Weizmann's advisers, recorded that Arthur Lourie, Political Secretary of the Zionist Executive in London, suspected a Revisionist named Bach of purloining this document. <sup>(4)</sup>

The "Evening Standard" also reprinted the entire document word for word from "The

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<sup>1</sup> / "Congress Rejects Partition Plan", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 13 August 1937, pp.24-25.

<sup>2</sup> / "The Admirals are After Me About Haifa", Evening Standard, (London), 17 August 1937, p.4.

<sup>3</sup> / Note from ? to Boyd and Downie, 17 August 1937 (?), (PRO CO 733/352/75718/21).

<sup>4</sup> / Blanche Dugdale, Diary entry 7 August 1937, (WA) ; Baffy - The Diaries of Blanche Dugdale 1936 - 1947, ed. N.A. Rose, (London, 1973), p.59.

Jewish Chronicle. <sup>(1)</sup> In the course of the following days, several other British newspapers, including the "News Chronicle",<sup>(2)</sup> the "Morning Post" <sup>(3)</sup> and the "Manchester Guardian" <sup>(4)</sup> reproduced extracts from the "Jewish Chronicle's" text of this conversation, although none of them included in their extracts, the section dealing with transfer.

The publication of Weizmann's memorandum on his secret meeting with Ormsby-Gore put Weizmann in a very embarrassing position and on 18 August, a day after the appearance of the article in the "Evening Standard", Weizmann sent a telegram of explanation to Ormsby-Gore, "Deeply regret any personal inconvenience caused you by publication uncorrected minute our conversation obtained by illicit means and used by insignificant unscrupulous opposition group." <sup>(5)</sup>

On 24 August, Ormsby-Gore wrote to Weizmann rebuking him for the leakage and adding, "I understand from your telegram that you do not deny the authenticity of the document which is quoted but merely assert that it was 'uncorrected'." <sup>(6)</sup>

In order for the High Commissioner of Palestine, Sir Arthur Wauchope, to be in the picture, on 24 August Sir Cosmo Parkinson, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, at the request of Ormsby-Gore, sent Wauchope a copy of Weizmann's telegram and a copy of the letter of reply that Ormsby-Gore had written to Weizmann. <sup>(7)</sup>

In a letter of extreme apology to Ormsby-Gore, Weizmann denied authorship of this document, "I am particularly sorry, that you should assume that I was the author of the notes in question. This is not the case; they are rough notes made by the secretary on the basis of my report of our conversation to my colleagues, and the notes were neither seen nor corrected by me. I saw them for the first time in Zurich printed in some newspapers." <sup>(8)</sup>

Futhermore, on his return to England in mid-September, Weizmann went to see Sir John Shuckburgh, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, about this matter, and assured him "solemnly that he himself had never recorded a single line on paper about the interview." He had only reported on this conversation to some of his colleagues and one of them had dictated this conversation without his knowledge as rough notes which one of his enemies had stolen them from his office. <sup>(9)</sup>

What was the authenticity of the document produced by Meir Grossman at the Zionist Congress and subsequently published in "The Jewish Chronicle" and the "Evening Standard"? The public release of the private papers of Weizmann has now made this document available to the public. It is marked "secret" and is headed "Summary Note of Interview with Mr. Ormsby-Gore Colonial Office Monday July 19th 1937 at 10.45 a.m." The document is written entirely in the first person (with one exception towards the end of the document where the third person, "Dr. Weizmann" is used). The end of the document is initialled (in type) Ch.W. and dated London 19.7.37. <sup>(10)</sup>

A comparison of this document with that published at the time in the press show the two, to be word for word identical, including of course the paragraph dealing with "Transfer of the Arab population." [There are a few insubstantial words which differ, but this is almost certainly due to errors occuring during the newspaper printing process.] Furthermore, Ben-Gurion recorded in his diary that the content of the conversation between Weizmann and Ormsby-Gore was dictated by Weizmann to Arthur Lourie. <sup>(11)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Evening Standard, 17 August 1937, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / "Admirals 'After' Mr. Ormsby-Gore", News Chronicle, (London), 18 August 1937, p.2.

<sup>3</sup> / "Mr. Ormsby-Gore and Dr. Weizmann", Morning Post, (London), 18 August 1937, p.10.

<sup>4</sup> / "An Ormsby-Gore-Weizmann Conversation", Manchester Guardian, 20 August 1937.

<sup>5</sup> / Telegram, Weizmann to Ormsby-Gore, 18 August 1937, (WA).

<sup>6</sup> / Ormsby-Gore to Weizmann, 24 August 1937, (WA).

<sup>7</sup> / Extract from semi-official letter from Sir Cosmo Parkinson to Sir Arthur Wauchope, 24 August 1937, (PRO CO 733/352/75718/21)

<sup>8</sup> / Weizmann to Ormsby-Gore, 4 September 1937, (PRO CO 733/352 F 75718/21) ; The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Series A - Letters, (Jerusalem, 1979), (henceforth Weizmann Letters), vol.xviii, no.175, p.192.

<sup>9</sup> / Shuckburgh to Ormsby-Gore, 15 September 1937, (PRO CO 733/352/75718/21).

<sup>10</sup> / Note of interview with Ormsby-Gore, 19 July 1937, (WA).

<sup>11</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 19 July 1937, (CZA S25/179/11) ; Ben-Gurion Memoirs, vol.4, op. cit., p.307.



Why did Weizmann deny authorship of the document at the time? We assume that he was endeavouring to extricate himself from an embarrassing situation with Ormsby-Gore with whom it was important that he remain on good terms.

Not only was this affair an embarrassment to Weizmann, it also embarrassed at least one of the Directors (Leonard Stein) of the "Jewish Chronicle". In a letter to the Editor published in the 10 September issue, he wrote that "I strongly disapprove of the publication of this document in the Jewish Chronicle." <sup>(1)</sup> A month later he wrote to Ormsby-Gore, pointing out that although he strongly disapproved of the publication of the document, he was satisfied that the "Jewish Chronicle" had not obtained it in an improper manner. Their representative had been shown the Bulletin of the Jewish State Party which contained the full text of this document which he then transmitted to the "Jewish Chronicle" offices in London. <sup>(2)</sup>

Minutes of this meeting, although in a much condensed form, were also written up by Ormsby-Gore. He noted that Weizmann made it clear that he was "going to do his best to get the Zionist Congress to accept partition." Ormsby-Gore then listed the various points made by Weizmann at the meeting. With regard to transfer, Weizmann said, "The Jews can't take (an) active part though they will help in getting Arabs out of Galilee into Trans-Jordan - e.g. places like the Zerka Valley - but some transfer is vital to the success of the scheme." <sup>(3)</sup> Weizmann's comments on the Arabs of Galilee are of particular interest. The Peel Report recommendation on transfer limited the transfer of the Arabs from this area to transfer on a voluntary basis. However, Weizmann exceeded these recommendations by telling the Colonial Secretary that the Jews would even "help in getting Arabs out of Galilee." - this was despite the fact that they could not take an "active part" in implementing the transfer of Arabs!

Blanche Dugdale "Baffy", a niece of Balfour, was a non-Jewish British Zionist who constantly tried to influence Cabinet Ministers and High Commissioners, by personal contact and in writing, stressing the justice of the Jewish cause in Palestine. On the day of the meeting with Ormsby-Gore she wrote in her diary, "To Z. O. [Zionist Office] to hear Chaim's account of his interview with Billy [William Ormsby-Gore] this morning. Billy appears to have agreed that all the main Jewish points should be favourably considered." <sup>(4)</sup> Ben-Gurion recorded in his diary that he suggested that Weizmann immediately write to Ormsby-Gore confirming the content of their conversation. Ben-Gurion added that at first Weizmann disagreed, but following a discussion with him, Weizmann took his advice and sent such a letter to Ormsby-Gore. <sup>(5)</sup>

Weizmann began his letter by thanking Ormsby-Gore and Lord Dufferin for sparing him so much of their time. He explained that in a few weeks time, he would have to face a highly critical assembly - the twentieth Zionist Congress. "It is due to them as much as to you that I should not risk misunderstanding your view on the matters we discussed. Forgive me, therefore, for enumerating the points one by one." He then enumerated the points which agreed with those in the document mentioned above (except that points 3 and 4 had been interchanged). His letter was a summary of his document, and the paragraph dealing with the transfer of population read:

#### "4. Transfer of Population.

You were good enough to go in some detail into the practical arrangements you are already contemplating for giving effect to this recommendation. I was reassured to find that you agree with me about the crucial importance of transfer for the success of a partition scheme."

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<sup>1</sup> / Leonard Stein, Letters to the Editor, The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 10 September 1937, p.25.

<sup>2</sup> / Stein to Ormsby-Gore, 4 October 1937, (PRO CO 733/352/75718/21)

<sup>3</sup> / Minutes of meeting between Ormsby-Gore and Weizmann, 19 July 1937, (PRO CO 733/328/4 6029) ; Minutes in Handwriting of Ormsby-Gore, (PRO CO 733/352 75718/21).

<sup>4</sup> / Blanche Dugdale, Diary entry 19 July 1937, (WA) ; Baffy, op. cit., p.52.

<sup>5</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 19 and 20 July 1937, (CZA S25/179/11) ; Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol.4, op. cit., p.307.

We can see that Weizmann makes no reservation whatsoever about implementing the transfer compulsorily, if necessary.

Finally, Weizmann reminded Ormsby-Gore that at the end of the previous day's conversation "which dealt with these major points, I told you that if they could be satisfactorily settled, I should personally support acceptance of the partition scheme." <sup>(1)</sup>

It is of interest to note, that Weizmann headed his private document "Transfer of Arab population" whereas in his letter to Ormsby-Gore he wrote "Transfer of population" (i.e. transfer of both Arabs and of Jews). Perhaps, there is no significance to be attached to this. On the other hand, this may indicate Weizmann's bias towards the transfer of Arabs out of the proposed Jewish State rather than the transfer of Jews from the proposed Arab State.

Weizmann together with Ben-Gurion had also met with the Colonial Secretary, a few weeks earlier, on 28 June. The Peel Report, which was already in the hands of the Government, had not yet been put on sale to the public and even the Zionist leaders had not yet been informed of its contents. At this meeting, Ormsby-Gore gave Weizmann and Ben-Gurion an outline of some of the contents of the Report.

With regard to the transfer of population, Ormsby-Gore stated "that he thought that the Arabs in the Jewish part would have to be transferred." The notes on this conversation were written up by Ben-Gurion and he reported Weizmann's reply as, "This was a procedure which we had recommended long ago, but it had so far been regarded as impracticable." To the copy of these typewritten notes at the Weizmann Archives an amendment had afterwards been added in ink. The words "we had recommended... impracticable" had been crossed out and in their place was handwritten "the Jews as a people with hostages throughout the world, would have to be very cautious in applying, though it might be done." <sup>(2)</sup> This handwritten amendment does not however appear in the copy at the Central Zionist Archives. <sup>(3)</sup> This would seem to indicate that the amendment was written in at a later date - namely, after the circulation of the minutes! [A copy of the minutes at the Ben-Gurion Archives is only a photocopy of those in the Weizmann Archives, (as evidenced by the stamp of the "Weizmann Archives"), and so cannot add anything to this point.]

Who wrote in this handwritten amendment? According to the Staff of the Weizmann Archives it was definitely not written by Weizmann or Ben-Gurion, though it might well have been written by Weizmann's secretary in London, Miss Doris May. <sup>(4)</sup> In fact it is difficult to see why such an amendment was made. As we have seen earlier, both Ben-Gurion and Weizmann had in previous years suggested to the High Commissioners of the time, that Arabs from Palestine be resettled in Transjordan. The Colonial Secretary had almost certainly been informed of these ideas, and thus there was no reason for not giving him the reply originally typed in the minutes of this meeting. Maybe it was an amateurish attempt to try and hide the fact from future historians that the Zionist leaders had in the past proposed transfer!

An interesting twist occurred in mid-1941, when Weizmann had a discussion with thirty-one leading American Zionist and non-Zionist personalities, in New York. During the course of this discussion, Weizmann referred to the Peel Commission's transfer proposal. "You remember," he said, "one of the decisions of the Royal Commission carried dynamite - the transfer of the Arab population, and I think you will bear it out, in camera audience, I was speaking against it, and I said that it will be done..." <sup>(5)</sup>

As we have just seen, the complete opposite was the case - Weizmann spoke up very much in favour of this population transfer recommendation! The Editor of Weizmann's published papers could not allow such an obviously untrue statement to go uncommented upon,

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<sup>1</sup> / Weizmann to Ormsby-Gore, 20 July 1937, (PRO CO 733/352 F 75718/21) ; Weizmann Letters, vol.xviii, op. cit., no.159, pp.179-80.

<sup>2</sup> / Note of Conversation with Ormsby-Gore, 28 June 1937, p.3, (WA).

<sup>3</sup> / Summary Note of Conversation with Ormsby-Gore, Colonial Office London, 28 June 1937, p.3, (CZA Z4/17069).

<sup>4</sup> / Private Communication from Staff of Weizmann Archives, 12 December 1984.

<sup>5</sup> / Private Luncheon Conference called by Dr. Chaim Weizmann, St. Regis Hotel Roof, 25 May 1941, p.13, (WA); Weizmann, Papers, vol.2, paper 52, p.428.

that he added in a footnote (in a very restrained manner!), "Perhaps this was imperfectly recorded, as the meaning is obscure. W. [Weizmann] did not express opposition to the Peel recommendation of a transfer of populations." (1)

However, in the very same speech, just a few sentences later on, Weizmann did propose transfer of Arabs! He said: "We can acquire a great deal of land in Trans-Jordania or Iraq. We shall see that you [the Arabs] are colonised and that you get 5 dunams of land [outside Palestine] for every dunam we get [from you in Palestine]." (2) A discussion followed Weizmann's speech but no-one criticised this transfer proposal. (3)

### **Weizmann's Letters**

Weizmann wrote a great abundance of letters, thousands in the course of his Zionist career! In a number of his letters written at the period of the publication of the Peel Report, he naturally discussed the population transfer proposal advocated by this Report.

A few days prior to his meeting of 19 July, Weizmann had written to Ormsby-Gore asking him for "authoritative information on certain points." He said, "Among these points, I will cite here first the vital question of transfer. The proposed boundaries of the Jewish State are so narrow that the policy to be pursued as regards transfer will be one of the primary considerations determining the decision of the Jewish people." He then asked what the intentions of the British Government were with regard to the paragraph in the Report recommending transfer, compulsory if necessary. (4)

At the end of September, Weizmann wrote a long letter to Jan Christiaan Smuts, the Prime-Minister of South Africa during the previous decade, who was a supporter of the Zionist cause. In this letter, he used much more guarded and cautious language. "Transfer of Population. The very restricted area of the proposed Jewish State makes some arrangement for the gradual transfer of its Arab population absolutely essential. This will be a difficult and delicate process; its desirability is mentioned by the Royal Commission, but definite and precise arrangements with the Mandatory Power and with the Arab State would be necessary for its successful execution." (5) In the two and-a-half months between writing the letters to Ormsby-Gore and Smuts, there had been some hostile reactions to the population transfer proposal. This may be the reason for Weizmann's more guarded language when writing to Smuts. However, even in this letter, Weizmann in no way withdraws his support for a compulsory transfer.

From a letter written by Weizmann in mid-July to Professor William Rappard of Geneva, who was a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission we can see that Weizmann was pleasantly surprised by the Peel Commission's recommendation for population transfer. He wrote that there were many disappointing features in the Peel Commission Report when compared with his expectations "but several things are somewhat better; the most important of them all is : Galilee and the question of transfer of population - a very difficult and delicate problem." (6)

Both the twentieth Zionist Congress in Zurich and the Geneva sessions of the Permanent Mandates Commission took place during the first half of August. On 14 August, towards the end of the deliberations of these two bodies, Weizmann wrote to Pierre Orts, the President of the Permanent Mandates Commission, saying that he would like to summarise several points to which the Zionist Congress attached the highest importance, in order to complete the notes and verbal explanations which he had given to Orts. (7) A footnote in Weizmann's published volume of letters states that these notes could not be traced.

One of the points concerned the transfer of population. "The Transfer Commission. My

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1 / Weizmann, Papers, vol.2, paper 52, p.428 fn.

2 / Private Luncheon Conference called by Dr. Chaim Weizmann, 25 May 1941, op. cit., pp.13-14.

3 / Ibid., pp.15-19.

4 / Weizmann to Ormsby-Gore, 14 July 1937, (PRO CO 733/352 F 75718/21) ; Weizmann Letters, vol.xviii, op. cit., no.139, pp.154-55.

5 / Weizmann to Smuts, 29 September 1937, p.8, (WA) ; Ibid, no.200, p.220.

6 / Weizmann to Rappard, 18 July 1937, (WA) ; Ibid., no.156, p.167.

7 / Weizmann to Orts, 14 August 1937, p.1, (WA) ; Ibid., no.168, p.185, (English translation).

colleagues and I attach the greatest importance to this question and we do not delude ourselves as to its difficulties. But the many concrete advantages, which the transferring body offers to us, to the Arabs and to the cause of peace between the two peoples and the two states, lead us to hope that the solution suggested by the Peel Commission be not dismissed out of hand, and that the instrument designed to put it into effect be formed according to this principle. Of course we do not propose to have recourse to constraint or to exercise any coercion whatsoever: only those who wish will be transferred and those who prefer to stay will stay." Weizmann suggested that after the creation of a Jewish State, many of the Moslems and other indigenous persons would wish to leave, in the same way as after the conquest of the Caucasus by Russia, many of the Moslems preferred to emigrate to Turkey. He then wrote about the liquidation of property and the economic life of the Jewish State following transfer. <sup>(1)</sup>

One immediately notices from this letter that Weizmann is talking about a voluntary transfer of Arabs. Up to now, in his letters and private memoranda, he talks about the "crucial importance" of implementing the Peel Commission's recommendation on transfer - a recommendation which included compulsion, if necessary. Furthermore, in his letter of 14 July, Weizmann specifically queries the Government's intentions regarding the implementation of "Paragraph 43 of Chapter xxii of the (Peel) Report" - the paragraph dealing with compulsory transfer. Why then this change of heart?

We can only suggest the following reasons. This letter was written to the President of the Permanent Mandates Commission, which was at that time at an advanced stage of its deliberations on the Peel Commission's recommendations on Palestine. Early on in these proceedings, the President himself had asked Ormsby-Gore to confirm "that in the event of the creation of the two new states, the proposed transfer of the rural Arab populations would only be effected if those populations freely consented." In other words, at that stage the President was against a compulsory transfer of population. [It seems that when he summarised all the evidence at the end of the sittings of this Commission, he arrived at the conclusion that a transfer would have to be compulsory.] Weizmann, who was a politician with several decades of experience, therefore realised that it would not be prudent to ask the President to put a compulsory transfer into effect.

Another possibility is that Weizmann is not speaking only for himself in this letter but for "My colleagues and I". Since some of his colleagues were against a compulsory transfer, Weizmann spoke of a voluntary transfer.

Nearly two years later, in early 1939, the British convened a conference of Jewish and Arab leaders at St. James's Palace in London. The Arabs, however, refused to meet with the Jews and the British were thus forced to negotiate in separate sessions with the Jewish and Arab leaders. However, some unofficial contacts did take place between the Jewish leaders and delegates from Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. In one of his letters, Weizmann wrote that during the course of these unofficial meetings with the Iraqis, he had on several occasions put forward a proposal regarding transfer and had "more than once struck a responsive chord". He added that "one of the Iraqi delegates with whom I became rather friendly indicated that he would be prepared to take an active part in helping such a project forward." Weizmann also felt that this transfer suggestion "would be received particularly favourably if the initiative came from America." <sup>(2)</sup> Weizmann did not state who this Iraqi delegate was but it was quite possibly Tewfiq Suwaydi.

A meeting had also taken place between Pinhas Rutenberg and Suwaydi, and at a meeting of the Jewish Agency in London which was held in late March of that year, Rutenberg delivered a report on it. He had tried to enlist Tewfiq's approval for an extended building plan and "hinted also on the possibility of population transfer." Tewfiq reportedly replied, "You come to conquer a land which is not yours; this will not take place and will never be." <sup>(3)</sup>

Weizmann, however, thought that Suwaydi would be amenable to influence. He said

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.3-4 ; Ibid., pp.186-87. (English translation).

<sup>2</sup> / Weizmann to Goldman, 28 April 1939, (WA) ; Ibid., vol.xix, no.52, pp.54-55.

<sup>3</sup> / Moshe Shertok, Handwritten Diary entry 22 March 1939, (CZA S25/198/1) ; The Diaries of Moshe Sharett, vol.iv, (Tel- Aviv, 1974), p.186.

that "Suwaidy was ready with his colleagues to create a movement by which Palestinian Arabs would go to Iraq, provided the Jews would help develop that country." Rutenberg replied that although "it would be useful to make an effort with Suwaidy", he himself did not believe that Suwaidy could deliver the goods. Weizmann said that he would continue his conversation with Suwaidy in Egypt. <sup>(1)</sup>

About three weeks later, Weizmann, together with Dr. Dov Joseph, arrived in Alexandria, Egypt. That day, a Sephardi Jewish lawyer from Paris, named Metrani, visited them and had a private conversation with Weizmann. Following this conversation, Weizmann briefly reported on its substance "which related to Tewfiq Suweidi's readiness under certain conditions to assist in the promotion of a project for the settlement of Palestinian Arabs in Iraq."

Joseph then drew Weizmann's attention to the "importance of any such project being presented to the Arab public as a purely Arab project put forward because of the interest of Iraq in increasing its population and developing its vast uncultivated areas." Putting it forward as a Jewish project would cause the Arabs to boycott it. If however, Iraqi government leaders "could be persuaded to commence propaganda among the Arabs of Palestine to move to Iraq" then the Jews could take part in the project and then start buying land in Palestine. Joseph urged that payment should be made in a number of instalments so that it could be stopped if it were to be found that the Arabs were not living up to their agreement.

That evening, when Weizmann met with Tewfiq, their discussion included "the question of the settlement of Palestinian Arabs in Iraq." During this conversation, Tewfiq said that it did not matter what the Mufti thought. Provided that the arrangement was considered by the Arab states to be reasonable, the Arabs of Palestine would accept it.

On the following evening, Metrani came to see Weizmann. They discussed "Tewfiq Suweidi's attitude to the proposed scheme of transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq." <sup>(2)</sup>

As we shall see later, at about the same period, in a letter to an American Zionist leader, Solomon Goldman, Weizmann stated that there was a possibility of acquiring a large tract of land from the Druze community in northern Palestine and transferring the Druze living there to outside Palestine.

From all this we can see that although the British had officially abandoned the Peel Commission partition proposals, which included the transfer of population, Weizmann was still actively working on the idea of the transfer of the Arab population from Palestine.

### **Weizmann's Hints at Transfer**

On no fewer than four further occasions during the 1930s and 40s, Weizmann, in meetings with prominent non-Jews would drop strong hints or make mild proposals on the desirability of transfer of the Arabs from Palestine; (as we can see, in private he was much more forthright!):

1. In 1933, Weizmann put forward in a letter to Alexis Leger, a non-Jew, a cautious proposal regarding transfer of Arabs. In a project which he had prepared and despatched to the French authorities, who were at the time the Mandatory power for Syria and Lebanon, Weizmann wrote, "On the attached plan I have indicated, approximately, two small areas of land adjoining Lake Tiberias and Lake Huleh, [both on the Syrian side of the border] respectively, which we are interested in acquiring (privately) in order to reserve them for Jewish settlement or, perhaps, to transfer there at a later moment a certain number of Arabs from northern Palestine, if they themselves would want this." Weizmann trusted that Henri Ponsot, the High Commissioner for Syria and Lebanon, would have no objection to such a transfer, provided that a cordial agreement was concluded with the Arabs concerned. <sup>(3)</sup>

2. As early as 1931, Weizmann had proposed the transfer of Arabs from Western

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes of Jewish Agency Executive, London, (henceforth J.A. Exec., London), 22 March 1939, p.3, (CZA ZA/302/23).

<sup>2</sup> / Dr. Joseph's Diary Notes, 10 April 1939, pp.3-4, 7, (CZA S25/43).

<sup>3</sup> / Weizmann to Leger, 17 June 1933, (WA) ; Weizmann to Leger, 15 June 1933 (Rough draft in English), (WA) ; Weizmann Letters, vol.xv, (Jerusalem, 1978), no.426, p.461, (English translation).

Palestine to Transjordan. When in 1936, the Peel Commission came to Palestine and took testimony from a number of people, Weizmann gave some of his testimony in camera. On 26 November, he brought up the question of Transjordan and strongly hinted at the possibility of it being the destination for transferred Arabs. Weizmann had claimed that he had repeatedly been asked that the Jews help in the development of Transjordan. He then stated, "There is no question that there should be any mass immigration [of Jews] into Transjordan, or that there should be any desire artificially to induce Arabs in Palestine to go to Transjordan. It could happen in a perfectly natural way." He explained that if an area of Transjordan adjacent to Western Palestine were to be developed, this might produce an "infiltration" of Jews and Arabs into Transjordan. <sup>(1)</sup>

3. In a memorandum written by Weizmann to the High Commissioner, Sir Harold McMichael, regarding the status of the Woodhead Commission, he referred to the proposal by the Peel Commission for the transfer of Arabs and then wrote, "The possibilities offered by the Peel scheme thus become substantial, assuming that certain modifications could be secured, and that the transfer scheme could, with the help of H. M. Government, be made effective, and carried out within a reasonable period of time." In the months following the publication of the Peel Report, the British Government changed its attitude towards transfer. Weizmann observed that the British Government had announced "that the transfer would in any event be a very slow process" and that when "defining the frontiers of any proposed Jewish area, great care must be taken to include as few Arabs as possible within them." Weizmann held that this retreat from transfer by the British Government was harmful, and wrote that "these statements [by the British] lend themselves to all kinds of interpretation" and arouse the Arabs from making peace. <sup>(2)</sup>

4. At the end of a meeting held between Weizmann and the American Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles in December 1942, Welles asked Weizmann whether the Zionists were thinking of the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. As was usual with Weizmann when asked this sort of question by some outsider, he gave a vague woolly answer! "I am thinking more in terms of development, and if the development is real, and done on a large scale, there is enough room for everybody, and there may be a voluntary transfer of Arabs from congested areas to less congested areas, when they have been developed. But we would not speak of it. If it comes spontaneously, well and good." <sup>(3)</sup>

We might mention here that just a few months later, a different assessment of the Zionist intentions in this matter was given by General Patrick J. Hurley, who had been appointed by President Roosevelt to observe and report directly to him on the general conditions prevailing in the Middle East. Naturally, unlike Weizmann, Hurley did not mince his words, and in a letter written by him to Roosevelt in May 1943, he wrote, "For its part, the Zionist organization in Palestine has indicated its committment to an enlarged program for (1) a sovereign Jewish State which would embrace Palestine and probably Transjordan, (2) an eventual transfer of the Arab population from Palestine to Iraq." <sup>(4)</sup>

### **Meeting with Leaders of the British Labour Party**

At the end of November 1939, three months after the start of the Second World War, the Zionist leaders, Weizmann, Shertok, Locker and Bakstansky had a meeting with the Leader of the British Labour Party, Major Clement Attlee and with Tom Williams. The minutes of this meeting, held at the British Parliament Building were written up by Shertok.

As stated in these minutes, during the course of the meeting, Weizmann "put the Zionist case quite briefly". He mentioned the two main points emerging from the Peel Report, namely the "idea of a Jewish State and the idea of a transfer of population" and said that the events of the past two years had strengthened the validity of these two points. He felt that as a

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<sup>1</sup> / Weizmann Papers, vol.2, p.127.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., pp.305-06.

<sup>3</sup> / Interview with Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles, 4 December 1942, Additional notes, (CZA Z5/1377).

<sup>4</sup> / Hurley to President Roosevelt, 5 May 1943, Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1943, vol.iv, The Near East and Africa, (Washington, 1964), (henceforth FRUS), p.777.

result of the war, the Jewish position would become much worse, and "moreover, the idea of transfer of population was bound to become more acceptable to men's minds because the settlement eventually to be reached could not take the form of merely drawing new territorial frontiers. Clearly populations would have to be shifted, and the world would become more accustomed to this idea." Weizmann considered that Palestine would be able to absorb three or four million Jewish immigrants, not in one go but within a measurable period of time. "We must have some territorial basis there", said Weizmann, "and that would mean an improved Peel scheme, possibly Palestine west of the Jordan, with some transfer of a part at least of the Arab population." He concluded that this should all be linked up with some kind of federation of the neighbouring Arab States. <sup>(1)</sup>

With regard to the transfer of the Arab population, two points emerge from the above. Firstly, Weizmann is not presenting a purely personal view, but he is putting "the Zionist case". Secondly, only two years earlier, Weizmann had given the small territorial area allocated to the Jewish State by the Peel Commission, as the reason for transferring the Arab population. Now, at this meeting, the Zionist demand was for a much larger territorial area - "possibly Palestine west of the Jordan" - whilst still insisting on "some transfer of part at least of the Arab population". According to the historian Walter Lacqueur, at the beginning of the war, Weizmann put forward this proposal with increasing frequency. <sup>(2)</sup>

One of these occasions was during a meeting held with the Russian Ambassador, Ivan Maisky. From Weizmann's diary, we can see that the date of this meeting was on 30 January 1941. <sup>(3)</sup> At this meeting the Arab-Jewish question was discussed. After Weizmann had answered Maisky that the only solution to the Jewish problem was Palestine, Maisky replied that "there would have to be an exchange of populations". To this Weizmann replied "that if half a million Arabs could be transferred, two million Jews could be put in their place. That, of course, would be a first installment; what might happen afterwards was a matter for history". Maisky replied that Russia had had to deal with exchanges of population. Weizmann replied "that the distances they had to deal with in Palestine would be smaller: they would be transferring the Arabs only into Iraq or Transjordan". Maisky then asked whether there might be some difficulty in transferring a hill-country population to the plains. Weizmann then answered: "a beginning might be made with the Arabs from the Jordan Valley; but anyway conditions in Transjordan were not so very different from those of the Palestine hill-country". <sup>(4)</sup> The historian Benny Morris reports that Maisky's report on this meeting, which can be found in the archives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, confirms this conversation on the transfer of Arabs. <sup>(5)</sup>

### Meeting at New Court

At the beginning of September 1941, Weizmann and Selig Brodetsky, discussed with Anthony de Rothschild, the possibility of reaching a modus vivendi between the Zionists and non-Zionists.

Anthony de Rothschild was a leading non-Zionist communal figure in Britain, who although opposed to Jewish statehood, recognised the urgent necessity of absorbing some of the refugees from Europe into Palestine. Weizmann suggested that a meeting take place between the Zionists and members of Rothschild's own group. <sup>(6)</sup>

The meeting took place at New Court in London on 9 September and was attended by over twenty people. Just over half the participants were Anthony de Rothschild's friends and the remainder were Zionists. Opening the meeting, Rothschild stated that its purpose was to try to find common ground from which to deal with the problems to be faced after the war. <sup>(7)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Note of Conversation with Attlee and Williams, 30 November 1939, p.2, (WA).

<sup>2</sup> / Walter Laqueur, A History of Zionism, (New York, 1972), p.539.

<sup>3</sup> / Weizmann Letters, vol.xx, (Jerusalem, 1979), no.267, p.276, fn.1.

<sup>4</sup> / J.A. Exec., London, 30 January 1941, p.2, (WA).

<sup>5</sup> / Benny Morris, "Ma Mistater m'achorai haShichtuv?", Alpayim, (Tel-Aviv), vol.14 (1997), p.199, fn.10.

<sup>6</sup> / Weizmann to Sacher, 4 September 1941, (WA) ; Weizmann Letters, vol.xx, (Jerusalem, 1979), no.179, p.194.

<sup>7</sup> / Note of Meeting held at New Court, London, 9 September 1941, p.1, (WA).

The future of Palestine, naturally, featured prominently in the discussion and when the question of boundaries came up, Weizmann pointed out (as stated in the minutes) that "the question of boundaries also raised the question of transfer of population. Such transfer might, of course be entirely voluntary. If, for instance, they could transfer those Arab tenants who owned no land of their own (he believed there were about 120,000 of them) they would be able to settle in their stead about half a million Jews." <sup>(1)</sup>

We see from these minutes that Weizmann said that the transfer of Arabs "might be entirely voluntary" as distinct from "must be". He was obviously still undecided as to whether these transfers should be "entirely voluntary" or whether compulsion should be used.

About a fortnight later, Weizmann sent a copy of these minutes to Harry Sacher pointing out that they were "only being circulated to our side." <sup>(2)</sup> This was a most unusual, if not improper action to circulate minutes of a meeting to a section only of the participants. However, it shows that the minutes were written up by someone on the Zionist side, if not by Weizmann himself. There was obviously something in these minutes that Weizmann did not want Rothschild to see!

At the end of the meeting, Weizmann was charged with the preparation of a memorandum which he began by stating that there was "general agreement on the following points." <sup>(3)</sup> in connection with transfer, Weizmann wrote, "In that State there will be complete civil and political equality of rights for all citizens, without distinction of race or religion, and in addition the Arabs will enjoy full autonomy in their own internal affairs, but if any Arabs did not wish to remain in a Jewish State, every facility will be given to them for transfer to one of the many and vast Arab countries." <sup>(4)</sup> Here, the transfer of Arabs is clearly of a voluntary nature. However, this does not necessarily reflect Weizmann's personal view as the memorandum summarised the "general agreement" of the meeting. Most of the participants were hostile to Zionism and the establishment of a Jewish State and had expressed great concern at this meeting on the future of the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine. Unlike the minutes, this memorandum was sent to Anthony de Rothschild to distribute to the friends he had invited to this meeting. <sup>(5)</sup>

A few months later, Weizmann publicly endorsed transfer, albeit of a voluntary nature, when he repeated almost word for word in the American journal "Foreign Affairs" what he had written on transfer in this memorandum. <sup>(6)</sup>

#### **Attitude of Weizmann towards Transfer**

Following tributes paid to Weizmann on the B.B.C.'s Third Programme in December 1963, the correspondence columns of the "Jewish Observer and Middle East Review" included an argument as to Weizmann's attitude towards the transfer of Arabs. Boris Guriel, Director of the Weizmann Archives, claimed that Weizmann had favoured transfer; Sir Leon Simon, a leading British Zionist, took the opposite view.

To substantiate his case, Guriel quoted a letter that Weizmann had written to Sir Leon Simon in November 1941. "I can see no reason why we could not do the same thing that the Greeks did after the last war. Whether it would take five years or three or seven, whether it would be two million or three, I cannot say." Guriel claimed that Weizmann was advocating applying the precedent of the Greco-Turkish population transfer of the 1920s to the Arabs of Palestine. <sup>(7)</sup> Simon answered that this letter had nothing to do with population exchange but dealt with "what an independent State can do when it wants to bring masses of people rapidly into its territory." <sup>(8)</sup> In fact, both interpretations are plausible.

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., p.4.

<sup>2</sup> / Weizmann to Sacher, 25 September 1941, (WA) ; Weizmann Letters, vol.xx, op. cit., no.186, p.200.

<sup>3</sup> / Weizmann Letters, vol.xx, op. cit., no.186, p.201.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.203.

<sup>5</sup> / Weizmann to Rothschild, 30 September 1941, (WA) ; Weizmann Letters, vol.xx, op. cit., no.188, p.204.

<sup>6</sup> / Chaim Weizmann, "Palestine's Role in the Solution of the Jewish Problem", Foreign Affairs, (New York), vol.20, no.2, January 1942, p.337.

<sup>7</sup> / "Was Boothby Right?" Jewish Observer and Middle East Review, (L), 7 February 1964, p.9.

<sup>8</sup> / Leon Simon, Letters to the Editor, Jewish Observer and Middle East Review, (London), 21 February 1964, p.26.



In subsequent correspondence, Guriel quoted from the minutes of the meeting at New Court and Weizmann's subsequent memorandum. <sup>(1)</sup> For his part, Simon quoted from Weizmann's speech to the British Zionist Conference of 1919 adding that "if Mr. Guriel, presuming to speak in the name of the Weizmann Archives, now wants us to believe that the policy of which Weizmann expressed such whole-hearted abhorrence in 1919, was at any time Weizmann's own policy, those of us (who) have some regard for Weizmann's reputation have a right to demand much more convincing evidence than Mr. Guriel has yet produced in support of so grave an imputation on the character of a leader to whose heritage he claims to adhere."<sup>(2)</sup>

All this was written in 1964. Since that time the "much more convincing evidence" demanded by Simon has become available by virtue of archives in Britain and Israel being opened up to historians. Such archival material (as shown earlier) clearly shows how in the 1930s and early 1940s, Weizmann was a strong supporter and proposer of transfer of the Arabs from Palestine, especially at the time of the Peel Commission. He considered the Commission's recommendation on transfer, (compulsory if necessary), to be vitally important. Indeed, Weizmann proposed still more extreme measures than those advocated by the Commission; according to the British Colonial Secretary, he said that the Jews "will help in getting Arabs out of Galilee into Trans-Jordan." As we shall see later, Weizmann supported the plan of Harry St John Philby - in fact, the historian Ilan Amitzur described Weizmann's support of this plan as "enthusiastic" <sup>(3)</sup> - and made efforts to advance the transfer plans of Edward Norman, even to the extent of advancing financial support.

All this, however, Weizmann did in closed meetings and private correspondence, a fact commented upon by both Professor Joseph Nedava<sup>(4)</sup> and Christopher Sykes,<sup>(5)</sup> the son of Sir Mark Sykes. In public, however, Weizmann invariably repudiated such ideas!

#### **NACHMAN SYRKIN**

Nachman Syrkin, who was born in Russia in 1868, was associated with Zionist Movement from its inception, and participated in the First Zionist Congress, leading the small group of socialist Zionists. His aim was the complete synthesis of socialism with Jewish nationalism as embodied in Zionism. Syrkin was also a prolific writer in several languages.

In 1898, Syrkin wrote a pamphlet entitled "Die Judenfrage und der sozialistische Judenstaat" (The Jewish Question and the Socialist Jewish State). Under the heading "Land Purchase" he wrote, "The first and foremost territory to be considered for the Jewish State is Palestine - the ancient birthplace of the Jews." After listing various ways of acquiring Palestine from the Turks, Syrkin concluded that the best way of securing the country was for the various peoples under Turkish domination to join forces in rebellion thus liberating themselves from the Turkish yoke.

Syrkin then proposed population transfer as a solution to some of the problems of the region. "In places where the population is mixed," he wrote, "friendly population transfer and division of territory should ensue. The Jews should receive Palestine, which is very sparsely settled and where the Jews even today comprise ten per cent of the population. The Jews should form an alliance with the peoples who are oppressed by Turkey and strive for a just division of the subjugated empire."

Syrkin hoped that the European states would be in favour of Jews settling Palestine since the Europeans would thus free themselves of their Jewish population whilst enabling Asia to develop both economically and culturally. However, Syrkin urged that if after all their efforts the Jews were unsuccessful in obtaining Palestine, they should chose another land

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<sup>1</sup> / Boris Guriel, Letters to the Editor, Jewish Observer and Middle East Review, (London), 6 Marc1964, p.21.

<sup>2</sup> / Leon Simon, Letters to the Editor, Jewish Observer and Middle East Review, (London), 13 March 1964, p.25.

<sup>3</sup> / Ilan Amitzur, America, Britain and Palestine, (Jerusalem, 1979), p.128.

<sup>4</sup> / Nedava, Forum (on the Jewish People, Zionism and Israel), op. cit., p.104.

<sup>5</sup> / Christopher Sykes, Cross Roads to Israel, (London, 1965), p.312.

"which will be vacated for them by means of money." <sup>(1)</sup>

The proposal by Syrkin in 1898 for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine, seems to be the first published scheme of this kind. Although Herzl had put forward his plans for the removal of the indigenous population from the Jewish State, three years earlier, his proposals were made in his private diary, and it was not until three decades later that this was published.

#### **DR. ARTHUR RUPPIN**

Arthur Ruppin who was born in 1876 was described as the "father of Zionist settlement" in Palestine. He paved the way from the political Zionism of Herzl to pragmatic Zionism. In 1908, the Zionist Executive appointed him head of their Palestine office and from then until his death in 1943, he was responsible for the work of settlement in Palestine. In the course of his work, he encouraged and assisted in the acquisition of large tracts of land in the Jezreel Valley.

In May 1914, Ruppin put forward his plan for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Syria, in a letter written to Dr. Victor Jacobson, who from 1908 had been head of the Constantinople branch of the Anglo-Palestine Company and unofficial diplomatic representative of the Zionist Organisation in Turkey. In his letter to Jacobson of 12 May 1914, Ruppin wrote, "We are considering a parallel Arab colonisation. Thus, we are planning to buy land in the region of Homs, Aleppo etc. which we will sell under easy terms to those Palestinian fellahin who have been harmed by our land purchases." [The city of Homs, originally known as Emesa is in central Syria, in the great Orontes plain; Aleppo, also known as Haleb, is the second largest city in Syria, and is in the centre of northern Syria.]

Thus Ruppin's plans involved buying land for these Arabs, not in another part of Palestine, but outside the country - in Syria.

Ruppin added that this method would only be considered if there were large scale Zionist colonisation. At that time, the Zionists were not making large land purchases and so there was no cause for Arab fears. "We will need to consider in earnest this problem," wrote Ruppin, "when the planned purchases in the Jezreel Valley are carried out." <sup>(2)</sup> [The Jezreel Valley is an area in the north of Israel, where in 1911, the pioneer settlement of Merchavia had been founded. In 1920, after three decades of negotiations, Yehoshua Hankin finally succeeded in purchasing from an absentee Arab family, seventy thousand dunams of land in the Jezreel Valley and within a few years, about twenty settlements were established in the area.]

On 28 May 1914, Jacobson, replying to Ruppin's letter, disagreed with Ruppin's plan to transfer the Arabs to Syria. In his opinion, this transfer of population would substantiate the Arab fears that the Jews intended to drive them from their land. Jacobson therefore felt that it was better not to make public mention of such a plan, nor to seek a solution in that direction. <sup>(3)</sup>

However, less than two decades later, Jacobson was to change his view completely on transfer. At the beginning of 1932, he put forward his own plan for the partition of Western Palestine. After designating the areas to be allocated to the Jews and the Arabs respectively, Jacobson said that it would be difficult to implement the partition unless 120,000 Arabs were to be transferred, with compensation, from the designated Jewish areas. Such transfer would strengthen the internal security of the Jewish State and decrease the danger of any local Arab rebellion. <sup>(4)</sup>

Also, in a memorandum written in French and dated January 1932, on a "Territorial

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<sup>1</sup> / "Ben-Eliezer" (pen-name for Nachman Syrkin), *Die Judenfrage und der Socialistische Judenstaat*, (Bern, 1898), pp.59-61; *Writings of Nachman Syrkin*, arr. B. Katznelson and Y. Kuperman, (Tel-Aviv, 1939), pp.53-54.

<sup>2</sup> / Ruppin to Jacobson, 12 May 1914, pp.1-2, (CZA L2/34ii) ; extract reprinted by Paul Alsberg, "The Arab Question in the Policy of the Zionist Executive before the First World War", *Shivat Zion*, (Jerusalem), vol.4, 1955/6, pp.206-07.

<sup>3</sup> / Jacobson to Ruppin, 28 May 1914, (CZA L2/34ii).

<sup>4</sup> / Shmuel Dothan, *The Struggle for Eretz-Israel*, (Tel-Aviv, 1981), pp.76-77.

Solution" Jacobson put forward his plan for the partition of Palestine and transfer of Arabs. In his plan, the Jewish part of Palestine would be called Eretz-Israel and the Arab part Palestine.

In connection with transfer, Jacobson wrote, "One can easily imagine conditions in which a considerable portion of ... Arab farmers would decide to move their homes and go to set themselves up, with the economic and financial assistance of the Jews, in other parts of the Confederation: in Syria, Transjordan, or even in Iraq or [the Arab part of] Palestine. To put into effect, in these modest proportions of several thousand men, this exchange of populations would not provoke any serious agitation and would be considered quite natural ..." (1)

At the end of 1933, Jacobson met separately with Jabotinsky, Ben-Gurion and Farbstein, [the last-named was a leader of the "Mizrachi" Religious Zionist party], in order to discuss his plan. Jacobson urged that the Jewish Agency Executive demand that Britain transfer from sixty to seventy thousand Arabs out of the Jewish areas, replacing them within a short space of time by one hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand Jews. (2)

As we shall see, less than four years later, the Peel Report was to recommend similar ideas, involving the partition of Palestine and the transfer of Arabs from the Jewish area.

During the period Ruppin was advocating his population transfer proposal, a number of Zionist leaders put forward similar suggestions. For example, the Hebrew writer, pioneer and future President of the World Zionist Organisation, Nahum Sokolow had in 1914 played with the idea of a population transfer. (3) However, a few years later Sokolow wrote a letter "in which he warns Weizmann, on grounds of political inexpediency, against a plan then afoot to expropriate Arab landlords from Palestine. (4)

At the tenth Zionist Congress held in Basle in 1911, Joshua Buchmil put forward a transfer proposal to the Palestine Committee of the Congress. Buchmil was a Zionist leader who had been a militant opponent of the Uganda scheme. In 1906, he had been sent by the Odessa Committee of Hovevai Zion to Palestine in order to study the economic and legal aspects of Jewish colonisation.

In his transfer proposal, Buchmil suggested that in order to facilitate the purchase of land in Palestine, land be purchased in Northern Syria and Iraq to which the Arabs from Palestine be transferred, thus leaving land in Palestine vacant for the Jews. (5)

## LEO MOTZKIN

Leo Motzkin who was born in 1867, was a protagonist of the struggle for Jewish rights in the Diaspora. He joined the Zionist Organisation at its outset and at its First Congress in Basle in 1897 headed a group of Zionists who demanded that the "Basle Programme" be so formulated as to leave no doubt that Zionism aimed to create a Jewish State based on international agreement.

Motzkin was also active in the German Zionist Organisation and served on its Executive. The thirteenth Conference of German Zionists was held in the city of Posen and opened on 27 May 1912. At every Zionist Conference a special lecture was delivered on the work in Palestine.

At the thirteenth conference, the lecture was given by Motzkin on the subject of "Unsere Palastinapolitik" (Our Palestine Policy). Towards the end of his lecture, Motzkin spoke on the Arab question. "There is no doubt," said Motzkin, "that one of our most difficult tasks will be to accustom the Arabs to the thought that Palestine is a Jewish land - Eretz Israel. The fact is, that around Palestine there are extensive areas. It will be easy for the Arabs to settle there with the money that they will receive from the Jews."

Motzkin then considered the Arab-Jewish problem in the wider framework of settlement

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1 / Jacobson to Weizmann, "Un aide-mémoire sur la 'Solution Territoriale'", 20 January 1932, p.6, (WA) ; Neil Caplan, *Futile Diplomacy*, vol.2, (London, 1986), p.185, (English translation).

2 / Dothan, *Struggle for Eretz-Israel*, op. cit., p.81.

3 / Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, op. cit., p.231.

4 / Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel*, op. cit., p.61 fn.1.

5 / Zalman David Levontin, *L'Eretz Avoteinu*, (Tel-Aviv, 1924), Book 2, p.187.

in both Palestine and Syria. "We are observing not just Palestine alone, but Palestine and Syria together, and we see in the colonisation of the areas an advantage for the two peoples from the point of view of history and economics." (1)

In an unpublished paper entitled "The Basis of Zionism and the Way to build up Palestine" written at the end of 1918, Motzkin again advocated the transfer of the Arab population from Palestine to the various Arab lands. He pointed out that the slogan of the men of the Second Aliyah was "Jewish labour". Until then, there had been mainly Jewish owners and Arab labour. At this period, the Jewish farmers were asked to employ only Jewish workers. It was hoped that this would mean that "many Jewish farmers and managers of public institutions would gradually dismiss their Arab workers and employ Jews in their stead." He then pointed out that this policy went counter to socialist ideology which demanded equality between members of different races.

According to Motzkin there was a simple solution to this problem. The Jews and the Arabs should come to a political agreement regarding "the transfer of population from territory to territory." When this was proposed in 1914 it was impossible of achievement as the Turks ruled in the land. Without Palestine in its entirety, there was no meaning to such an agreement. For this reason, the Zionists made known in the summer of 1916 that the Arab question could be solved not by propaganda or theoretical discussions but only by a political revolution. Motzkin considered that the Arab question could strengthen "political Zionism".

He went on to explain that the meaning of "political Zionism" was the methodical purchase of land together with Jewish settlement and Jewish labour and peaceful agreement with the local population. It was obvious that the problem would not be an easy one. Agreement would come on a political or economic basis, since territorial concessions were not a realistic proposition.

"Our thoughts were then that settlement needs to move in two directions," continued Motzkin, "namely Jewish settlement in Palestine and the resettlement of the Arabs of Palestine in areas outside of Palestine." The transfer of an appreciable population, which at first seemed overwhelming from the financial angle, was a matter not impossible of accomplishment. It would not require very large sums of money in order to resettle the inhabitants of an Arab village on other land and to provide for their needs there. (2)

In 1931, Motzkin was again involved in a population transfer proposal. Santo Semo, a Parisian engineer, had submitted to Motzkin, then President of the seventeenth Zionist Congress, his plan for a radical solution of the Palestine problem. Santo Semo saw the solution of the Palestinian problem not so much from the political viewpoint as from the economic and ethnic point of view. He proposed the formation of a Jewish-Arab organisation having as its task the transfer of Arab peasants from Palestine to Iraq. He listed the advantages of his plan and the precedents for population transfer. (3)

Motzkin, however, did not bring Semo's proposal to the attention of the Congress, since he regarded Semo as an impractical visionary and therefore did not seriously relate to his plan. (4)

#### **AKIVA ETTINGER**

Akiva Ettinger, an agricultural expert, was founder and administrator of Jewish settlements in Palestine. He played a prominent role on behalf of the Jewish National Fund in the purchase of land.

In 1909-10 Ettinger went on a study tour of Iraq. In his memoirs published in the winter of 1936-7, he observed that although Iraq would not be suitable for Jewish settlement, there was room for "many more millions of additional inhabitants." Dr. Michael Heymann, a former Director of the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem, observes that it is "interesting to note"

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1 / Leo Motzkin, "Unsere Palastinapolitik", Juedische Rundschau, (Berlin), no.28, 12 July 1912, p.261.

2 / Sefer Motzkin, ed. Alex Bein, (Jerusalem, 1939), pp.163-64.

3 / Santo Semo, "Une Solution Radicale du Problème Palestinien", Paris, 1931, p.1, (CZA L9/41).

4 / Michael Heymann, The Zionist Movement and the schemes for the settlement of Mesopotamia after Herzl, (Tel-Aviv, 1965), p.53, fn.

that these memoirs were published at the time when the Peel Commission was in Palestine and the Zionist leaders were hard put to find new solutions to the Arab problem. Hence "population exchanges were of extreme importance." Heymann feels therefore that the timing of the publication of Ettinger's memoirs was not coincidental. He adds that some years after the publication of these memoirs, Ettinger "advanced a proposal for the resettlement of Palestinian Arabs in unpopulated areas of Iraq in order to make room for Jewish settlement in Palestine." (1)

In the summer of 1940, Akiva Ettinger wrote a paper on "Population Exchange" which was published in the Palestinian journal "Bacur", and in October 1941. this same article appeared in English in a condensed form in the "Jewish Frontier" (2). (This was possibly the proposal referred to by Heymann.) He considered that at that period there was no need to transfer the non-Jewish population from Palestine. However, he felt that should the rate of Aliyah to Palestine increase, it could be possible that the Arab population would become an irredenta, and one therefore needed to plan ahead and examine the question of population exchange. (3)

Ettinger wrote that since about 1910, a number of people had recognised the positive value of population exchange and saw in it a way to peace and political and economic recovery of complete nations. He corrected the misconception that large population transfers in the Balkan states were only implemented after the First World War. Even before that time, he pointed out there was a population exchange between Bulgaria and Turkey. He went on to detail other population exchanges which followed in the subsequent years. Ettinger showed that after the Greco-Turkish population exchange, the relationship between these two nations completely changed for the better - arguments ceased and a friendly political relationship came about. (4)

He then went on to discuss the transfer question in connection with Palestine. He pointed out that officially the question had been raised by the Peel Commission, but this commission tied its own hands by suggesting that one should search for water in the Negev and in Transjordan for the Arabs. This was however doomed to failure since there was no organisation apart from the Jews who was prepared to make the necessary effort to find such water. He went on to argue that even if one were to find sufficient water and transfer the Arabs to these areas, it would only be a temporary solution, and one would then be forced to find other solutions. One of these solutions was the transfer of Arabs to Iraq and he pointed out why Iraq, who lacked population, was the best solution. (5)

Ettinger then referred to the fact that there were Arabs who had proposed the emigration of Jews to Arab countries. This he immediately dismissed as lacking any sense, since it was impossible to establish a Jewish minority in the same countries which until very recently had tried to crush its Jewish minority. In contrast, Ettinger held that there were unlimited possibilities for Arab transfer to Iraq, where the conditions would be ideal. (6)

He then pointed out the necessity for the Jews of Europe to leave that continent, and they would then be able to settle on the land vacated by the Arabs moving to Iraq. He added that it would not be necessary to do a lot of research on this question since it had already been carried out during the previous twenty years. There would however be groups who would try to prevent implementation of such a transfer and it was thus necessary to have arguments ready to refute these groups. (7)

Ettinger continued by outlining some of the points involved in this scheme which included the purchase of Arab land in Palestine. He felt sure that Iraq, which was underdeveloped agriculturally, would thus be interested in the plan.

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1 / Heymann, *The Zionist Movement*, op. cit., p.52.

2 / Akiva Ettinger, "Population Transfers", *Jewish Frontier*, (New York), vol.viii, no.10(82), October 1941, pp.17 - 20.

3 / Akiva Ettinger, "Population Exchange", *Bacur*, (Tel-Aviv), 1941, p.41.

4 / *Ibid.*, pp.42-44.

5 / *Ibid.*, pp.45-46.

6 / *Ibid.*, p.46.

7 / *Ibid.*, p.47.

Ettinger concluded that although the population exchange as outlined in this paper involved serious problems, both Jews and Arabs would be interested in finding solutions to such problems. <sup>(1)</sup>

In his book, "Am Haklaim Ivrim B'Arzenu", published in 1945 Ettinger writes of his frequent discussions with Berl Katznelson on the question of transfer. The two men agreed on the need for massive voluntary Jewish immigration to Palestine and hoped that in a similar way "many of our (Arab) neighbours will go to the neighbouring countries" which were rich in fertile land and in great need of an increased population. Ettinger further writes that in 1942, Katznelson published Ettinger's survey and suggestions on transfer. Subsequently, someone in America criticised Ettinger for publishing these proposals. He reported this criticism to Katznelson who said that he had expected this attitude from "blind" people but "it does not matter. The subject will attract the hearts of many individuals and especially of progressive nations." <sup>(2)</sup>

### **ISRAEL ZANGWILL**

Israel Zangwill, the Anglo-Jewish writer, was born in 1864, and was the author of many ghetto studies, ghetto tragedies and ghetto comedies.

#### **Zangwill Perceives Arab Problem in Palestine**

In 1895, Zangwill saw the significance of Zionism and became a follower of Herzl. In April 1897, he was a member of a group of English Jews who went on a pilgrimage to Palestine. They arrived on the day before Pesach at Jaffa, travelled by train to Jerusalem where they spent the first days of the Festival; this included the holding of an English style service at the Western Wall, prior to their Seder at a nearby Jewish hotel. During the course of the Intermediate Days of the Festival they toured the country.

In the course of this visit, Zangwill had the opportunity to see the Arab problem at first hand. In one of his meetings with Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the father of the Modern Hebrew language, Zangwill raised the question of the Arab problem, asking him how the Jews and Arabs would succeed in living together and whether there was room in so small a country for two peoples. Ben-Yehuda did not see this as such a problem. On the contrary, in his opinion it was essential to help the Arabs to establish schools in which they would learn Arabic and Hebrew, thus increasing the Arabs' cultural level and developing a common language between the two peoples. Zangwill was not happy with Ben-Yehuda's answer and felt that his vision of the Hebrew language had distorted his objectivity. <sup>(3)</sup> However, it took Zangwill a few years to formulate his own solution to the Arab problem.

In the December 1904 edition of the American Jewish newspaper "The Maccabaeen" appeared an article by Zangwill entitled "Zionism and England's Offer". In the course of this article Zangwill put forward his proposal for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine: "There is, however, a difficulty from which the Zionist dares not avert his eyes, though he rarely likes to face it. Palestine proper has already its inhabitants.... So we must be prepared either to drive out by the sword the tribes in possession as our forefathers did, or to grapple with the problem of a large alien population, mostly Mohammedan and accustomed for centuries to despise us." He also felt that the Zionists must extend their "idea of Palestine", mentioning the Euphrates, the border of Egypt and Mesopotamia (Iraq) as her true boundaries. <sup>(4)</sup>

In a half-page advertisement in the same edition of "The Maccabaeen" <sup>(5)</sup> and in a further advertisement in the same paper in the following March, <sup>(6)</sup> this article was described

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> / Akiva Ettinger, Am Haklaim Ivrim B'Arzenu, (Tel-Aviv, 1945), p.204.

<sup>3</sup> / Joseph Nedava, "Israel Zangwill and the Arab Problem", Ha-umma, (Jerusalem), fourth year, 2 (14), October 1965, p.210.

<sup>4</sup> / Israel Zangwill, "Zionism and England's Offer", The Maccabaeen, (New York), vol.vii, no.6, December 1904, p.281.

<sup>5</sup> / Joseph Leftwich, Israel Zangwill, (New York, 1957) pp.204-05.

<sup>6</sup> / Advertisement, "Zionism and England's Offer", The Maccabaeen, (New York), vol.vii, no.6, December 1904, p.310.

as an "Address" - the December edition in fact headed this advertisement "A Notable and Brilliant Address". We can thus see that Zangwill had spoken on this subject to an audience. His biographer, Joseph Leftwich, quotes Zangwill as saying that he made this speech in New York in 1904. <sup>(1)</sup> The identity of the audience and the exact date of delivery have not been traced.

It was "The Maccabean" who reprinted and put on sale 10,000 copies of this article. Obviously, one cannot say that the paper's description of this address as "A Notable and Brilliant Address" was due to the population transfer proposal contained in it. However, one can say that this proposal did not prevent its being described in these terms or its being reprinted in large numbers, for sale to the general public.

In April 1905, Zangwill delivered the above speech (with some minor changes) to a crowded meeting in Manchester, England. <sup>(2)</sup>

The seventh Zionist Congress of 1905 finally rejected the offer to establish a Jewish State in Uganda. Following this rejection, Zangwill founded the Jewish Territorial Organisation, which was dedicated to the establishment of a Jewish autonomous settlement in any part of the world.

He thus lost interest in the transfer of Arabs from Palestine until the First World War, when he returned to the Zionist fold and accordingly returned to his proposal as summed up in the words of Professor Nedava, "The Arabs of Palestine must vacate the land designated to be the Jewish State." <sup>(3)</sup>

#### **Lecture to Fabian Society**

In a lecture delivered to the Fabian Society in December 1915, Zangwill broached his plan for the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine. [The Fabian Society was founded in 1883 by a small group in London who aimed at reconstructing society in accordance with the highest moral possibilities.]

In his lecture, Zangwill considered that even under British suzerainty, the restoration of the Jews to Palestine would not be easy. He felt that despite all the magnificent colonisation efforts of the Jews in Palestine "now, alas! half destroyed", they still had "too few vested interests in the soil to have a claim to it on any basis of Realpolitik." He pointed out that even before emigration during the War, the Jewish population of Palestine was only one hundred thousand, and they possessed only two per cent of the land. "Unless therefore, the Arabs would trek into Arabia, or could be peacefully expropriated, any Government set up on a constitutional democratic basis would result, not in a Jewish autonomy but in an Arab autonomy." <sup>(4)</sup> A few years later, Zangwill was to write that if the Jewish National Home were "to be built up without an Arab trek, it can only be by methods strictly unconstitutional." <sup>(5)</sup>

Zangwill repeated his plan in a popular monthly, a still more popular Sunday paper and in an address to the National Liberal Club. This Club was established in 1882 and was one of the more important clubs in London. It was full of sympathy with Zangwill's contention that only by being in the majority could the Jews build up their Model State. <sup>(6)</sup>

#### **Zangwill's Conversation with Jabotinsky**

In the summer of 1916, Zangwill met in Preston, near London, with Vladimir Jabotinsky. Over twenty years later in 1939, Jabotinsky wrote an account of his "Conversation with Zangwill" which mainly dealt with Zangwill's proposals for the Arabs of Palestine. This topic was introduced by Zangwill who asked Jabotinsky what he would do with the Arabs if

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., vol.viii, no.3, March 1905, p.134.

<sup>2</sup> / "Mr. I. Zangwill on the East African Question", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 14 April 1905, p.24; Speeches, Articles, and Letters of Israel Zangwill, ed. Maurice Simon, (London, 1937), pp.210-11.

<sup>3</sup> / Nedava, Ha-umma, op. cit., p.211.

<sup>4</sup> / Israel Zangwill, The War for the World, (London, 1916), p.342.

<sup>5</sup> / Israel Zangwill, The Voice of Jerusalem, (London, 1920), p.108.

<sup>6</sup> / Israel Zangwill, Letters to the Editor, The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 20 December 1918, p.15.

the Jews got a Charter for Palestine. Jabotinsky replied that the classic answer that there was enough room in Palestine on both sides of the Jordan for six or eight million people and the Arabs only numbered half a million. "All this is just idle chatter", replied Zangwill, adding that people, such as Jabotinsky, from Eastern Europe considered it quite normal for more than ten minority groups to be found living together in a small area. However, peoples from Western democracies would see this as a disease for which there could be no cure. "To allow such a situation in our Jewish State would be like gorging out our eyes with our hands. If we receive Palestine, the Arabs will have to 'trek'."

As we see, Zangwill was very fond of using the word 'trek' in connection with the fate of the Arabs of Palestine. The origin of the word is from the Boers of South Africa, who in the first third of the twentieth century began a mass migration from Capeland to Transvaal in order to free themselves from their English neighbours. This migration became known as the "Great Trek".

Speaking in general regarding the distribution of people on the face of the earth, Zangwill felt that it was essential to correct imbalances which arose from accidents of history. "Progressive nations need to meet and work out a plan for a logical and just redistribution of territory in such a manner that every people will have its own place and no one will fear his neighbour."

Zangwill did not see any sanctity in the voluntary nature of migration. He said that there were some things, such as children's education which were generally agreed to be good and beneficial. "In a case like this it is foolish to avoid compulsion." Zangwill believed absolutely that a time would come when migration would be viewed in a similar light. However, before that came about, there would have to be a wholesale clearance of various false theories, such as that of migration being a tragedy. "This is one of the most conspicuous falsehoods in the world. Migration is a fortunate experience. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred", he claimed, "the transferees have found their new territories to be better, more spacious and healthier." <sup>(1)</sup>

#### **Zangwill's Article of May 1917**

In an article written a few months before the publication of the Balfour Declaration, Zangwill again tried to grapple with the Arab problem in Palestine. He asserted that Lord Shaftesbury's magnanimous plea to "Give the country without a people to the people without a country" was a misleading mistake. "The country holds 600,000 Arabs", wrote Zangwill, "and unfortunately the soil is occupied by the Arabs." He held that even under a constitutional government for all the inhabitants of Palestine, "there would be, not a Jewish autonomy but an Arab autonomy... In any event the Jews would be swamped and the Jewish atmosphere" which was the main object of a Jewish State, would become "less distinctive than the Ghetto of New York."

Zangwill considered that the "only solution of this difficulty lies in the consideration that Palestine is not so much occupied by the Arabs as over-run by them... We cannot allow the Arabs to block so valuable a piece of historic reconstruction... And therefore we must greatly persuade them to 'trek'. After all, they have all Arabia with its million square miles - not to mention the vast new area freed from the Turk between Syria and Mesopotamia - and Israel has not a square inch."

Zangwill suggested that the Arabs should be encouraged "to fold their tents" and "silently steal away". He felt sure that the Jews would be prepared to pay their travelling expenses and purchase any immovable property.

In conclusion, Zangwill wrote that the Jews of Palestine, if a minority, would either have to dominate the majority or be dominated by them and neither of these alternatives would be desirable. "Neither would be the dream that has sweetened the centuries of

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<sup>1</sup> / Vladimir Jabotinsky, "A Conversation with Zangwill", *Der Moment*, (Warsaw), no.152, 21 July 1939, (news-clipping in Jabotinsky Archives 1939/18 tav no.17); *Writings of Jabotinsky* vol.17, (Zichronot ben-dori), (Tel-Aviv, [n.d.]), pp.256-59; *Jewish Herald*, (Johannesburg), vol.iii, no.21, 4 August 1939, p.5.



sorrow." (1) This article was reprinted in the American Zionist paper "The Menorah Journal" of October 1917. (2) The historian Rafael Medoff observes that there was no reaction by the American Zionists to this article of Zangwill's and he suggests that the reason may have been that "it appeared in the edition of 'Menorah Journal' that was circulating at precisely the same moment that euphoria over the Balfour Declaration was sweeping the American Zionist movement." (3)

This article did however come up in a conversation between Elisha Friedman and the philanthropist Jacob Schiff in October 1917. Friedman (who in the 1940s became actively involved in Herbert Hoover's Arab transfer plan) said: "Zangwill thinks England would be willing to pay the Arabs for their land and improvements and turn over the million of acres in Arabia to these Nomads and leave the small strip on the seacost [sic] for the Jews." (4)

### "Before the Peace Conference"

During the First World War, the United States' President, Woodrow Wilson, worked on his ideas for a new Utopian international system which would perpetuate peace and assure justice and security to every nation regardless of its material strength. Wilson insisted that the results of war should not be expressed through the annexation of territory but be based on the principle which promises the right of self-determination for all nations. More specifically, in connection with Palestine, point number twelve of Wilson's famous "Fourteen Points" necessary to a just and lasting peace, included the proposal that peoples under Turkish rule were to be allowed self-determination. Until Palestine had been conquered by the British in 1917-8, it had been part of the Ottoman Empire under Turkish rule.

Zionist organisations throughout the world, therefore, naturally utilised the opportunity of the Paris Peace Conference held in January 1919, to push forward Jewish claims and title to Palestine. Zangwill, however, was at odds with the Zionist Organisation over its interpretation of the Balfour Declaration. He therefore, in December 1918, published an article in "The Jewish Chronicle" entitled "Before the Peace Conference".

On 4 December 1918, Zangwill had written a letter (untraced) to the Editor of "The Jewish Chronicle", Leopold Greenberg, (presumably) offering him this article for publication in that paper. On the 6th of the month, Greenberg replied saying that he liked the idea of sending them this article. The Editor was obviously keen to publish it because he added, "if you can let us have it by Monday [9 December] that will suit us best because it will give us plenty of time to 'feature' it and perhaps get some announcements of it elsewhere beforehand." (5)

From Zangwill's letter of 10 December, we see that Greenberg had already received this article and had commented favourably on it. Zangwill was sure that his article "will key the thing up, so that they [the forthcoming Paris Peace Conference] will not dare offer us too little." He was also sure that his "views will excite controversy" adding that he had "expressed them very briefly and have all the answers." He observed that his wife thought that his "beautiful phrase 'race redistribution' is a really constructive contribution."

Zangwill did not know whether Greenberg would be writing an Editorial on his article, but suggested that "it might be well in anticipation of one class of objector to point out that I am no 'visionary' but the President of the only Society in the world except the ICA(?) which has emigrated 10,000 Jewish souls from persecution to freedom and prosperity." (6) Zangwill's article appeared in "The Jewish Chronicle" of 13 December, and in this edition were two Editorials on Zangwill. Although Greenberg did not mention that that Zangwill was no "visionary", he did observe that "in the Ito [Jewish Territorial Organisation], too he has

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1 / Zangwill, Voice of Jerusalem, op. cit., pp.92-93.

2 / Israel Zangwill, "The Fate of Palestine", The Menorah Journal, (New York), vol.iii, no.4, October 1917, pp. 196-202.

3 / Rafael Medoff, American Zionist leaders and the Palestinian Arabs, 1898-1948, Doctoral thesis, Yeshiva University, 1991, (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1994), [hereafter: Medoff, thesis], p.113.

4 / Memorandum of Conversation between J.H.S. [Jacob Schiff] & E.M.F. [Elisha Friedman], 20 October 1917, p.2, (Princeton University, Louis Brandeis Papers, Reel 82).

5 / Greenberg to Zangwill, 6 December 1918, (CZA A120/364).

6 / Zangwill to Greenberg, 10 December 1918, (CZA A120/364).

rendered at least one signal service in one particular branch of the Jewish difficulty by the re-settlement of some thousands of oppressed Jews in more congenial environment." (1)

In his article, Zangwill wrote that if it is to exist at all, a Jewish Palestine must be a reality and not a sham, adding that so far, interpretations of the Balfour Declaration "seem scarcely serious". He felt that the Jewish National Home would be a "British Crown Colony with a predominantly Arab population." He complained that while other peoples scarcely known to history were to flourish on their own soil, the Jewish people "is to crawl into a corner of its own land like a leper colony." One was entitled to assume, Zangwill considered, that the Balfour Declaration "was intended to settle the Jewish question in harmony with the spirit of this great moment of world reconstruction when everything is in the melting pot."

He repeated, that in order to convert Palestine into a Jewish National Home, the Arabs would have to be resettled in Arabia. "And hence we must suppose that this new system of creative politics will not stop short of disentangling Europe, and that those amicable measures of race redistribution which we have already seen to be an unavoidable part of a final world settlement will be carried out in Palestine as elsewhere. Thus the Arabs would gradually be settled in the new and vast Arabian Kingdom, to liberate which from the Turk, Jews no less than Arabs have laid down their lives and with which the Jewish Commonwealth would cultivate the closest friendship and co-operation. Only thus can Palestine become a 'Jewish National Home'." He felt that only if Palestine were to have a large Jewish majority, (but not a "Jewish totality"), and the land nationalised via expropriation of both Jewish and Arab land "with reasonable compensation", could the Jews hope to build up a "model state".

Zangwill warned that the World War which had just ended had been "a sufficient object-lesson in the rankling poisons of race-hatred generated between peoples pent in the same territory". Hence the Jews had to possess Palestine in the same way as the Arabs had to possess Arabia or the Poles Poland. (2)

### Reactions to Zangwill's Article

After the publication of Zangwill's article, Sir Lionel Abrahams, a distinguished English civil servant and Anglo-Jewish historian, handed in his resignation as a member of the Jewish Territorial Organisation. On receiving Sir Lionel's resignation, Zangwill wrote him a letter which he also sent a copy of to "The Jewish Chronicle" for publication. In addition he sent the paper a memorandum containing his plan as worked out for the Peace Conference. (3) This memorandum presumably contained the points made in his letter to Sir Lionel.

Greenberg replied that he was publishing the letter to Sir Lionel, but pointed out that he was in a difficult situation with regard to the Memorandum since "the [British] Government would not view with favour the publication of a number of different proposals, especially before the proposal comes to them from the Zionist body itself", and also "because it is not desirable to put up the back of the idiots who are in authority." Even with regard to the publication of Zangwill's letter to Sir Lionel, Greenberg had some hesitation since he observed, "Between ourselves, I rather think that I am sailing very near the wind in publishing your letter to Sir Lionel Abrahams." Greenberg concluded that he would however publish Zangwill's memorandum, as soon as Weizmann let him publish his plan, and at the same time point out that his paper had held it over until they had received Weizmann's memorandum. (4)

In his letter to Sir Lionel, Zangwill wrote: "Dear Sir Lionel, - On the ground that my suggestion for the gradual and amicable emigration of the majority of its Arabs from the tiny territory of Palestine is 'indefensible and impracticable,' you ask me to remove your name

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1 / Editorial, "Mr Zangwill Speaks", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 13 December 1918, p.5.

2 / Israel Zangwill, "Before the Peace Conference", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 13 December 1918, p.12; Zangwill, Speeches, Articles, op. cit., pp.340-42. (

3 / Zangwill to Greenberg, 16 December 1918, (CZA A120/364).

4 / Greenberg to Zangwill, 17 December 1918, (CZA A120/364).

from the list of the Council of the Jewish Territorial Organisation." (1)

In his book "The Voice of Jerusalem" published nearly two years later, which amplified many of the points contained in his letter to Sir Lionel, Zangwill explained the importance of "gradual and amicable emigration". There he contrasted his planned transfer of the Arabs from Palestine, with the "brief notice" of compulsory emigration which the terms of the armistice concluding the war, gave all Germans in Turkey. His proposals for transfer would involve "a well-organised emigration to a pre-arranged home amid one's kinsmen, with full compensation for values left behind." (2)

At a Zionist demonstration held in the East End of London, a few weeks before the publication of Zangwill's "Before the Peace Conference" article, Weizmann had put forward his own ideas on Palestine. In brief, his plans were for first gaining world recognition of Palestine as a Jewish land, then employing "legitimate means" to bring millions of Jews to Palestine within a relatively short time without encroaching on the rights of the Arab peasants. Jews would work the land and would lay the spiritual foundations of the country - namely the Hebrew language, Jewish days of rest and the Hebrew education system. However, Weizmann proposed that there should not be a government until there was a Jewish majority in Palestine. Instead, the land should be administered by a Trustee power. (3)

Zangwill was against Weizmann's plans and in his letter to Sir Lionel Abrahams referred to this scheme as "indefensible and impracticable". "Even if it does not propose to sit on the Arab's head, it does propose to snow him under, and ethically I can see no difference between destroying his position gradually or at a stroke." Zangwill felt that it would be more ethical to make an honest, open bargain with the Arabs rather than slowly swamp them. He pointed out that "even the 'Morning Post' (no very pro-Semitic organ) merely demanded our 'buying out the present owners of Palestine'; exactly my policy." Zangwill contended that only Jewish critics found his scheme either "indefensible" or "impracticable". (4)

In his book, Zangwill stated categorically that his "suggestion of amicable race-redistribution or a voluntary trek" was the only method of creating a Jewish State in Palestine. "If it is as impracticable as is generally alleged, then the whole Zionist project was a chimera." (5)

Referring in his letter to historic precedents in the universal migrations of primitive people, Zangwill added that the "Arab semi-nomadic fellah" had created nothing in Palestine to attach him to the soil. (6) Hence there was "no Arab people living in intimate fusion with the country, utilising its resources and stamping it with a characteristic impress: there is at best an Arab encampment." (7) He recommended that the Arab carry "his primitive plough to his own new and vast Arabian kingdom." These he would be master in his own house and in a state of peace rather than perpetual friction with the Jews of Palestine.

Zangwill enclosed a copy of his plan which he had proposed that Weizmann present at the Paris Peace Conference. (8)

Three days later, Lucien Wolf wrote a letter to Zangwill which was subsequently published in "The Jewish Chronicle". [Lucien Wolf was at the time President of the Anglo-Jewish Association. This was a British organisation which had originally been formed for the protection by diplomatic means of Jewish rights in backward countries. After 1905, Wolf had collaborated with Zangwill in his Jewish Territorial Organisation, and he was one of the main British figures in the anti-Zionist campaign. One should mention that at that period there were a number of prominent Anglo-Jews who were anti-Zionist - not just non-Zionists. They felt that Zionism could jeopardise the legal rights won by the Jews of Britain over many decades, and that Jewish patriotism was incompatible with their loyalties as

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1 / Zangwill, Jewish Chronicle, 20 December 1918, op. cit.

2 / Zangwill, Voice of Jerusalem, op. cit., pp.103-04.

3 / "Dr. Weizmann on Zionist Demands", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 13 December 1918, p.18.

4 / Zangwill, Jewish Chronicle, 20 December 1918, op. cit.

5 / Zangwill, Voice of Jerusalem, op. cit., p.103.

6 / Zangwill, Jewish Chronicle, 20 December 1918, op. cit.

7 / Zangwill, Voice of Jerusalem, op. cit., p.104.

8 / Zangwill, Jewish Chronicle, 20 December 1918, op. cit.

British citizens and could lead to anti-Semitism. When the text of what was to be known as the Balfour Declaration was being discussed by the British Cabinet, these anti-Zionist Jews made antagonistic representations to the British Government and as a result they modified the text of the Declaration to one which was much less favourable to Zionist aspirations.]

Before his article was even published Zangwill realised that Lucien Wolf would raise objections to the plan and he thus in his letter to Greenberg wrote that "one of Wolf's objections is indeed countered in advance", although he did not specify what this particular objection was. <sup>(1)</sup>

Wolf began his letter by asserting that he felt just as strongly as did Sir Lionel that Zangwill's proposal to transfer the Arabs was " 'indefensible' if not 'impracticable'." Wolf went on to show complete lack of knowledge of the history of Palestine during the last two millennia. "The Zionists, however dear may be their memories of 2000 years ago, came to the land as strangers, while the so-called Arabs - by which is meant the fellahin or peasantry - are the indigenous population who were in the country before the first invasion of our people, and who have remained there ever since."

Wolf then expressed concern at what might happen to Jews in other countries, were the Arabs to be evicted from Palestine because they did not happen to be Jews. He warned that the proposal which Zangwill had made for the amicable emigration of the Arabs from Palestine had already been made for the emigration of Jews from Poland. He felt that although the few hundred thousand Jews of Palestine might benefit from the transfer of the Arabs, seven million Jews in Eastern and South Eastern Europe might have "to submit to a similar persecution without any right of appeal to justice and fair play." He added that, were the eviction of Arabs to take place, an "indelible stigma" would be attached to Jews throughout the world. <sup>(2)</sup>

Zangwill told Wolf that he saw no grounds for his criticisms. "In your shrinking from a Jewish State you strive to bar the way by ethical considerations unknown to history." He asked Wolf, "Where and on what status, pray, are the original inhabitants of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, even of Wilson's own America?" Zangwill added that history had "never recognised the rights of races to monopolise territories they could not develop. If, as you say, the Arabs have been in Palestine 2000 years, then it is high time they trekked, like the Boers from Cape Colony."

Although allowing that the Arabs had had a great civilised period, Zangwill said that the fellahin were "primitive, illiterate, reckless folk" who had created absolutely nothing in Palestine. He trusted that Wolf's solicitude for the Arabs did not extend to the exploiting absentee landlords. <sup>(3)</sup>

A year later, Zangwill wrote about an Arab sheikh who had issued a pro-Zionist manifesto regarding Arabs of Palestine whose lands were continually being expropriated, without even compensation, by the very Effendis who were behind the opposition to Zionism. <sup>(4)</sup>

Zangwill inquired, "What injustice is there in transferring the Arab to a similar piece of land in his own kingdom?" As already seen, nearly twenty years earlier, Herzl in his draft charter for a "Jewish-Ottoman Land Company" had included a similar proposal.

To prevent the Arab being overruled, Zangwill suggested Arab emigration from Palestine coupled with Jewish immigration to Palestine. Such a process would "redress the balance of races and make a 'Jewish National Home' more possible."

Wolf's point regarding Poland was referred to by Zangwill as "mere impudence" and the analogy between the cases of Poland and Palestine dismissed, since the Jewish population of Poland was only 16 per cent as compared with the 85 per cent Arab population of Palestine. <sup>(5)</sup> Elsewhere, Zangwill wrote that he had no objection to "an orderly migration of Polish Jews"

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<sup>1</sup> / Zangwill to Greenberg, 10 December 1918, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Lucien Wolf, Letters to the Editor, The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 3 January 1919, p.19.

<sup>3</sup> / Israel Zangwill, Letters to the Editor, The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 3 January 1919, p.19.

<sup>4</sup> / Zangwill, Voice of Jerusalem, op. cit., p.104.

<sup>5</sup> / Zangwill, Jewish Chronicle, 3 January 1919, op. cit.

who were being persecuted, to a "less barbarous soil". The difference was that whereas there was no Jewish State to receive the Polish Jews, the Arabs of Palestine only had to cross the border of Palestine to be in an Arab State. <sup>(1)</sup>

In reply to Zangwill's letter, Wolf wrote, "If the so-called Arabs were really Arabs - that is, natives of Arabia - and if the Jews were really Palestinians - that is indigenes of Palestine - there might be something to be said for your argument on the crazy basis of Territorial Nationality, which is the root curse of all our policies. But the Arabs are not Arabs. They are only the Moslemised descendants of the indigenous Canaanites, and hence they are in their rightful homeland which, however poor and feckless they may be, is their own. This is so well established an anthropological fact that you will find it referred to as beyond dispute in any good encyclopaedic article on Palestine." However, the eleventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, published only eight years earlier, shows that the Palestinian population of that day was made up of a patchwork of peoples including very large contingents from the Mediterranean countries, especially Armenia, Greece and Italy.

Wolf continued, "The Jews on the other hand, come from the very Mesopotamia to which you would now banish the Arabs. They never struck root in the country, although they certainly sanctified it by great doings... and they passed out of it because in reality it was too small for their great spirit and took the world for their stage." This is not in accordance with Jewish tradition and liturgy. Wolf asked Zangwill why he was not asking the Poles to trek into Russia and leave the Jews in possession of Poland. Wolf considered that such a proposal "would be just as reasonable as your proposition in regard to the Arabs." <sup>(2)</sup>

Zangwill replied that he did not demand this since the Poles had struck root in Poland and were in effective, historic cultural possession of their country. In addition, whereas an "Arab Kingdom is being set up for the Arabs outside Palestine", no Polish kingdom was being set up for the Poles in Russia. "It is the Arabs who have 'never struck root' in Palestine, not the Jews", said Zangwill, "for the Jews were uprooted while the Arabs are still, after all these centuries, merely standing on the surface."

At this period, the Emir Feisal had made a speech in which he stated that "Dr. Weizmann's ideals are ours" and that he looked forward to Jewish co-operation with his State. On 3 January 1919, he signed the historic agreement with Weizmann. In connection with the Emir Feisal, Zangwill wrote that if he "is as friendly as he sounds, then surely - united as Jews and Arabs are in their common objection to French suzerainty - there would be no difficulty in arranging with him on a quid pro quo basis that the Arabs of Palestine should be gradually drawn from these 10,000 square miles into the 400,000 square miles of the Arabic sphere, the two States then co-operating, freed from the danger of friction." <sup>(3)</sup> As is well-known, only a few months later, Feisal retreated from his pro-Zionist stand.

The final letter in this series, came from Rabbi Dr. Samuel Daiches, a Rabbinic and oriental scholar who was born in Vilna and had become a lecturer at Jews' College in 1908. Daiches was critical of Zangwill's articles and letters, Lucien Wolf's letters and Claude Montefiore's article on the "Dangers of Zionism" (which had appeared at the same period in "The Jewish Chronicle"). "They have all this in common", wrote Daiches, "they misunderstand the Jewish spirit and the essence of Zionism."

With regard to Wolf, Daiches wrote, "Mr. Wolf's anxiety for the 'descendants of the indigenous Canaanites' and his hints to the Poles and other anti-Semites would be farcical if they were not tragical... I may, by the way tell Mr. Wolf that the Jews did not come from Mesopotamia. The family of our patriarch Abraham migrated from Canaan to Babylonia, and Abraham re-migrated from Babylonia to Canaan, went back to his 'rightful homeland'. We are, therefore, at least in as good a position as the 'descendants of the indigenous Canaanites'. The superconscience of Mr. Wolf may be quite at rest on this score. 'Cooked' history gives a bad taste, Mr. Wolf."

Daiches opposed Zangwill's proposal to transfer the Arabs from Palestine, describing it

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<sup>1</sup> / Zangwill, Voice of Jerusalem, op. cit., p.103.

<sup>2</sup> / Wolf, Jewish Chronicle, 3 January 1919, op. cit., p.20.

<sup>3</sup> / Israel Zangwill, Letters to the Editor, The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 10 January 1919, p.14.

as "un-Jewish and unpolitical". He said, "We will not evict Arabs or any other people living in Palestine... We want Palestine to be again the Jewish National Home. The Arabs have no objection to this idea being realised." <sup>(1)</sup> The years which immediately followed showed Daiches to be completely mistaken. The Arabs' true intentions were revealed, not just in words but in pogroms and massacres.

#### **Editorial Comments in "The Jewish Chronicle"**

During the period of Zangwill's original article and the subsequent correspondence, "The Jewish Chronicle" published several Editorials on the subject.

The first one, under the heading "The Arab Problem" appeared in the same edition as Zangwill's article. It began by stating that Zangwill had always emphasised the demographic problem confronting Jewish settlement in Palestine and continued, "In the article we print, Mr. Zangwill grasps the nettle with characteristic courage." After summarising Zangwill's suggestion for transfer of the Arabs from Palestine to the new and vast Arabian kingdom, the Editorial writer concluded that this suggestion was "wholly impracticable." It was one thing to transport ten or twenty thousand willing emigrants, but another to transport hundreds of thousands "possibly against their own wishes." The Editorial writer then put forward his own views on solving the Arab problem in Palestine, namely by absorption of the Arabs as equal citizens. He concluded, "Meanwhile we may welcome Mr. Zangwill's constructive attempt to deal with the whole question, and the fine sense of Jewish nationalism which he manifests. We would only add that Mr. Zangwill's experiences and enthusiasms - to say nothing of his commanding position in Jewry - eminently fit him, in our opinion and in the opinion, we are convinced of his co-religionists all the world over, to take a prominent part in the deliberations of the Palestine section at the coming Peace Conference. We hope that his presence and service may be secured." <sup>(2)</sup> It is significant to note that although the Editorial writer of "The Jewish Chronicle" did not agree with Zangwill's proposals for the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine, he afforded both Zangwill and his proposal the greatest respect and proposed that he take a prominent part in the forthcoming Paris Peace Conference.

Another Editorial written a fortnight later, came out against both Zangwill's proposals and the official Zionist proposals for solving the Arab problem. The Editorial writer hoped that in the new scheme for effectuating the Balfour Declaration, which was at the time in the course of preparation, "the vital Arab question will be dealt with on something like rational and reasonable lines. Expropriation, as Mr. Zangwill proposes, we do not think comes under either of these categories, any more than does the policy of peaceful penetration of Jews on the one hand, and gradual elimination of the Arabs on the other, which is said to be the official Zionist plan." <sup>(3)</sup>

In a third Editorial which appeared after the exchange of letters between Lucien Wolf and Zangwill, the idea of population transfer was viewed more favourably. The Editorial writer conceded that Zangwill's retort to Wolf contained "several points which deserve to be borne in mind in the discussion of this very difficult and vital question... It may be that in the end no material injury would be done to the Arab population" by applying Wilson's principles of reshaping lands on the principle of Nationality. "As an ideal, indeed, the proposition, if voluntarily embraced by Arabs and Jews alike, would prove to be a solution of the trouble." <sup>(4)</sup>

The Editorial writer however, felt that the plan sketched by "A Jewish Nationalist", a month and-a-half earlier in "The Jewish Chronicle" was the most practicable plan for dealing with the Arab problem. In this plan, the anonymous author said that the Arabs could not be "expropriated" but must be given the "fullest consideration" and "utmost protection". For his solution of the Arab question, he suggested turning the "Arabs into Israelites politically." Those Arabs who wished "to become citizens of 'Israel' could do so" and those

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<sup>1</sup> / Samuel Daiches, Letters to the Editor, The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 10 January 1919, p.15.

<sup>2</sup> / Editorial, "The Arab Problem", The Jewish Chronicle, London, 13 December 1918, p.5.

<sup>3</sup> / Editorial, "Zionist Matters", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 27 December 1918, p.5.

<sup>4</sup> / Editorial, "Mr. Zangwill and the Arab Problem", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 3 January 1919, p.7.

who did not wish could remain Arabs. He said, "We have to rely upon political means for maintaining within its borders a nationality that is Jewish; and it stands to reason that these political means will prove in the end just as effectual in gradually eliminating from the land of Israel those who do not desire to identify themselves with that nationality, as they will be the means of attracting to its borders those who do." (1) The Editorial writer considered that this plan was natural and comparatively easy whilst Zangwill's was arbitrary and bristles with difficulties, dangers and injustice. (2)

As we shall see later, when in the 1940s, the British Labour Party put forward its proposal for encouraging the Arabs to leave Palestine, the Jewish Chronicle Editorial writer came out in two Editorials very much in favour of the proposal, describing it as "sane realism" and very critical of those Zionists who opposed the plan.

### **Lecture in Aid of War-Wounded**

The First World War ended in November 1918, leaving an enormous toll of dead and wounded including many Jewish victims. At the end of December, a concert was held in London in aid of the West London Branch of the Jewish Victims of War which was addressed by Zangwill.

Zangwill realised that he would require every forum possible to propagate his views and thus in a postscript to his private letter of 10 December to the Editor of "The Jewish Chronicle", he pointed out that he had just received an invitation to preside at a concert in aid of the Jewish victims of the war, and said that "this would supply a forum for saying whatever may be necessary at that critical date." (3)

During the course of this lecture, he explained that his Jewish Territorial Organisation had been reluctant to adopt Palestine as a National Home because "the overwhelmingly Arab population made a Jewish autonomous basis apparently impossible." He felt that with the promulgation of the Balfour Declaration, the Jews were entitled to believe "that a radical solution of this difficulty had been found." As could be seen from Canada and the Transvaal leaving "races pent up in one territory" led to trouble and friction. The World War had been fought to break up the dangerous sources of friction in Austria and Hungary. "Where then", said Zangwill, "was the logic of creating in Palestine a minor Austria artificially? The races should separate as Abraham did from Lot." (4)

Zangwill praised Sir Mark Sykes, who a year and-a-half earlier had proposed the setting up of a Joint Committee for the protection of the natural rights of Arabs, Armenians and Jews, the three races who had been oppressed by the Turks. These ideas of Sykes formed part of the background to the famous declaration made by Lord Robert Cecil, the Assistant British Foreign Secretary. This was made at a meeting, at which Zangwill was present, held at the London Opera House in December 1917, in order to express gratitude to the British Government for issuing the Balfour Declaration. Cecil declared, "Our wish is that Arabian countries shall be for the Arabs, Armenia for the Armenians and Judea for the Jews." (5) In his lecture in aid of the war-wounded, Zangwill epigrammatised Cecil's statement saying that "The Arabs were to have a State in Arabia, the Armenians a State in Armenia and the Jews A STATE - OF FRICTION." Laughter followed!(6)

This expression "a state of friction" for the Jews was amplified by Zangwill in a footnote to a book by Redcliffe Salaman. Zangwill stated that he "hoped that by an amicable agreement they (the Arabs) would prefer to trek to their new Arabian State just as the Boers trekked for Cape Colony. In that case the two States could arise side by side and hand in hand. Otherwise he did not see that a Jewish State could arise at all, but only a state of

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1 / "A Jewish Nationalist", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 15 November 1918, p.12.

2 / Editorial, Jewish Chronicle, 3 January 1919, op. cit.

3 / Zangwill to Greenberg, 10 December 1918, op. cit.

4 / "Mr. I. Zangwill and the Palestine Scheme", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 3 January 1919, p.15.

5 / Great Britain, Palestine and the Jews, (New York, 1918), p.39.

6 / "Zangwill and Palestine Scheme", Jewish Chronicle, 3 January 1919, op. cit.

friction." (1)

Redcliffe N. Salaman M.D. was a Jewish Officer stationed in Palestine who wrote a whole series of letters which were subsequently published. In a letter written from Surafend in February 1919, he mentioned a number of complaints brought by Arabs for which on investigation not a shred of supporting evidence could be found. Salaman considered that these accusations were propaganda to influence Arabs against Jews. "Unfortunately the fault is not all on their side", continued Salaman, "I fear I.Z's letter (I have not had a chance of seeing the original) has done untold harm." He did not identify the letter, but possibly, he is referring to one of Zangwill's letters to "The Jewish Chronicle" which had been published a month or so earlier. "It is radically wrong to suggest a complete removal of the Arabs, simply because it is both impractical and un-English." (2)

A footnote appended to this letter states that Zangwill had explained to Salaman that "the reports were but a crude summary of his thought." Zangwill, who seems in his explanations to take a defensive posture, hoped that the Arabs of Palestine, whose kinsmen after years of oppression were having a new state set up for them in Arabia, "would of themselves sympathise with the ideal of the still more unfortunate nation of Israel, and would see the practical impossibility of the Zionist ideal being carried out on a very small piece of territory such as Palestine is, if 600,000 of their own people remain on the soil."

Zangwill promised that the Arabs would be fully compensated by the Zionist Organisation and if necessary would obtain equivalent plots of land in the new Arab State. He warned that the Arabs would be making a grave mistake should they persist in regarding the little territory of Palestine as their own. (3)

No written account by Zangwill of this footnote has been traced, although in a letter written by him to Salaman dated 3 December 1919, Zangwill thanked him for returning his articles and letters, and commenting, "But surely they explain quite well my point of view, and show that that it was misinterpreted in the first rumours." Possibly it was from this material that Salaman got the information for his footnote.

In this letter, Zangwill also informed him where he thought he had first put forward his idea for transfer of Arabs, and the attitude of the non-Jews towards this idea: "I cannot remember when I first launched the idea of an amicable Arab expropriation; but it was probably at the National Liberal Club, where the idea was received sympathetically by a large audience, mainly Gentile. Gentiles, indeed, cannot understand how a National Home can be got otherwise." (4)

In a further letter to Salaman written in March 1920, (following one of Zangwill's speeches), Zangwill wrote: "Your criticism that I offer no constructive policy is utterly untrue. I offer a policy, heroic indeed, but quite feasible. You are a tyro in the movement to which I have devoted half a lifetime, and you really do not understand the great issues involved."

In answer to a further criticism of Salaman's that Zangwill "disturbed the Arabs", the latter replied, "it is very odd that a writer in yesterday's 'Daily News' (who is writing a series of articles on the Zionist problem), never mentioned me among the numerous factors of unrest." (5)

### **"Zionism and the League of Nations"**

The "League of Nations Journal" extended an invitation to Zangwill to contribute an article, and in February 1919, he took advantage of this invitation to express his forebodings.

The Journal published Zangwill's article in their "Open Forum" section, a section which had been "instituted with a view to stimulating discussion and arousing interest in all aspects of, and subjects connected with, the problem of a League of Nations". Following this article,

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1 / Redcliffe N. Salaman, *Palestine Reclaimed*, (London, 1920), p.176.

2 / *Ibid.*, pp.174-75.

3 / *Ibid.*, pp.175-76.

4 / Zangwill to Salaman, 3 December 1919, (CZA A120/199).

5 / Zangwill to Salaman, 5 March 1920, (CZA A120/199).



the Editor commented, "The above article represents a definitely Zionist point of view." (1) However, there was no question of the Editor of this journal attempting to suppress an article advocating transfer.

Zangwill pointed out in his article, that the claim of the Jews to Palestine did not rest "merely on history", but also on the fact that whilst they were the only people in the world without a national home, Palestine was at that time a derelict country. He then continued with his oft-repeated statement that the presence of 600,000 Arabs was the "gravest obstacle to the rise of the Jewish State." These Arabs had "created nothing there except trouble for the Jewish Colonies, and should be gradually and amicably transplanted to the Arab Kingdom, which is to be re-established next door, and with which the Jewish State would cordially cooperate." Zangwill considered that race redistribution was "in the interests of general world-happiness" and that it was one of the functions of the League of Nations. (2)

In a letter to "The Jewish Chronicle", Zangwill described this article as "a very short but strong article" on "Zionism and the League of Nations". He felt sure that "The Jewish Chronicle" could get permission to copy the article, and he offered them an advance copy. (3) This article was in fact published in both "The Jewish Chronicle" (4) and "The Jewish World". (5)

### Zangwill's Address to Poale Zion

By 1920, a year after the Paris Peace Conference, a League of Nations had been established and Zangwill had hoped that under their auspices a "friendly arrangement would be fixed up between the Jews and the Arabs, who would gradually retire to their own State." Instead of which, for making "this reasonable suggestion of an exodus by consent", Zangwill had been "denounced" by both Weizmann and Feisal as an "ejector of the Arab".

In his lecture to Poale Zion (Labour Zionists), at the end of February 1920, Zangwill said, "With the passing of the dream of universal justice associated with the League of Nations, the hopes of such a settlement have faded." In his stinging criticism of Weizmann, Zangwill stated that unless he could solve the Arab problem, Zionism would be a fiasco. "For if you shirk Exodus you are confronted by Numbers." Weizmann had proposed the use of force to keep the door open for Jewish immigration to Palestine, and with this Zangwill agreed, but he complained that Weizmann "will not see that his political ideal demands force - though with full compensation - in the Arabs' going out." Zangwill held that in the first instance, reason and goodwill should be used to solve the Arab problem, but failing that "then one single act of compulsion is better for both sides than perpetual friction." He claimed that were he an Arab politician, he would gradually withdraw his "semi-nomadic population" to Arab territory and seek an alliance of the Arab and Jewish forces "each in its own State." (6)

An Editorial in the same edition of "The Jewish Chronicle" began, "Without seeing eye to eye with Mr. Zangwill on all the points in his brilliant speech... we would express our general concurrence in his views." It is not clear which of Zangwill's "points" displeased the Editorial writer. However, nowhere in this Editorial was the transfer proposal criticised. Rather, the Editorial writer praised Zangwill's "stern call for a courageous facing of the facts at a time of extraordinary crisis in Jewish history, and a demand that Jews, and especially Zionists should rise to the height of an unexampled opportunity." (7)

The following week a letter was published in "The Jewish Chronicle" by the British born author and Zionist historian, Leonard Stein, who pointed out that the Arab leaders did

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1 / Israel Zangwill, "Zionism and the League of Nations", The League of Nations Journal, (London), vol.1, no.2, February 1919, pp.46-47.

2 / Zangwill, Voice of Jerusalem, op. cit., p.100.

3 / Zangwill to Greenberg, 25 January 1919, (CZA A120/364).

4 / Israel Zangwill, "Jewish National Movement, Zionism and the League of Nations", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 14 February 1919, p.14.

5 / Israel Zangwill, "Zionism and the League of Nations", The Jewish World, (London), 12 February 1919, p.11.

6 / "Zangwill on Weizmann", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 27 February 1920, pp.18-19.

7 / Editorial, "Zangwill on Weizmann", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 27 February 1920, p.7.

not have "the smallest intention of advising an Arab emigration." (1)

Another Editorial countered, that should the Arabs remain in Palestine, the policy of Jewish immigration might find itself confronted by serious difficulties. The Editorial writer questioned whether the policy of laissez faire would solve the problem and felt that an "intelligible and workable course" needed to be propounded on the Arab question. (2)

On the other hand, an Editorial in the anti-Jewish British daily newspaper, the "Morning Post", strongly attacked Zangwill's proposed solution of the Arab problem, describing it as "Nationalism, Militarism, Imperialism, in the most aggressive sense of these much abused words. The Arabs are to be driven out of the country in which they have lived for hundreds and thousands of years, and by force if necessary." In view of the fact that the Jews constituted only a small percentage of the population, the writer felt that instead of the proposal to drive out the Arabs, Zangwill should have proposed living in "peace and international solidarity with these Arabs." (3)

In answer to this paper's criticism, Zangwill reminded them that in the past they had pronounced as reasonable the method of expropriation with compensation. He felt that after the "gigantic blood-letting for more or less futile ends" which had taken place during the First World War, he could not jibe at the use of a "little force for real ends" such as the solution of the Jewish problem. (4)

Greenberg in a letter to Zangwill commented on this "Morning Post" leader. He wrote, "The 'Morning Post' leader is such a wretched production, so unfair, so unchivalrous that I am convinced it was never written in the 'Morning Post' office." (5) Greenberg also felt that "The Jewish Chronicle" should publicly react to this leader, that in a further letter dated 10 March, he wrote "so far as the 'Morning Post' is concerned, I will see what space we can afford after what we are bound to put in of our reply to their infamous article." (6) In their answer (actually to another article in the "Morning Post" attacking this speech of Zangwill's), "The Jewish Chronicle" spoke of taking "words from their context, contort them, and dish them up so as to suit his own malevolent purposes." (7)

A further attack on Zangwill's views was made in the Manchester "Sunday Chronicle" by E. B. Osborn who once wrote for the "Morning Post", and Zangwill commented that he "may be the man behind the whole thing" (i.e. presumably the author of the leader in the "Morning Post"). Zangwill answered this attack with, in his own words, "a good little letter". (8)

Another attack made at the beginning of 1920 on Zangwill's views on Arab transfer was made by Leon Simon, a leading British Zionist, who strongly opposed transfer. In the course of an article in "The Maccabaeon" entitled "Jews and Arabs", Simon put forward three theoretical solutions for the Arabs of Palestine, the first being "to remove the Arabs from the country, by force if they would not go of their own free will."

In discussing this solution, Simon wrote that there is "a certain attractiveness" about this suggestion. However there was no reason to suppose that it would be acceptable to the Arabs. He then continued: "The use of compulsion has, if I recollect aright, been suggested by Mr. Zangwill (I am not clear whether he would apply it to the Arabs of the Palestinian towns as well as to the felaheen of the countryside), but this is a solution which is condemned by every consideration either of justice or of expediency. The injustice of compulsory wholesale deportation needs no laboring." (9)

### **Zangwill's Address to the American Jewish Congress**

In October 1923, Zangwill, at the invitation of the American Jewish Congress, delivered

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1 / Leonard Stein, Letters to the Editor, The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 5 March 1920, p.29.

2 / Editorial, "The Future of Palestine", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 5 March 1920, p.8.

3 / Editorial, "Zangwill in Two Parts", Morning Post, (London), 2 March 1920, p.6.

4 / Israel Zangwill, Letters to the Editor, Morning Post, (London), 8 March 1920, p.4.

5 / Greenberg to Zangwill, 8 March 1920, (CZA A120/364).

6 / Greenberg to Zangwill, 10 March 1920, (CZA A120/364).

7 / "Mr. Zangwill", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 12 March 1920, p.22

8 / Zangwill to Greenberg, 11 March 1920, (CZA A120/364).

9 / Leon Simon, "Jews and Arabs", The Maccabaeon, (New York), vol.xxxiii, no.1, January 1920, p.15.

a lecture at the Carnegie Hall in New York. In addition to an audience of nearly 4000 people, the lecture was broadcast by radio throughout the United States and to England.

In this lecture, which the "New York Times" headlined "Zangwill Calls Political Zionism a Vanished Hope", Zangwill declared that the Jews must forego their political hopes in Palestine or start a conflagration. In the course of this lecture he commented that he would "always remain persuaded that a Jewish State was possible at the moment when the Arab was a defeated enemy, liberated from the Turk and glad enough to take on any political impress; that by a policy of racial redistribution such as is now in operation between the Greeks and the Turks under the Treaty of Lausanne, combined with full compensation for expropriated land - a policy of mine with which even our Morning Post was originally satisfied - the difficulty of making a home out of a territory in which we are only one out of nine inhabitants and in which our total holding of the soil is still below 4 per cent, could have been largely removed." (1)

An editorial in the New York Jewish weekly "The New Palestine" pointed out that this address made headlines on the following day all over the United States and there were a "volley of protests and denunciations." (2) One should note that these denunciations were against the general theme of his address and not specifically against his comments about the Arabs. The "New York Evening Post" did refer to Zangwill's comments on transfer and said: "Quite aside from the question whether the thing could have been done that Mr. Zangwill believed ought to have been done, it is a question whether the thing ought to have been attempted." (3)

On the afternoon following Zangwill's address, Dr. Stephen Wise, who had acted as Chairman on the previous evening, assembled all the delegates and issued a statement. He began by saying that "Mr Zangwill spoke for himself and not for the American Jewish Congress. He spoke to Israel and not for Israel." However, later on in his statement he said that "the gravest possible misconstruction has been placed upon the general tendency of Mr. Zangwill's address, for Zangwill criticizes not as an anti Zionist but as a Zionist of Zionists.... As far as Zangwill has any quarrel, it is not with the fundamental ideals and principles of Zionism, but with policies of the present Zionist leadership." (4)

An endorsement of Zangwill's views was made by the secretary of the American Jewish Congress, Bernard Richards, who in a letter to "The New Palestine" which was published the following week, wrote: "To pretend that many of us have not for years been thinking what Mr. Zangwill is saying, is only a form of hypocrisy which does not add to the dignity of Jewish life." (5)

In complete contrast to Richard's assessment, a vice president of the American Jewish Congress, Samuel Untermeyer, handed in his resignation "as a protest against its [the American Jewish Congress's] action in permitting the use of its platform for the destructive and ill balanced diatribe delivered by Mr. Zangwill against the Palestine movement under the auspices of the Congress." (6) In his long letter of resignation, Untermeyer referred to Zangwill's comments on the Arabs: "Such a lurid and brazen proposal for expatriating and expropriating the Arabs could only have been born in the mind of one who is accustomed to deal with the fancies and phantasms of the world of fiction. It would, I take it, be futile to inquire how Mr. Zangwill the pacifist is able to make peace with the savage idea that the Jews should have taken advantage of the chaos and turmoil of the war to evict the Arabs out of Palestine. Such an idea is abhorrent to anyone who is imbued with the just, humanitarian and constructive spirit of our movement." (7)

An attempt to "tone down" Zangwill's views on Arab transfer was made in an address

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1 / Zangwill Calls Political Zionism a Vanished Hope", The New York Times, 15 October 1923, p.1.

2 / Editorial, "The Disappointed Mr. Zangwill", The New Palestine, (New York), vol.v, no.15, 19 October 1923, p.283.

3 / The Press on Zangwill, The New Palestine, (New York), vol.v, no.15, 19 October 1923, p.294.

4 / Meyer Weisgal, "Zangwill and Congress", The New Palestine, (New York), vol.v, no.15, 19 October 1923, p.290.

5 / Letters to the Editor, Bernard Richards, The New Palestine, (New York), vol.v, no.16, 26 October 1923, p.320.

6 / "Untermeyer vs. Zangwill", The New Palestine, (New York), vol.v, no.17, 2 November 1923, p.326.

7 / Ibid., p.327.

delivered by Stephen Wise on 4 November 1923 - three weeks after Zangwill's address. Wise stated that Zangwill "never dreamt of expropriating or expelling the Arabs. Zangwill would rather cut off his right arm than urge his people, whom he respects, to do anything unworthy, unjust, ignoble." Wise said that five or six years earlier, when a great Arab kingdom had been mooted, Zangwill had claimed that it would not be "impossible to purchase land from the Arabs who would trek across the Jordan to the Hedjas." <sup>(1)</sup> However, from a study of Zangwill's pronouncements on Arab transfer, particularly his lecture to Poale Zion in 1920, one cannot find much support for Wise's assessment.

With the advantage of hindsight, Abraham Goldberg, who was a member of the Zionist Organization of America's administrative committee, came to the defence of Zangwill, in an article written in 1930. Goldberg wrote: "Israel Zangwill did, at one time, suggest a similar solution [i.e. transfer] to the Arab question in Palestine; but he was 'laughed out of court' and accused of being Utopian, of suggesting things that are solely impractical. We all know better now."

He went on to describe the success of the Greco-Turkish transfer and pointed out that such a solution for Palestine would be much easier "since it involved only a small displacement of a few hundred thousand fellaheen." The method to be used should not be force but a real incentive such as granting twice as much land outside of Palestine. <sup>(2)</sup>

During the following year, Goldberg made a more specific proposal for Arab transfer. He was talking about the boundary between Palestine and Transjordan which he called "fictitious" and asked "Why, then, cannot many of the Arabs migrate to Transjordan and settle there, where they would be strictly under Arab auspices and an Arab Government?" He hoped that the Zionist representatives at the forthcoming London Conference would point out the injustice which had been "done to the Jewish National Home in severing Palestine into two parts of which one is still reserved exclusively for Arabs, and in not encouraging the Arabs of Palestine to migrate to Transjordan, so that additional territory might be available for Jewish colonization and for the development of the Jewish Homeland without hindrance." <sup>(3)</sup>

At the same period, Felix Frankfurter, a Supreme Court Justice of the United States, in an article published in the journal "Foreign Affairs" wrote: "Certainly, hill Arabs [from Palestine] can as readily be settled there [Transjordan] as on the plains." <sup>(4)</sup>

### **Zangwill the "Most Consistent Advocate"**

In the period following the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of the British Mandate over Palestine, the trend among both Jews and non-Jews was against the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. Perhaps the following remark made by Winston Churchill towards the end of 1919 was a reference to Zangwill. "There are the Jews, whom we are pledged to introduce into Palestine, and who take it for granted that the local population will be cleared out to suit their convenience." <sup>(5)</sup>

In a similar vein, in an article by Weizmann which appeared in the Palestine daily newspaper "Ha'aretz", he wrote, "When the Arabs read the speeches of our D'Annunzio - Mr. Zangwill - they may well believe that the Jews will come suddenly in their millions to conquer the land and turn out the Arabs. But responsible Zionists have never said or desired such a thing." <sup>(6)</sup>

Furthermore, from a letter written by Zangwill, we can see that the Zionists considered Zangwill's proposals to be dangerous at that time. In this letter, written after a meeting with

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<sup>1</sup> / Stephen Wise, "Weizmann and Zangwill", *The New Palestine*, (New York), vol.v, no.18, 9 November 1923, p.342.

<sup>2</sup> / Abraham Goldberg, "Arab Claims to Palestine", *The New Palestine*, (New York), vol.xviii, no.5, 7 February 1930, p.84.

<sup>3</sup> / Abraham Goldberg, "The London Conference", *The New Palestine*, (New York), vol.xx, no.7, 17 April 1931, p.100.

<sup>4</sup> / Felix Frankfurter, "The Palestine Situation Restated", *Foreign Affairs*, (New York), April 1931, p.429; Felix Frankfurter, "The Balfour Declaration and After: 1917-31", *The Jewish National Home*, ed. Paul Goodman, (London, 1943), p.74.

<sup>5</sup> / Gilbert, Winston Churchill, *op. cit.*, p.484.

<sup>6</sup> / Quoted by Leftwich, Israel Zangwill, *op. cit.*, p.205.

Aaron Aaronsohn, (one of the founders of the secret Nili organisation, which supplied the British Command with information for their campaign to conquer Palestine from the Turks), Zangwill wrote, "He said my article in Pearson's Magazine, pointing out the Arab population difficulty in Palestine was read by the Arabs (when he was in Egypt) and produced great agitation among them. The Zionists have now begged me not to raise the question and I have consented for the moment." <sup>(1)</sup> According to Leftwich<sup>(2)</sup> this letter was written at the time of the Paris Peace Conference (at the beginning of 1919), but this is certainly incorrect. In his diary, Aaronsohn<sup>(3)</sup> reports this meeting as taking place with Zangwill on 16 November 1917, and Nedava<sup>(4)</sup> gives the date of this letter as 18 November 1917.

However, just over a year or so later, Aaronsohn himself was suggesting a transfer proposal for the Arabs. According to William Bullitt, a member of the American delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, Aaronsohn proposed that since Palestine was to be turned into a Jewish State, the irrigation system in Iraq should be restored and the Arabs of Palestine offered land in Iraq more fertile than their holdings in Palestine, in the hope of persuading large numbers of Arabs to emigrate to Iraq. <sup>(5)</sup>

Although within a year, Aaronsohn changed his views on transferring the Arabs, many of the others, who at that time had strongly opposed transference, took around fifteen years to change their views and to become enthusiastic supporters of transfer. Zangwill had been against the general trend, or more correctly a decade-and-a-half ahead of it. Throughout the period of his support for official Zionism, Zangwill continually brought forward the same solution for the Arab problem. It was Walter Laqueur, the Zionist historian, who described Zangwill as the "most consistent advocate" of population transfer. <sup>(6)</sup>

Despite all this, Zangwill could not be accused of being anti-Arab, for at the same time that he was proposing the removal of the Arabs from Palestine, forcibly if necessary, he wrote, "If the Arab remains on the land his welfare must be as dear to us as our own." <sup>(7)</sup>

We have also seen that Zangwill was afforded respect, even by those who differed with him with regard to transfer. No attempt was ever made to muzzle him. On the contrary, he was continually invited to lecture on the Palestine question to a wide variety of groups and organisations and to write articles on the subject, including an invitation to the "League of Nations Journal." At that period, differing opinions and solutions were regarded with respect.

## **VLADIMIR JABOTINSKY**

Vladimir Jabotinsky, founder of Revisionist Zionism, was born in Odessa in 1880. During the First World War he founded the Jewish Legion and after the war organised the Haganah in Jerusalem. In 1924, he formulated his policy which included the statement that the aim of Zionism was the establishment of a Jewish State on both sides of the Jordan. A year later saw the formation of the United Zionists Revisionists. Relations with the official Zionist movement became increasingly strained and Jabotinsky pressed for secession of the Revisionists from the Zionist Organisation. In 1935, the New Zionist Organisation was founded with Jabotinsky as its President.

Jabotinsky's main connection with population transfer was during the period of the Peel Commission in 1937. His interest in .transfer continued until his death in 1940. During this period his opinions veered from strong opposition to the idea of transfer to a cautious endorsement of the principle.

For three months, the Peel Commission heard evidence from over a hundred witnesses in Palestine and in London. In February 1937, Jabotinsky gave evidence at one of their public

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.202-03.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.202.

<sup>3</sup> / Diary of Aaron Aaronsohn 1916 - 1919, ed. Yoham Ephrati, (Tel-Aviv, 1970), p.354.

<sup>4</sup> / Joseph Nedava, "Population Exchange Plans to Solve the Palestine Problem", Gesher, (Jerusalem), 1-2 (92-93), 1978, p.164.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.155.

<sup>6</sup> / Laqueur, History of Zionism, op. cit., p.231.

<sup>7</sup> / "Zangwill on Weizmann", Jewish Chronicle, 27 February 1920, op. cit., p.28.

sessions, in which he rejected the idea of the removal of the Arabs from Palestine. "I have also shown to you already that, in our submission, there is no question of ousting the Arabs. On the contrary, the idea is that Palestine on both sides of the Jordan should hold the Arabs, their progeny, and many millions of Jews. What I do not deny is that in the process the Arabs of Palestine will necessarily become a minority in the country of Palestine." <sup>(1)</sup> Earlier in his evidence, Jabotinsky had explained to the Commission that he envisaged "Palestine" to be the "area on both sides of the Jordan, the area mentioned in the original Palestine Mandate." <sup>(2)</sup>

A week after publication of the Peel Report, Jabotinsky delivered an address to members of the British Parliament, strongly opposing the partition of Palestine and describing the area of the proposed Jewish State as the Jewish "Pale". He saw no reason why the Arabs should choose to migrate out of the Jewish "Pale" and regretted that the Peel Report should have mentioned "in a very suggestive paragraph the 'instructive precedent' of that compulsory 'exchange of population' between Greece and Turkey." Jabotinsky said, "They may call me an extremist, but at least I never dreamed of asking the Arabs who live in a Jewish country to emigrate. It would be a most dangerous precedent, extremely harmful to the Jewish interests in the Diaspora... So this 'trekking' business is just empty talk." He concluded that in the Peel Report's proposed area for the Jewish State there would be no room for "even remotely adequate" Jewish immigration and that partition of the country "if final, would mean the doom of death." <sup>(3)</sup>

Two months later, Jabotinsky wrote an article in which he again came out strongly against the Peel Commission's transfer proposal. "The babbling about 'transferring' the Arabs of the proposed Jewish State is even worse than irresponsible. From the Jewish point of view it is a crime." Jabotinsky complained that the Commission knowing nothing about population transfers nor of the Jewish position, yet proposed that "when a certain territory will become Jewish, the non-Jewish population must be 'transferred'." He disclaimed all Jewish responsibility for "their babble" and was surprised that the members of the Commission "are not ashamed to publish such nonsensical ideas in an official document." He then queried how the Arabs were to be persuaded to transfer and where it was proposed to settle them, "or will they simply be forced to go thus creating a real precedent of historical magnitude for anti-Semites?"

Jabotinsky concluded by distinguishing between voluntary and compulsory transfer. "Emigrations are possible. Maybe they are desirable," but they would have to be on a voluntary basis. However, he felt that the prevailing conditions in the Middle East were not conducive to voluntary emigration by the Arabs." <sup>(4)</sup>

Why should Jabotinsky, a "right-winger" so strongly oppose the proposal for population transfer at a time when many socialist Zionists strongly supported the transfer of the Arabs, and in many cases were in favour of a transfer of a compulsory nature?

A study of Jabotinsky's writings shows that his negative attitude to population transfer did not date from the period of the Peel Commission but can be traced back to at least 1916. In that year, Jabotinsky had a discussion with Zangwill during the course of which he found himself to be in complete disagreement with Zangwill's attitude to this problem. This discussion was reported in an article "A Talk with Zangwill" written by Jabotinsky in 1939 (and discussed elsewhere in this work).

In 1918, immediately after the publication of the Balfour Declaration, Jabotinsky wrote an article in the "Telegraph", a newspaper edited by Syrkin, which article (or at least an extract of it) was reprinted in the Warsaw hebrew newspaper "Hazefira". This article was written to refute the argument that it was impossible to give a "charter", in other words rule

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<sup>1</sup> / Palestine Royal Commission, Minutes of Evidence heard at Public Sessions, sixty-sixth meeting, 11 February 1937, p.370.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.369.

<sup>3</sup> / Vladimir Jabotinsky, The Threatened Partition of Palestine, (Address to members of British Parliament), 13 July 1937, pp.4-5, (CZA 23.480).

<sup>4</sup> / Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Sunk without Trace", The 11th Hour, (Johannesburg), vol.1, no.25, 3 September 1937, pp.17,27; On the Partition, Jerusalem, pp.5-6, (Jabotinsky Archives 14-4 gimmel).

over Palestine, to one hundred thousand Jews, so long as the Arabs greatly outnumbered the Jews in the country. In the course of his argument, Jabotinsky wrote that "it is understood that those Arabs who dwell in Palestine are permitted and have the right to require that their toes are not trodden on." He felt that this matter was beyond argument and asserted that there was sufficient land available in Palestine for Jewish settlement, bringing figures to show that the population density of other countries was much greater than that of Palestine." (1) In a similar vein, in a letter to the Editor of "The Times" of London<sup>(2)</sup> written nearly two years later and reprinted in the Palestine newspaper "Ha'aretz",<sup>(3)</sup> Jabotinsky pointed out that to create the Jewish National Home, Palestine's resources must be developed so as to promote the "immigration of suitable elements and their settlement in the country." He then continued, "All talk of our intending to 'drive out the Arabs and take their place' is due either to ignorance or malice. This sort of 'driving out' is obviously as impossible politically as economically." He then pointed out that "driving out" the Arabs was unnecessary due to the smaller population density of Palestine as compared with other countries. It might be interesting to speculate here what Jabotinsky's attitude to this question would have been had Palestine's population density been greater than that of other countries, instead of smaller.

It was in the early 1920's that Jabotinsky established the Revisionist Party. He became very sensitive to being regarded as an extreme Zionist, and to being periodically accused by his political opponents of planning to drive out the Arabs in order to make room for Jewish settlement. (4) On several occasions, Jabotinsky stated his views against transference of the Arabs in order to prove that he was no extremist.

In 1929, a discussion took place between Jabotinsky and Baron Edmond de Rothschild on the question of transfer, and this is described elsewhere in this work.

A few years earlier an article by Moshe Smilensky had appeared in the newspaper "Ha'aretz", in which he had argued that there was no point in introducing agricultural reform into Palestine since there was no suitable land for Jewish agriculture. This point had also been made from the podium of the Zionist Congress. Jabotinsky was doubtful whether this, even if true, should be stated in public. In an article criticising Smilensky's opinion, Jabotinsky utilised the opportunity to show how moderate he was regarding the transfer of Arabs. "We have no intention of pushing anyone out of his house or field - there are enough abandoned fields in Palestine... It is dangerous and wrong to argue that we will not be able to plough a dunam in Palestine without removing from it - even with financial compensation - a person who has worked it before us. It is dangerous and wrong to prattle about things like this." (5)

Jabotinsky most vociferously denied any accusations of planning the removal of the Arabs from Palestine. Following a lecture which he gave at the end of 1926, a Salonica newspaper, "Pro-Israel", reported Jabotinsky as asserting that not only was a Jewish majority in Palestine to be striven for but the Arabs must also be completely driven out. In a letter to the lawyer Jonah Machover, Jabotinsky wrote denying that he had said such a thing, or anything which could be so interpreted. "Any attempt to remove any portion of the Arab population would be, first, morally inadmissible, secondly, absolutely hopeless, for the thing is impossible." (6) Just over a week later, the newspaper "Haolam" printed an almost identical letter from Jabotinsky. (7)

A similar incident occurred in 1935, when Dr. Stephen Wise, a leader in the American Zionist movement, made a strong indictment against "Jabotinsky, his teachings and his leadership." Included in this indictment was the accusation that Jabotinsky's movement aspired to "an Arabless Palestine." Jabotinsky then issued a public statement and in answer to

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<sup>1</sup> / Vladimir Jabotinsky, "On the Arab Question", Hazefira, (Warsaw), no.5, 31 January 1918, p.9.

<sup>2</sup> / Vladimir Jabotinsky, Letters to the Editor, The Times, (London), 27 November 1920, p.6.

<sup>3</sup> / Vladimir Jabotinsky, "The Palestine Mandate", Ha'aretz, (Tel-Aviv), 15 December 1920, p.2.

<sup>4</sup> / Nedava, Geshet, op. cit., p.154.

<sup>5</sup> / Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Hamitrashmim", Hazaphon, (Haifa), no.5, 19 March 1926, p.2.

<sup>6</sup> / Jabotinsky to Machover, 29 December 1926, (Jabotinsky Archives, 16/2/1 aleph).

<sup>7</sup> / Vladimir Jabotinsky, Letters to the Editor, Haolam, (London), 7 January 1927, p.3.

the charge regarding "an Arabless Palestine" wrote, "I very seriously warn Dr. Wise and any possible imitators of his - if I hear anything of this kind again, I will demand a Court of Honor, on the strength of the London agreement which prohibits aliloth - and alila in good colloquial Hebrew means calumny." (1) In this "London Agreement", Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky had come to an understanding and had worked out an agreement together which included the banning of libel and insults between their two movements. However, soon after Jabotinsky's warning to Wise, both movements rejected this agreement.

A Zionist leader who did not concur with Jabotinsky views on the population question in Palestine was Jacob de Haas, who, in a letter which the latter wrote to Jabotinsky in October 1936, disagreed with Jabotinsky's proposal to move one and a half million Jews to Palestine within a ten year period. Instead de Haas proposed moving half a million in a single operation. He felt that this "would smash the WZO [World Zionist Organisation] by impact" whereas Jabotinsky's policy "is likely to strengthen them." (One should remember that at that period, there was very bitter rivalry between the World Zionist Organisation and Jabotinsky's New Zionist Organisation!) De Haas then added that another advantage was that "it would along those lines be possible [to] talk of evacuating or restricting the Arabs." (2)

Jabotinsky's biographer, Joseph Schechtman, who also worked with him over an extended period, linked Jabotinsky's views on the subject of transferring the Arabs from Palestine, with his conception of a Jewish State. Schechtman wrote that Jabotinsky's recipe for the Arab problem "was realistic and stern: the establishment of a Jewish majority in Palestine will have to be achieved against the wish of the country's present Arab majority; an "iron wall" of a Jewish armed force would have to protect the process of achieving a majority; after that goal was reached, the Arabs would have no choice but to adapt themselves to the new state of affairs; then and only then, a modus vivendi would be worked out, always on the basis of the premise that two peoples, Jews and Arabs, were going to live and work in that country." (3)

Although Jabotinsky had come out so strongly against any proposal for the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine, his views on this subject underwent a change. At the beginning of December 1937, Jabotinsky met with Edward Norman, a man who had prepared a scheme to transfer Arabs from Palestine to Iraq and who had come to London to discuss his plan with various people. In his diary Norman wrote that Jabotinsky had already read a copy of his Iraq paper. "He approved of the whole idea very much. He said that he felt, however, that the most difficult part would be to induce Arabs to leave Palestine." Norman said that Jabotinsky had suggested a "Macchiavellian" scheme to encourage the Palestine Arabs to emigrate thus enabling Norman to carry out the plan in the event of Iraq's agreeing to its implementation. According to Jabotinsky, the Zionist Organisation should "openly oppose Arab emigration from Palestine." The Arabs would then be sure that the plan was of non-Jewish origin and that the Jews only wanted them to stay in Palestine in order to exploit them. They would therefore "want very much to go away to Iraq." (4)

Schechtman felt that the evolution of the minority problem in pre-Second World War Europe considerably influenced Jabotinsky's opinion on the transferring of minorities when any other solution seemed impracticable. (5) We have reviewed Zangwill's conversation with Jabotinsky in 1916, on the subject of transfer of the Arabs from Palestine. In an article written in 1939, Jabotinsky admitted that perhaps Zangwill's reasoning was logical but was so far removed from his own conceptions (having been brought up in Eastern Europe) that it was hard for him to accept. (6) He then mentioned the agreement which had just been signed between Germany and Italy providing for the transfer of Germans from Southern Tyrol and described it

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1 / Joseph Schechtman, *Fighter & Prophet. The Vladimir Jabotinsky Story*, English ed., (New York, 1961), pp.269-70.

2 / de Haas to Jabotinsky, 7 October 1936, (CZA A404/719).

3 / Schechtman, *Fighter & Prophet*, English ed., op. cit., p.324.

4 / *Ibid.*, p.325.

5 / *Ibid.*

6 / *Der Moment*, op. cit.; *Writings of Jabotinsky*, vol.17, op. cit., p.260; *Jewish Herald*, op. cit., p.5.



as an "amicable precedent" which would have a future influence on the fate of minorities in other places. "It is a constructive friendly attempt," he continued, "to solve the problem for the common good, with the consent of the second nation, in a radical and definite manner." He concluded that for good or for bad a new concept (population transfer) had entered the world and would have to be taken into consideration in future planning. <sup>(1)</sup>

In his last book "The War and the Jew", Jabotinsky, according to Schechtman, "fully endorsed the idea of a voluntary Arab transfer from Palestine." <sup>(2)</sup> In this book, Jabotinsky wrote that "he refused to see a tragedy or a disaster" in the Arabs' willingness to emigrate. He felt that since there was the "great moral authority" of the Peel Commission "for calmly envisaging the exodus of 350,000 Arabs from one corner of Palestine, we need not regard the possible departure of 900,000 with dismay," adding, however, that he could see no necessity for this exodus. <sup>(3)</sup> Jabotinsky considered that majority rule was not such a "perfect panacea." He held that for a "radical remedy" one would have to follow the precedent of the Greco-Turkish population exchange but he doubted whether it would be feasible. "But theoretically the idea of redistributing minorities en masse is becoming more popular among 'the best people' and there is no longer any taboo on the discussion of the subject." <sup>(4)</sup> As we can see, all this was quite a radical change from Jabotinsky's statements of just two years earlier, when he had in no uncertain terms described the transfer proposal of the Peel Commission as "babble" and had expressed surprise that they were "not ashamed to publish such nonsensical ideas."

In "The War and the Jew", Jabotinsky explained that the fact that Arabs preferring to migrate could do so, would prove that they had "somewhere else" where they could build a new home. He was certain that "any Arab country which should find the courage and the acreage for inviting such an immigration of trekkers would reap enormous material advantages... The Arab trekkers, moreover, would probably migrate with donkey loads of pelf." <sup>(5)</sup> However, despite such justification, Jabotinsky considered that "Palestine, astride the Jordan has room enough for the million of Arabs, room for another million of their eventual progeny, for several million Jews and for peace." <sup>(6)</sup>

On 9 November 1939, Jabotinsky had a meeting with Professor Shlomo (Stefan) Klinger, a member of the Nessiut (Presidency) of the New Zionist Organisation. At this meeting a number of subjects were discussed, amongst them the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. Notes on the contents of this meeting were written up by Jabotinsky. <sup>(7)</sup> The part on transfer reads: "Arabs will have to make room. If Balts may be moved, Pal. [Palestinian] Arabs certainly so. Where to? - Give half a billion dollars loan to Iraq or Saoudia [sic]." It is not clear from these notes whether these are the views of Klinger, or whether this is what was agreed upon between Jabotinsky and Klinger.

These notes then continue with Jabotinsky writing "My own" and noting down his opinion on a number of issues. On the loan for the purpose of transfer of Arabs he writes, "This is the job for Amer. [American] Jewry."

Let us assume for the sake of argument that the first alternative given above - [namely, that the Arab transfer proposal is just Klinger's personal view] - is the correct one. We can see that even then, not only does Jabotinsky not oppose Klinger's plans for Arab transfer, but he even suggests how a loan for this purpose might be raised.

In February 1988, an article entitled "Expelling Palestinians" written by the journalists Yossi Melman and Dan Raviv, appeared in "The Washington Post". <sup>(8)</sup> This article stated that Jabotinsky supported the idea of Arab transfer and "in November 1939, he wrote a letter to one of his party members." The contents of the letter, as reported in this article, correspond

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid.; Ibid., p.263; Ibid., p.7.

<sup>2</sup> / Schechtman, *Fighter & Prophet*, English ed., op. cit., p.326.

<sup>3</sup> / Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The War and the Jew*, (New York, 1942), pp.218-19.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.220.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.221.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., p.222.

<sup>7</sup> / Notes on Meeting between Jabotinsky and Klinger, 9 November 1939, (Jabotinsky Archives, 2/12/1 aleph).

<sup>8</sup> / Yossi Melman and Dan Raviv, "Expelling Palestinians", *The Washington Post*, 7 February 1988, Outlook Section, p.C4.

to the points made in Jabotinsky's notes on his meeting with Klinger. It is not known whether this is the text of an actual letter written by Jabotinsky, or whether it was "constructed" from these notes of Jabotinsky's.

Discussions on Jabotinsky's real attitude towards the transfer of Arabs from Palestine also took place during the 1980s in the Israeli press.

In an article published in May 1981, Asher Rubinstein stated that Jabotinsky was consistently opposed to transfer, and he brought no fewer than eight examples, ranging from 1916 to 1938, to prove his point. He however then continued by stating that Jabotinsky was not opposed to their emigration by their own free-will, quoting a few examples from December 1937 onwards. <sup>(1)</sup>

A few months later in January 1982, an argument on the subject appeared in the columns of the newspaper "Ha'aretz". It began by Shulamit Hareven mentioning in an article that Jabotinsky had argued in 1940 that the departure from Palestine of one million Arabs by their own free-will would not be seen as a tragedy. <sup>(2)</sup>

In answer to Hareven, David Niv in a letter to the newspaper, argued passionately, that more than any other Zionist leader, Jabotinsky was fanatically opposed to any proposal or even hint of transfer of Arabs. <sup>(3)</sup>

Dr. Yosef Heller replied to this letter and brought proofs of Jabotinsky real attitude towards transfer from: 1: his conversation with Edward Norman at the end of 1937, 2: his "conversation with Zangwill", which Heller argued, clearly showed that Jabotinsky's attitude towards transfer had changed already in 1936, and 3: in his book "The War and the Jews", in which he wrote that he saw nothing exceptional in transfer.

In order to explain Jabotinsky's public statements on the subject, which seemed to show a different attitude, Heller explained "that as long as the question of Palestine was still the subject of a furious debate, one should be careful in public statements. As against that, in his discussion with Edward Norman, his true stand is revealed and this was because he spoke in private." <sup>(4)</sup>

## **BARON EDMOND DE ROTHSCHILD**

Baron Edmond de Rothschild was a philanthropist, who in the 1880s patronised the first settlements in Palestine and saved them from collapse. He became the major address for all problems in the Yishuv (Jewish areas of settlement), and thus became known as "Father of the Yishuv". All the agricultural experiments carried out in the Jewish settlements by French experts were covered by his funds.

In 1929, Rothschild put forward his views on Arab transfer in the course of a discussion he had with Jabotinsky. After this conversation, Jabotinsky wrote, "People say that I am an extremist but... compared with the Baron I am a moderate... I, for example am prepared to be satisfied with a majority of 55 - 60 per cent (Jews) in Palestine, whereas he wants Palestine to be completely Jewish... He is prepared to give the Arabs money to enable them to buy other land on condition that they leave Palestine." Jabotinsky went on to praise the Baron for his great character and noble spirit and for his beliefs that Palestine would be as Jewish as France was French. "He is a Zionist, a visionary who yearns for Jewish independence more than we do." <sup>(5)</sup>

[These views of Rothschild's proposing transfer of Arabs were originally written in an (untraced) letter written by Rothschild to Jabotinsky in 1929. They were printed in the Mexican Yiddish newspaper "Tribuna Sionista", in May 1954, in an article by Solomon

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<sup>1</sup> / Asher Rubinstein, "Attitude of Jabotinsky to the Partition Proposal and Transfer of Arabs in accordance with the Peel Commission", Ha-umma, (Tel-Aviv), no.63, May 1981, pp.80-81.

<sup>2</sup> / Shulamit Hareven, "Beware, Transfer", Ha'aretz, (Tel-Aviv), 12 January 1982, p.13

<sup>3</sup> / David Niv, Letters to the Editor, Ha'aretz, (Tel-Aviv), 17 January 1982, p.12.

<sup>4</sup> / Dr. Yosef Heller, Letters to the Editor, Ha'aretz, (Tel-Aviv), 29 January 1982, p.24.

<sup>5</sup> / Joseph Schechtman, The Vladimir Jabotinsky Story, vol.2, 1923-35, Hebrew ed., (Tel-Aviv, 1959), p.152.

Gepstein,<sup>(1)</sup> a person who had been associated with Jabotinsky throughout the latter's career.]

Further incidents concerning Baron de Rothschild and his plans to transfer Arabs from Palestine were related by Shabetai Levy. Levy was one of Baron de Rothschild's officials in PICA, where he assisted in land reclamation projects throughout Palestine. Later, between the years 1940 - 1951, he was Mayor of Haifa.

In his memoirs, Shabetai Levy writes on his own involvement with the transfer of Arab peasants from Palestine to Syria. Levy reports that the Baron would use every opportunity to stress that there should be a continuity of Jewish land in Palestine. Levy had been successful in carrying out this policy in the Lower Galilee - with the exception of one small Arab village, where the villagers persistently refused to sell. He went on to write that "one day I had the idea to suggest to the Arabs that they agree to transfer to Syria on condition they receive from us two and a quarter times the land we receive from them" together with other financial compensation. The Arabs agreed to this proposal and Levy then went to Syria where he found suitable land and the transfer of Arabs was thus implemented. <sup>(2)</sup>

Baron Rothschild was not however satisfied with the proximity to Palestine of the transferred Arabs. This we know from a meeting which took place between him and Levy on a visit of the latter to Paris. The Baron began by praising Levy for his work in redeeming the land and advised him to continue with similar work. Levy then reported Rothschild as saying, "but it is better not to transfer the Arabs to Syria and Transjordan since they are parts of Palestine, but to Mesopotamia (Iraq). He added that under such circumstances, he would be prepared to send the Arabs, on his account, new agricultural machinery and instructors of agriculture." <sup>(3)</sup>

Similar comments by Rothschild on transfer were reported by Levy in a talk which he gave on the English language radio channel "Kol Zion Lagolah" in July 1951. Levy's main work was the acquisition of land in Palestine, and on one occasion had to conclude an exchange of properties in a certain Lower Galilee village. It was on the Sabbath that Levy and Rothschild met in Haifa to discuss the matter. The Baron was concerned that the Arab peasant might suffer from this exchange and thus asked Levy to suggest to these Arabs that they move to Iraq. In the event of such an agreement, the Baron was prepared to pay their transport and resettlement costs. Levy then took out his notebook to write down these instructions of the Baron, but he was immediately rebuked by the latter, "Don't you know it is the Sabbath and that it is forbidden to write? You have a good memory and you will surely remember what I am telling you until to-morrow." <sup>(4)</sup>

## FELIX WARBURG

Felix Warburg was born in 1871 in Hamburg, Germany, and he participated in the financial aspects of the economic and industrial transformation of the U.S.A. He was also active in educational and cultural spheres. As far as his Zionist activities were concerned, Warburg was active in promoting Jewish settlement in Palestine. He cooperated with Marshall and Weizmann in broadening the Jewish Agency to include non-Zionists. Until the latter part of 1930, he was Chairman of the Jewish Agency Administrative Committee.

On 16 June 1930, Bernard Flexner sent a coded telegram from London to Warburg in New York. Towards the end of the telegram he wrote: "Have passed on suggestion ref[?] on Transjordan" <sup>(5)</sup> - presumably the author of the suggestion was Warburg. On the same day, Joseph Hyman, who was Warburg's assistant on the Jewish Agency's Administrative

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<sup>1</sup> / S. Gepstein, "Jabotinsky talking about Baron Rothschild", *Tribuna Sionista*, (Mexico), no.61, 22 May 1954, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> / Shabetai Levy, "From my Memoirs", Haifa, Oliphant and the Zionist Vision, ed. Joseph Nedava, (Haifa, [n.d.]), p.128.

<sup>3</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.129.

<sup>4</sup> / Mr. Shabetai Levy's talk in the Series "I Remember" in English Programme "Kol Zion La Gola", July 1951, (Haifa Municipal Archives, section 18-6, Shabetai Levy Archives file 7) ; Shabetai Levy, "I Remember the Baron", *Jerusalem Post*, 6 April 1954, supplement on Baron de Rothschild, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> / Incoming Cablegram, Flexner to Warburg, 16 June 1930, (Princeton University, Louis Brandeis Papers, Reel 90)

Committee in New York, wrote a letter to Louis Brandeis enclosing the text of the decoded telegram. In this letter Hyman explained that the reference to Transjordan concerned "a possible inquiry into the nature of British aid to agriculture in Egypt and in other mandated or colonial possessions with a view to determining whether such aid if granted, could facilitate emigration of Arabs into Transjordan, and increasing agricultural possibilities for Jews in Palestine." (1)

At the end of October 1930, a few days after the publication of the Passfield White Paper, which limited Jewish immigration into Palestine, Warburg wrote a letter to Sir John Chancellor, the High Commissioner of Palestine, in which he cautiously proposed the transfer of Arabs to Transjordan. He pointed out that it was not a new suggestion that Britain "might lend its credit guaranty towards the purpose of acquiring a larger quantity of better land than is obtainable in Palestine, at a lower rate, and settle those of the Arabs who would like to become up to date farmers on such lands." Warburg went on to explain that it was not "a question of driving out the Arabs who do first class work where they are in Palestine, but of removing those who are not working now to places where they can show their willingness to acquire real skill as farmers." (2)

A few days later, a huge demonstration of 40,000 people took place in Madison Square Garden in New York, in order to protest against the White Paper. (3) Amongst the numerous Jewish and non-Jewish speakers (including those who sent messages), was Felix Warburg, who as a result of the White Paper had resigned his position as Chairman of the Administrative Committee of the Jewish Agency. Warburg "disputed the contentions in the Passfield report that the land was overcrowded and that the supply of arable land would be exhausted by the present population." He then pointed out that Transjordan's soil and water conditions were better than those of Palestine and he went on to propose a transfer scheme: "If the Mandatory Government feels that something should be done for the felaheen, it may be well to consider if for the same amount invested much larger quantities of better land could be acquired and that part of the Arab population which is now employed urged to develop part of Transjordan. It is unjust to speak of such an offer of land in Transjordan as expatriation of the Arabs, as Transjordan is distinctly Arab territory and is only separated from Palestine by the Jordan [River]." (4)

During the 1930s, Warburg, in the course of his Zionist work, was in contact with Judge Julian Mack. Mack, at that period was a judge in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeal. He had also held high posts on Zionist bodies. Mack had obviously been thinking about the question of transfer of Arabs to Transjordan, since in a letter which he wrote to Warburg in October 1936, he said that "when he [Garratt - whom Warburg considered to be a friend of the Zionists] talks about cantonization he does not consider the possibility of the Arabs going to the possibly more fertile soil of Trans-Jordania." (5)

## MENACHEM USSISHKIN

Menachem Ussishkin was born in Russia in 1863 and in his early life was a member of Hovevei Zion. He was Hebrew Secretary to the First Zionist Congress in 1897 and a few years later led the opposition to the "Uganda Scheme". In 1919, he settled in Palestine and from 1923 until his death in 1941 was head of the Jewish National Fund.

Following the 1929 massacres in Palestine, the British Government commissioned the Shaw Report in which differing opinions were offered as to the availability of land in Palestine for future Jewish immigration. A few weeks after publication of the Report, towards

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<sup>1</sup> / Hyman to Brandeis, 16 June 1930, (Princeton University, Louis Brandeis Papers, Reel 90).

<sup>2</sup> / Warburg to Chancellor, 27 October 1930, (Princeton University, Louis Brandeis Papers, Reel 90).

<sup>3</sup> / "40,000 Here Protest on Palestine Policy", The New York Times, 3 November 1930, p.4 ; "American Jewry Scores England's Guilt", The Jewish Tribune, (New York), 7 November 1930, p.6.

<sup>4</sup> / Felix Warburg, "Transjordan, Part of Palestine", The New Palestine, (New York), vol.xix, no.7, 7 November 1930, p.126.

<sup>5</sup> / Mack to Warburg, 16 October 1936, (Princeton University, Louis Brandeis Papers, Reel 104)

the end of April 1930, the Jewish National Fund invited local and foreign journalists to the Eden Hotel in Jerusalem, to hear a lecture by Menachem Ussishkin.

After referring to the different opinions regarding future Jewish immigration, Ussishkin proposed transfer of the Arabs from Palestine. "We must continually proclaim our demand that our land be returned to our possession. If the land is empty of inhabitants - Good! If, however there are other inhabitants there, they must be transferred to some other place, but we must receive the land! We have an ideal greater and more elevated than standing guard over hundreds of thousands of fellaheen [Arab peasants]."

Ussishkin pointed out that since the Arabs had many lands at their disposal whereas the Jewish people had none, it was surely just that Palestine be given to the Jews. However, this would only be necessary in the future, "as for this generation, most of the land is just waiting to be reclaimed." <sup>(1)</sup>

In May 1936, Ussishkin told a meeting of the Executive of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, "I would very, very much like the Arabs (of Palestine) to go to Iraq and I hope that they will go there sometime." He gave two reasons for this. Firstly, the agricultural opportunities were greater in Iraq than in Palestine and secondly, in Iraq the transferees would find themselves in an Arab rather than a Jewish State. However, Ussishkin discounted the possibility of either deportation of the Arabs, or a population transfer by means of which Diaspora Jewry would be moved to Palestine and the Jews of Palestine would "send them Arabs." Instead, he proposed that the Zionists should request that Transjordan be incorporated into Palestine. Ussishkin said that it would be quite legitimate for the British to argue that there should be sufficient land for the Arab peasants, provided that Transjordan either be given over to Jewish settlement, or if the request for Jewish settlement there were to be rejected, then Transjordan should be "for the resettlement of those Arabs whose lands we will purchase." He felt that even the most ethical person could not oppose such an idea. <sup>(2)</sup>

A few months later, towards the end of 1936, Ussishkin declined to appear before the Peel Commission then in Palestine to take evidence. In the course of an article written in February 1937 and entitled "Why I Did Not Testify", Ussishkin explained his opposition to the approach taken by the Zionist Executive when giving evidence before the Peel Commission. On the question of State lands, Ussishkin wrote that the Zionist Executive should have argued as follows: "We believe that there is room in Palestine also for the Arabs but if you maintain that there is no room for them in the country, then they can find land in other places.... The Arab people have immense areas of land at their disposal; our people have nothing except a grave's plot. We demand that our inheritance, Palestine, be returned to us and if there is no room for Arabs, they have the opportunity of going to Iraq." <sup>(3)</sup>

## MOSHE SHERTOK (SHARETT)

The Zionist leader, Moshe Shertok, was born in Ukraine in 1894 and immigrated to Palestine with his family at the age of twelve. From 1933, he was head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency and with the establishment of the State of Israel, became the first Foreign Minister. From the beginning of 1954 for a period of nearly two years, he was Prime Minister of Israel.

At a parlour meeting held in the house of Dr. G. Halpern in Jerusalem on 21 December 1937, Shertok delivered a lecture on the practical fundamentals of political Zionism. The meeting was obviously a closed one since the text of the lecture was marked "secret".

A few months earlier, the Peel Commission had proposed the transfer of Arabs from the area of the Jewish State and this proposal was currently under serious discussion and investigation by a special committee of the Jewish Agency. This was also the period of Hitler and the Nazis in Germany and since 1933 legislation and discrimination against the Jews of

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<sup>1</sup> / "Lecture by M. M. Ussishkin before Journalists", Doar Hayom, (Jerusalem), 28 April 1930, pp.1, 4.

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes J.A. Exec., vol.25/3, no.57, 19 May 1936, pp.28-29, (CZA).

<sup>3</sup> / Menachem Ussishkin, "Why I Did Not Testify", The New Palestine, (New York), vol.27, no.5, 5 February 1937, p.3.

Germany had been intensifying.

During the questions and answers at the end of Shertok's lecture, the question of transfer of the Arab population from Palestine came up. Apparently, the questioner implied that there was a similarity between the proposal to transfer the Arabs from Palestine and the treatment of the German Jews by Hitler.

Shertok immediately discounted any parallel whatsoever adding that what Germany was doing to her Jews was "taking them and throwing them out without any concern for their future and without permitting them to take their possessions with them." In contrast, the transfer of Arabs would have either to be by agreement or not take place at all. Shertok, however, then explained what he meant by the word "agreement". "There does not have to be agreement with every individual Arab but there has to be agreement with another government. In any case, whether with complete agreement or without agreement, there must be no expulsion of people with negation of their property rights and without concern for their resettlement. Even were the transfer to be compulsory, there must be compensation for property left behind and concern for resettlement in the new location. If this is impossible, then it is impossible, but no comparison can be made between the transfer proposal here and the situation in Germany." (1)

Shertok's comments on transfer are somewhat contradictory. He first says that transfer must be "by agreement or not take place at all" - agreement being with the receiving government but not with every Arab transferee. He then contradicts himself by speaking of transfer "with agreement or without agreement" - namely compulsory transfer - so long as the transferees receive compensation for their immovable property and steps are taken to ensure that they are properly rehabilitated in their new country. Finally he adds that even if this is found to be impossible, there is still no comparison to be made with Nazi Germany.

#### **ABRAHAM SHARON (SCHWADRON)**

Abraham Sharon (Schwadron) was born in Galicia in 1878 and settled in Palestine in 1927. He was a prolific writer who was mainly concerned with Zionist polemics and the basic principles of Zionism. Among his hundreds of critical and admonitory articles, published in almost every Hebrew newspaper, were a number dealing with population transfer. Some of these articles were concerned with general ideas on transfer, whilst others dealt with his specific proposals for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine.

Sharon first put forward his views on population transfer in 1916. In a series of articles entitled "A Revision of Pacifism", published in the July-October 1916 issue of the pacifist and anti-imperialist journal "Dokumente des Fortschritts", Sharon attempted to apply "the framework of the Zionist idea to other nationalities, that is to solve their national problems by an agreed and organised transfer of a nation or parts of it to the territory of another state." (2)

Dr. Moshe Yegar, who made an intensive study of the writings of Sharon, commented on the above passage, "In other words, the transfer of the Palestinian Arabs to the neighbouring countries and the transfer of Diaspora Jewry to Palestine, as the only solution of the Palestine problem." According to Yegar, Sharon would sometimes claim that he was the original proposer of this idea. As Yegar commented, Sharon was obviously unaware of earlier proposals, "Nevertheless, there was nobody within the Zionist movement like Sharon with his constant preaching and insistence on the idea of the transfer of populations." Yegar concluded, "To the extent that Sharon is still remembered, his name is mainly connected, generally in a distorted way, with proposals to remove the Arabs from Palestine." (3)

In August 1930, in reaction to the anti-imperialist Congress which had taken place a

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<sup>1</sup> / Lecture by Moshe Shertok, Jerusalem, 21 December 1937, p.23, (CZA S25/444).

<sup>2</sup> / Abraham Schwadron, "Imperialism, Pacifism and Zionism", *Opinion*, (New York), July 1936, pp.14-15 ; Abraham Schwadron, "Arab Imperialism", *Hatekufah*, (Tel-Aviv), 26-27, 1930, p.501.

<sup>3</sup> / Moshe Yegar, *Integral Zionism - A Study in the Teaching of Abraham Sharon*, (Tel-Aviv, 1983), pp.86-87.

month earlier in Frankfurt and which had censured Zionism, Sharon published an article reiterating his views on population transfer. <sup>(1)</sup> In his manuscript, Sharon has added the following handwritten comment at the end of his article, "This was the main point: The chapter whose inference is the transfer of the Arabs to the Arab lands - and the editors refused to publish it!" <sup>(2)</sup>

In 1937, Sharon published a booklet in which he wrote of "a new pacifism, a pacifism which will not sanctify every status quo, but will supplant the static equilibrium in international relations by a dynamic equilibrium." This new pacifism would permit a population transfer from an overpopulated to an underpopulated country in accordance with the conditions first proposed by Sharon in 1916. <sup>(3)</sup>

In an article written about four years later, Sharon pointed out that in earlier history, the problems of minorities were solved by "destruction of the weak by sword and fire." However, "Now", he said, "Zionism has come and shown us a new way:- a radical solution for quarrels between peoples living in one land by means of the transfer of one of the peoples to a different territory; a transfer that is not an uprooting and a destruction but a planting and an alleviation. It is certainly a very difficult and complicated solution, but it is fundamental, realistic and of enduring value."

Sharon said that there had been several international examples of population transfer since Zionism had first propounded the idea. He added that the members of the Peel Commission, which had recommended population transfer for Palestine were "qualified and very experienced men."

Sharon, writing in the early 1940s, hoped that "the principle of the concentration of nations" would in the future be accepted by the enlightened world so that all minorities would be treated according to the principle of "a people that shall dwell alone", each concentrated in its own territory. This, said Sharon, was the "overall conceptual framework of Zionism - the concept of transfer and concentration of nations." Although at the time when the Zionists first put forward this idea it was regarded as strange and unusual, "today it is becoming more and more acceptable in the wide world." <sup>(4)</sup>

Soon after the publication of the Peel Report in the summer of 1937, Moshe Smilensky came out against its proposal to transfer the Arabs from Palestine. Whereupon Sharon published an article in the Palestine daily "Ha'aretz" in which he said that although he fully agreed with Smilensky's objections to partition, great harm could be caused to the future of the Jewish community in Palestine, if Smilensky's views on population exchange were to be accepted by the public.

"Mr. Smilensky rightly shows the impossibility of agreeing to a Jewish State where the majority of the land would be owned by non-Jews", said Sharon. However, the disparity in the ratio between the Jewish and Arab populations "is even more terrible and ridiculous." Even with mass Jewish immigration, the Arabs would remain "a large alien minority which would simply nullify the Jewish character of our State."

After referring to the recommendation of the Peel Commission regarding the transfer of population, Sharon added that the "Evening Standard" and other important newspapers had considered the problem of transferring the Arabs to Transjordan. Even the radical socialist, Henry Noel Brailsford, had written that although there might be no justice in forcing a quarter of a million Arab peasants to leave their homes in the Jewish State and transfer to the Arab State, their remaining in the Jewish area would hinder Jewish settlement. Sharon observed that whereas many non-Jews supported this transfer, Smilensky still opposed it.

Smilensky had suggested that a non-Jewish minority in their midst would give the Jewish people in their sovereign land the opportunity to demonstrate the correct way to treat minorities. Sharon asked how Smilensky could be so sure that the Jewish Nation would live up to such standards adding that even Smilensky had continually complained about the

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<sup>1</sup> / Schwadron, Hatekufah, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Yegar, Integral Zionism, op. cit., p.89.

<sup>3</sup> / Abraham Schwadron (Sharon), Arab Imperialism, (London, 1937), p.5.

<sup>4</sup> / Abraham Sharon, Mishnei Evrei Hasha'ah, (Tel-Aviv, 1947), pp.167-68.

Jewish Community's relations with non-Jews neighbours.

Sharon conceded that Smilensky had quite rightly objected to forcible transfer of the Arabs. But he was incorrect, averred Sharon, when he said that the Zionist establishment could not draw a parallel from the Greco-Turkish population exchange because that exchange had involved a reciprocal agreement between two peoples and two states. The Peel Commission had brought it as a precedent for the situation in Palestine. "We must therefore not begin any negotiations without a condition regarding population exchange 'with a reciprocal agreement between two peoples and two states' and a transfer of land ownership with suitable and fair compensation." <sup>(1)</sup>

The Greco-Turkish population exchange was carried out by agreement between the two states, but was compulsory insofar as the individual transferees were concerned. Presumably, Sharon intended these same conditions to obtain in the proposed Jewish-Arab population transfer.

In another article, Sharon referred to a lecture which he delivered around 1940 to a kibbutz of "Hashomer Hazair" in which he specifically proposed a transfer of Arabs. The lecture was on the Jewish-Arab problem and in the course of it, "I argued for a population transfer as a solution to this problem. The Arabs will go from here to Iraq and the Jews from the Diaspora to here." <sup>(2)</sup>

As was to be expected, the members of Hashomer Hazair were opposed to Sharon's ideas on transfer. At the beginning of 1942, Meir Ya'ari of Hashomer Hazair put his case in opposing the transfer of Arabs in an answer he wrote to an article by Sharon. <sup>(3)</sup>

Incidentally, this particular article by Sharon does not seem to talk about the transfer of Arabs, but the transfer of Jews from the Diaspora to Palestine. For this transfer of Jews, Sharon considered that a two-part agreement was required - an agreement to ensure an ordered absorption of Jews into Palestine and an agreement with the country of origin to ensure the liquidation of equipment and property. <sup>(4)</sup>

Ya'ari doubted Sharon's powers of persuasion in attempting to convince "the neighbours" that "it would be to their advantage to leave the land where they have lived for hundreds of years" with all its topographical and economic advantages.

Ya'ari said, "If Mr. A. Sharon were to take the trouble to sit down at the table with his neighbours" he would have to explain why after the collapse of Nazism it was not possible for two peoples to live together in one country. He also felt sure that after the termination of the war, the democratic world would neither accept transfers nor provide the financial assistance to implement them. <sup>(5)</sup> [In fact, after the Second World War, countless millions of people in Europe and other places were transferred from country to country with the acquiescence of the democratic countries.]

The difficulties inherent in two sets of people with differing ideologies living together in one place can be illustrated from the case of the two kibbutzim, Bet Alfa and Ramat Yohanan. Both these kibbutzim consisted entirely of Jews - socialistic Jews. However their members were of different nuances of socialist ideology; some members followed the Hashomer Hazair ideology whilst others followed Mapai ideology. These differences in ideology spilled over into the social life of the kibbutzim poisoning personal relations to such an extent that members of the kibbutzim found it impossible to live together. After a long period of growing tension, a population transfer was implemented in 1939 between these two kibbutzim by concentrating all members with the Hashomer Hazair ideology in Bet Alfa and those with the Mapai ideology in Ramat Yohanan.

In a lecture delivered to a kibbutz of Hashomer Hazair about a year after the Bet Alfa/Ramat Yohanan "population transfer", Sharon said, "You are a little closer to your friends in Mapai, than the Arabs are to the Jews, yet you were not able to continue living in your 'Bi-

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<sup>1</sup> / Abraham Sharon, "He'arot shelo l'guf hainyan", Ha'arezt, (Tel-Aviv), 23 August 1937, pp.3-4.

<sup>2</sup> / Abraham Sharon, "He'arot chauvinistiot l'inyan ha'aravim", Beterem, (Tel-Aviv), July 1949, p.42.

<sup>3</sup> / Meir Ya'ari, "Evacuation - Transfer - Agreement", Hashom Hazair, (Tel-Aviv), no.6, 4 February 1942, pp.4-5.

<sup>4</sup> / Abraham Sharon, "Evacuation - Transfer - Agreement", Hashomer Hazair, (Tel-Aviv), no.6, 4 February 1942, p.4.

<sup>5</sup> / Ya'ari, Hashomer Hazair, op. cit.



National State'..." (1)

In the years following the establishment of the State of Israel, Sharon continued to put forward his plans regarding transfer. (2)

## **BERL KATZNELSON**

Berl Katznelson was an educator, writer and a leader of the Zionist Labour movement. He was one of the few people who would press for the observance of Sabbath, festivals and dietary laws in the Histadrut kitchens, and he wanted the young people to respect and appreciate their Jewish religious heritage.

As we can see elsewhere in this work, Katznelson would regularly speak up in favour of transferring Arabs from Palestine.

At a meeting of the Zionist General Council held in November 1942, Berl Katznelson quoted the Hashomer Hazair leader Meir Ya'ari as saying that Ben-Gurion had renounced transfer. Katznelson then commented: "I don't know what he [Ya'ari] means by 'renounced' and what he means by 'transfer' ... To the extent that I know Zionist ideology, this is part of the realisation of Zionism, the perception of this Zionism is the transfer of a people from country to country - a transfer by agreement. For an agreed immigration I do not agree, but for an agreed transfer I am prepared to agree in regard to our neighbours."

He pointed out that the Zionists held that transfer was one of the great ideas which was taking place in the world - in some places in a very good manner but in others in a very bad one. He said that the Zionists had never abandoned the idea of transfer when it is carried out in a fair manner, and felt that the developments which might come about after the termination of the Second World War could very possibly lead to an agreed transfer.

Katznelson then continued: "Since I have entered into this argument, we will see this question through: Was the establishment of Merchavia accomplished without transfer? There was indeed transfer of one or two Arab villages, by agreement with the Jews; was this unfair or unethical? This we arranged in a small area of Palestine for the sake of a small settlement. And the members of Hashomer Hazair are dwelling in Merchavia, in Mishmar Haemek - is this not transfer, moving of [Arab] population from place to place? If transfer is unethical from the outset, then the settlement on the land by Hashomer Hazair is unethical, because it utilises the moving of population from place to place, and it is not only we who are making use of transfer." He concluded by pointing out that the Jews were enjoying the benefits from the small transfer that had taken place in Palestine during the previous sixty years. "Therefore Ya'ari should not reject this idea, reject it on ethical grounds." (3)

A detailed study of the character of Berl Katznelson has been made by his biographer Anita Shapira. With regards to his attitude towards transfer, she wrote that Berl saw in a mutually agreed transfer a real answer to the Arab problem in Palestine. From the time that the Peel Commission put forward this proposal, he was very enchanted with the idea. Just as transfer had solved the Greco-Turkish conflict, Berl saw it as a long term solution to the Jewish-Arab conflict. He was therefore very pleased when the British Labour party put forward transfer of Arabs as part of its Palestine policy. Shapira concluded that Katznelson's "thoughts on population transfer were characteristic of him; he did not recoil from revolutionary changes, from audacious exchanges, and he believed that the aftermath of the [second world] war would be the opportune moment for change." (4)

## **YITZCHAK TABENKIN**

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<sup>1</sup> / Sharon, Beterem, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Yegar, Integral Zionism, op. cit., pp.95ff; Nedava, Gesher, op. cit., p.159.

<sup>3</sup> / Minutes of Inner Zionist General Council, 10 November 1942, p.5, (CZA S25/294).

<sup>4</sup> / Anita Shapira, Berl, part 2, (Tel-Aviv, 1980), pp.608-09.

Yitzchak Tabenkin was a Labour leader in Palestine. He was among the founders of the Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad movement and also of the Ahdut ha-Avodah party.

As we shall see, following the publication of the Peel Commission's transfer proposal in 1937, Tabenkin expressed strong opposition to this proposal at a meeting of the Council of "World Unity", whilst at the same period agreed to the idea of a voluntary transfer in his speeches to the 20th Zionist Congress and to a Mapai Council Meeting! His agreement to a voluntary transfer continued into the 1940s.

In 1943, a discussion took place between members of Mapai Si'ah Bet ("Faction B") and Hashomer Hazair, on the subject of the Biltmore Conference. ["Mapai Si'ah Bet" was a leftish group within the Mapai Party. In 1944, supported by over half the Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad movement, it broke away from Mapai and formed the Ahdut ha-Avodah Party.] During the course of this discussion, Tabenkin said that he could not agree that it was not just or right to hand over Palestine to a Jewish administration, who would implement the settlement of the land and encourage Jewish immigration. He was, however, against compulsory transfer. This would be harmful since the Jews in Palestine would always be among Arabs and a forcible transfer would lead to catastrophe. With regard to a voluntary transfer, Tabenkin's views were quite different - "By agreement with the Arabs, yes." He however concluded that at present this was not a realistic proposition. <sup>(1)</sup>

In a speech delivered a year later, Tabenkin said that the Jews' objective was to gain the entire Land of Israel on both sides of the Jordan, without harming the Arabs and their rights and without expelling a single Arab, although it might be "possible that by means of agreement without any expulsion, the Arabs would deign one of these days to change their place of residence and transfer from here to another place." <sup>(2)</sup>

The historian Anita Shapira has summarised Tabenkin's views on transfer: "Like Berl [Katznelson], Tabenkin welcomed the idea of transfer, so long as one is speaking of voluntary transfer." <sup>(3)</sup>

However, during the last few years, there has been a concerted attempt to ignore or even categorically deny the fact that he ever spoke in favour of transfer!

In a symposium held in 1987, marking 15 years to the death of Tabenkin, Ze'ev Tzur of the Tabenkin Institute gave a lecture on the subject of "Yitzchak Tabenkin and his Attitude towards the Arabs". During the course of his lecture, he listed the occasions when Tabenkin spoke out against transfer of Arabs. He however omitted the times when he spoke in favour of transfer! Tzur even quoted from the meeting in 1943 with Hashomer Hazair, but was very selective - only Tabenkin's opposition to compulsory transfer was quoted, but the phrase "By agreement with the Arabs, yes", was omitted!<sup>(4)</sup>

Also in 1987, Yoshke Rabinowitz, a member of kibbutz Naam, who is regarded as an expert on the teachings of Tabenkin, and was one of his pupils, also claimed that Tabenkin utterly rejected the transfer of Arabs. He went on to state that in an argument with Berl Katznelson, who supported transfer, Tabenkin argued that "we will never obtain Arab agreement to transfer, and if there is transfer without their agreement it is expulsion." <sup>(5)</sup>

In contrast however, Tabenkin's son Yosef of kibbutz Ein Harod, indirectly, and perhaps unconsciously, admitted that his father's opposition to transfer only went as far as transfer of a compulsory nature: "I don't know of one instance when my father Yitzchak Tabenkin, suggested the idea of compulsory transit" - note the use of the word compulsory. He went on to suggest that this idea was in fact first suggested by Berl Katznelson and afterwards by Ben-Gurion. <sup>(6)</sup>

A few weeks later, another kibbutz member, this time Aryeh Segoli of kibbutz Afak, in

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes of Seven Meetings of Mapai Si'ah Bet, 1943, Meeting with Hashomer Hazair on the subject of Biltmore, p.4, (Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad Archives 13 bet/1/5).

<sup>2</sup> / Yitzchak Tabenkin, Collected Speeches, vol.iv, 1943 - 1949, (Tel-Aviv, 1976), p.74.

<sup>3</sup> / Shapira, op. cit., p.696.

<sup>4</sup> / Ze'ev Tzur, "Yitzchak Tabenkin and his Attitude towards the Arabs", Kinnus Tabenkin, (Yad Tabenkin, Efal, October 1987), pp.42-43.

<sup>5</sup> / "Tabenkin Fought Against the Idea of Transfer", Ma'ariv, (Tel-Aviv), 6 July 1987, p.3.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid.

a letter to the newspaper "Ma'ariv" quoted only Tabenkin's pronouncements on his opposition to transfer. <sup>(1)</sup>

One should note however that these above statements came from members of kibbutzim at the time of the establishment of the Moledet party! What however seems more surprising is that the statement that "Tabenkin negated absolutely the idea of transfer" appeared in an article by Moshe Ben-Yosef (Hager) in the right-wing paper "Nekudah"! <sup>(2)</sup> At the time I wrote a letter to "Nekudah" pointing out that this statement was simply incorrect. <sup>(3)</sup> Ben-Yosef (Hager) then wrote to me, "The truth is that when I heard Yosef Tabenkin and Ze'ev Tzur on the telephone, I did not believe what my ears heard. But I saw myself obligated to pass on their exact words in the names of the speakers, since I was not able to refute what they had said to me." <sup>(4)</sup>

#### DR. JACOB THON

Dr. Jacob Thon was the founder and first chairman of the Temporary Council of the Jews of Palestine which was established in 1918. At its fifth session, held in Jaffa in June 1919, the question of transfer of Arabs from Palestine was raised by Yosef Sprinzak, a leader of Hapoel Hazair, who said that "we must receive Palestine without any reduction or restrictions. But there is a known quantum of Arabs who live in Palestine and they will receive their due. Anyone who wants to work will cultivate his plot. Anyone who does not want to work it, will receive compensation and he will seek his fortune in another country." <sup>(5)</sup>

The words "he will seek his fortune in another country" have been heavily crossed out in these minutes. As we can see in various other places in this book, proposals made for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine, have often been crossed out or even deleted from minutes, letters, etc. In this particular case, the historian Tom Segev comments: "That the full implications of this statement were understood by all is indicated by the fact it is crossed out in the meeting's minutes." <sup>(6)</sup>

Just over a decade later, in the early 1930s, a problem which surfaced was what to do with Arab tenants who occupied land which had been acquired by the Zionists for Jewish colonisation. In February 1931, Colonel Frederick Kisch, head of the Political Department of the Executive of the Zionist Organisation, wrote a confidential letter to a number of organisations and individuals in which he put forward a number of plans which had been suggested to solve this problem. He asked the recipients of his letter to state which they considered to be the best plan. One of these plans was the transfer of Arabs out of Palestine: "That land should be acquired in Transjordan for the re-settlement of displaced Arab tenants, the necessary political arrangements being made with the Transjordan Government and the Mandatory Power." <sup>(7)</sup>

One of the recipients of this letter was Thon and a few months later he replied to Kisch. Thon wrote, "The transfer of Arab cultivators and Arabs in general, to Transjordan, would of course, be the most desirable solution from our point of view; but it seems to me that the more we make this scheme public as our desideratum, the less probability there is of it being realised."

He did not think that the Mandatory Government would adopt such a policy since it would "create far reaching excitement and agitation among Moslems throughout the world." In addition the League of Nations would prevent its implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> / Aryeh Segoli, Letters to the Editor, Ma'ariv, (Tel-Aviv), 23 July 1987, p.11

<sup>2</sup> / Moshe Ben-Yosef (Hager), "Thanks to Transfer", Nekudah, (Ofrah), no.108, 14 April 1987, p.17.

<sup>3</sup> / Chaim Simons, Letters to the Editor, Nekudah, (Ofrah), no.111, 30 June 1987, p.4.

<sup>4</sup> / Private communication from Moshe Ben-Yosef (Hager), 1 July 1987.

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes of the fifth session of the Temporary Council of the Jews of Palestine, 11-13 Sivan 5679 (9-11 June 1919), p.134, (CZA J1/8777).

<sup>6</sup> / Tom Segev, One Palestine Complete, (London, 2000), p.404 fn.

<sup>7</sup> / Kisch to various organisations and individuals, 25 February 1931. 24 February 1931 (English translation), (CZA S25/9836).

Thon also felt that such transfer would be economically advantageous to the Arabs. With the money they received from the sale of their land in Palestine, they would be able to purchase land superior in both quality and quantity in Transjordan. He hoped that when a more friendly atmosphere prevailed in the area "it will be possible for us to arrange for the settlement of Palestinian cultivators in Transjordan quite privately." <sup>(1)</sup>

Thon was on the Vaad Leumi presidium but his main activity was as Managing Director of the Palestine Land Development Corporation, an office which he held from 1921 until his death in 1950.

He was also a founder member of Brit Shalom, an organisation whose aim was for the establishment of a bi-National Jewish-Arab State. In addition he was a member of a committee on Jewish-Arab relations, which met in the early 1940s, and included such members as Dr. Magnes. Despite all this, Thon would often propose the transfer of Arabs from Palestine!

As we shall later see following the publication of the Peel Commission report in 1937, Thon was an enthusiastic supporter of Arab transfer from Palestine and an active member of the Jewish Agency Population Transfer Committee.

In August 1942 the members of a Jewish-Arab relations committee, of which Thon was a member, wrote a report on future Jewish-Arab relations. Thon's views on, amongst other things, the transfer of Arabs from Palestine, could not find expression in this report of the committee, and so he submitted a personal memorandum in November of that year.

After discussing the continual danger the Arabs would pose to a future Jewish State, even if they were in the minority, Thon wrote that "a Jewish State would only have value, if together with its proclamation by the Deciding Powers, a transfer of the Arab population would also be made possible." He however added that such a transfer would have to be by agreement with the Arabs. He went on to explain: "One should not suppose that the Peace Conference, whose function it would be to make peace between peoples and to recognise the natural rights of all peoples, will agree to the removal of the Arabs of Palestine by force." Thon did not believe that after the War, there would be place for the Nazis' views on the transference of minorities from country to country. He could thus not visualise that in the new Europe, tens of millions of people could be uprooted from their homes and lands. [In fact, time showed Thon to be wrong! Following the second world war, the Allies did in fact agree to the transfer of almost ten million persons in Europe.] Thon was also of the opinion that a compulsory transfer of Arabs would result in a strong reaction by influential Diaspora Jews.

He then went on to discuss transfer from the point of view of the Arabs. On this he wrote, "One should not however exclude the fact that also the Arabs will recognise the advantages which will accrue to them in their transfer from Palestine to the Arab countries." He brought a proof from the transfer of Greeks and how it caused Greece to grow both economically and militarily. Similarly, the Arab countries were lacking in population, and this would be rectified by an influx of Arabs from Palestine.

Thon concluded that the Zionist aspirations should thus be for "an agreement with the Palestinian Arabs and the neighbouring countries for a transfer of population." He pointed out that to achieve this, one needs to make every effort and utilise every outside influence. "Only if such an agreement is achieved, will a Jewish State be able to arise in our days." Without such an agreement, Thon felt that it would be necessary to continue with the Mandate over Palestine and maintain a force which would be strong enough to maintain security. <sup>(2)</sup>

## **EDWARD NORMAN**

### **Introduction**

Edward Norman, who was an American multimillionaire, financier and philanthropist was born in 1900. His grandfather, Emanuel Nusbaum, was a poor Bavarian Jewish immigrant,

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<sup>1</sup> / Thon to Kisch, 2 June 1931, (CZA S25/9836).

<sup>2</sup> / Personal memorandum by Dr. J. Thon, 3 November 1942, p.2, (CZA S25/204).

who earned his meager living as the proprietor of a store that supplied goods to peddlers in upstate New York during the 1850s. His son Aaron, a brilliant businessman, reversed the family fortunes to become a millionaire. In 1919, the family name was "Americanised" from Nusbaum to Norman. Aaron had two children, Edward and Ruth, and they were both educated in elite private schools in Western Europe. <sup>(1)</sup>

Edward Norman was one of the non-Zionist members of the Jewish Agency's Executive Council and he urged the foundation of a roof organisation to co-ordinate and funnel American Jewish aid for Palestinian educational, cultural and social service institutions.

Although Norman was a non-Zionist member of the Jewish Agency's Executive Council, this certainly does not mean that he was a "non-Zionist". Shertok commented in his diary, how he wished that there would be many Zionists like Norman. <sup>(2)</sup>

In the early 1930s, Norman conceived the idea of the transfer of Arabs from Palestine, and he worked almost consistently on his plan for at least fifteen years.

In Norman's plan, the destination of the transferred Arabs was to be Iraq. Iraq was named Mesopotamia by the ancient Greeks and it was known by this name to the Western World until after the Peace Conference at Versailles in 1919. Until the end of the First World War, Iraq was part of the Ottoman Empire. It was then given as a Mandated territory to Great Britain, who made Feisal its King. In 1932 Britain relinquished its Mandate, and Iraq became an independent state.

In ancient times, the irrigation systems enabled the country to support millions of people. However, destruction and neglect of the irrigation works throughout the ages, resulted in a considerable decrease in population. During the early part of this century, work was done on the restoration of the irrigation system, and whilst Norman was developing his plan, the construction of a great dam and diversion canal on the Tigris river was completed. This project enabled an enormous area of the Shatt-el-Gharraf region lying between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to be made available for cultivation and settlement. The plan which Norman was to put forward was to transfer the Arabs of Palestine to this region of Iraq. <sup>(3)</sup>

A lot of information concerning this plan is to be found in various archives throughout the world. However, when studying the bibliography at the end of this book, the reader will notice that conspicuous by their absence are the "Edward Norman private archives". My inquiries to locate such an archives have until very recently drawn a blank. It has however just come to my notice that Edward Norman's diary is now in the hands of the historian Dr. Rafael Medoff.

### Three Successive Versions of Norman's Plan

About 1930 Edward Norman "became interested in some solution of the Palestine problem" and he spent a great deal of time studying the question. <sup>(4)</sup> In March 1933 he visited Palestine and on 11th of that month wrote a long letter to Israel Benjamin Brodie, an American Zionist leader who pioneered industrialisation in Palestine, giving his impressions of the country. He was very concerned with the rapidly increasing land prices and added that "many Arabs are refusing to sell, and without land the future of the Jews here is limited." <sup>(5)</sup> From a later part of his letter, we see that a solution involving the transfer of Arabs to Iraq had already crossed his mind: "A properly-managed company might accomplish something along lines suggested by a conversation I had with Lord Glenconner, who said that King Feisal of Iraq is very anxious to attract Arab farmers to his country, and might with proper people arrange to grant a large section of the unused fertile land of his country to be given to Arabs from Palestine..It sounds far-fetched, but so did many things here that now are realities, and I

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<sup>1</sup> / Rafael Medoff, *Baksheesh Diplomacy*, (Lanham,2001), pp.3-7.

<sup>2</sup> / Moshe Shertok, *Handwritten Diary entry 4 February 1939*, p.45, (CZA S25/198/1) ; *Diaries of Sharett*, vol.iv, op. cit., p.16.

<sup>3</sup> / Edward Norman, *An Approach to the Arab Question in Palestine, Second Version*, New York City, February 1937, section iii para.28, (CZA A246/29).

<sup>4</sup> / *Memorandum of Conversation, Proposal for settlement of Palestine Problem*, 16 November 1938, p.2, (NA 867N.01/1618).

<sup>5</sup> / Norman to Brodie, 11 March 1933, p.6, (CZA A251/17a).

think a well-managed non-political company could accomplish something along these lines."<sup>(1)</sup>

Further information regarding Norman's thoughts at that time come from the diary of Ben-Gurion, following a meeting between the two of them in February 1939. Ben-Gurion wrote that Norman had thought to himself following his visit to Palestine, "If the Aliyah will increase, then the Arabs will rebel. They will understand that if it will continue for ten years, Eretz Israel will be transformed into a Jewish State, and it should not be assumed that they [the Arabs] will come to terms with this fact in silence." This led Norman to propose a solution to the problem: "Is it not possible to settle the Arabs of Eretz Israel in another country?" Norman discounted most of the countries in the region for one reason or another; Egypt was already over-populated, Saudi Arabia was a desert and thus unsuitable for peasant-farmers, Syria was French. Iraq had the greatest potential.<sup>(2)</sup>

It was in February of the following year, that Norman brought out the first version of his transfer plan, which was introduced as a "Preliminary Draft".<sup>(3)</sup>

Norman began his memorandum by discussing the attitude of Zionist Jewry to the inter-related subjects of "Jewish immigration into Palestine and Jewish acquisition of the land". He considered that "immigration and possession of the land by definition are the bases of the reconstruction of the Jewish homeland", and it is thus natural that they should be pursued as rapidly as possible by all methods. The programme which had been adopted up to that date in these fields, namely encouraging both immigration and purchase of land to the maximum, had proved its worth and had this not been the case "the homeland project at this date would still be largely in the realm of ideas."<sup>(4)</sup>

However it had now reached the state where the Arabs of Palestine felt threatened and they were reacting accordingly. Norman considered that the British Government's "apprehension of the approach of a crisis, unless there is some relaxation of the pressure that is bringing it on, is understandable." The obvious solution was to "diminish the pace of the growth of the Jewish homeland" and this in fact was the method which the Government had adopted.

Under the terms of the Mandate, the British Government was charged with "facilitating close settlement of the Jews on the land" whilst at the same time "protecting the civil and religious rights of the previous inhabitants". According to Norman, the Jews were not able to understand how they had violated the rights of the Arabs. Land had been purchased at fair prices, and employment and living conditions of the "fellahin" (Arab peasants) had improved, as a result of Jewish colonisation. However, these fellahin were "ignorant to a profound degree" and hence susceptible to the influence of their leaders. In addition, for a variety of reasons, Jewish colonisation was not good for the Arab landowners and upper ("effendi") class.<sup>(5)</sup>

Norman considered that in view of the fact that the British Government, whilst ignoring the logic, arguments and evidence presented by the Jews to support their case, had decided on a policy of "severe reduction in the rate of the development of the Jewish homeland", a new method would have to be found to overcome this. The problem had become more acute in view of the fact that Hitler had come to power just a year earlier and the Jews of Germany were beginning to realise the dangers, and to search for a country willing to accept large-scale immigration.

In analysing the problem, Norman considered that "the manner in which the building of the Jewish homeland has been furthered until now is clearly one of taking over Palestine without the consent of the indigenous population." He pointed out that even after selling his land, an Arab landlord was "not aware of having agreed to take his funds and movable goods

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.7-8.

<sup>2</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 3 February 1939, (BGA) ; David Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol.6, op. cit., p.126.

<sup>3</sup> / Edward Norman, An Approach to the Arab Question in Palestine, Preliminary Draft, (First Version), New York City, February 1934, (CZA A246/29).

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., pp.1-2.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., pp.2-4.

and chattels and leave the country" and that it was "hard for him to visualize himself as an unwanted figure in the land where he was born and where his people have resided for generations." (1) One should mention that Norman is not accurate here: three quarters of the Arabs then living in Palestine had immigrated during the previous eighty years, and this included a substantial illegal immigration of Arabs.

Norman argued that "if the Jews gradually are to fill up Palestine, the present Arab population must have some place to go. It cannot be exterminated, nor will it die out." As far as Norman could ascertain, the Jews had not devised a formula to get Arab consent to gradually take over the country, "nor has any plan been propounded for resettling the Arabs outside of Palestine."

He suggested that it had been the tacit hope of the Zionists that as the Jewish community and landholdings expanded, the Arab landowners who had sold their land would migrate to other Arab countries, and the Arab peasants would also leave to become tenant farmers elsewhere. Events had in fact demonstrated little emigration of Arabs from Palestine. In fact the opposite was true - during the preceding ten years Arabs from neighbouring countries were being attracted to Palestine by its increasing prosperity. (2)

In attempting to draw up a new programme to solve this problem, Norman referred to the population exchange between Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey which had taken place after the First World War. "It was the desire of each of the three governments to rid its country of the foreign minorities and to replace them with people of the appropriate national origin. It was recognized by the authorities at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 that such an exchange of populations would be conducive to the maintenance of peace between the three countries, which for years had been at odds, and several times at war, in efforts to acquire territories inhabited by populations not appropriate to the governments under which they were living." The League of Nations thus set up a special commission to supervise this exchange of population and to liquidate the real estate they might leave behind. Despite all the complications and complexities involved, "upwards of two millions of people have been transferred, and the populations of the respective countries are now practically homogeneous." (3)

Norman argued that this procedure would not be "applicable in all its details to the problem of removing Arabs from Palestine and replacing them with Jews," since the Jews not already in Palestine did not possess land on which the Arabs might be resettled. Thus "if Arabs are to be induced to leave Palestine, some land must be discovered on which they can be placed, an incentive for their agreeing to go must be found and the means must be obtained to defray the costs involved." (4)

He considered that the most suitable country for the transferred Arabs was Iraq. That country was "desirous of attracting immigrants, particularly Arabs with agricultural experience." The Iraqi Government had repeatedly stated that it would be pleased to see a farming population of Arab nationality settled in the great valley between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, where irrigation works were then in the planning stage. However, before anything concrete could be accomplished, Norman felt that a "precise program would have to be formulated", adequate finance would have to be made available, and only then could negotiations begin.

Norman argued that if the Iraqi Government really desired new immigrants and it was assured that they were to be brought in at no cost to Iraq, then the Iraqi Government would assist by providing the immigrants with land free of charge. Under such conditions and on the right terms, including the provision of free transportation for the transferees together with their movable property and livestock, it might be possible "to induce Palestinian Arabs to exchange their present holdings for new ones in Iraq", especially if they were to obtain larger areas in that country.

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1 / Ibid., pp.4-5.

2 / First Version, op. cit., pp.5-6.

3 / Ibid., p.7.

4 / Ibid., p.8.

He pointed out that the transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq "would not be a removal to a foreign country.... The boundaries that have been instituted since the [First World] War are scarcely known to most of the Arabs. The language customs, and religion are the same." (1)

From where would the finance for such a plan come? Norman said that the answer to this lay in the fact that Jews all over Europe wanted land in Palestine. Hence land bought from Arabs leaving Palestine could be resold to Jews. He then presented an estimated budget for resettling Arabs in Iraq.

Norman considered that were the Jews to "succeed in acquiring a major part of Palestine a large number of Arabs perforce will have to leave the country and find homes elsewhere." He was worried that if the Arabs were to be "forced out inexorably as the result of Jewish pressure" they would leave with ill-will and there would be enmity towards the Jews for generations, and the rest of the world might come to sympathise with the Arabs. (2) As we have seen, nearly forty years earlier when Herzl put forward his proposal for the removal of non-Jews out of his proposed Jewish State, he followed it by the comment, "At first, incidentally, people will avoid us, We are in bad odor." Herzl however concluded that this "bad odor" would only be a transient phenomenon.

In concluding this section of his memorandum, Norman wrote, "The proposed plan should not seem so fanciful and should merit serious consideration. The creation of a new nation requires broad vision." (3)

In order to implement his plan, Norman listed a number of distinct stages. Firstly, the abstract principles would have to be fully discussed "on a strictly confidential basis" by influential people who were "familiar with Palestine conditions". At the same time indirect enquiries - casual conversations and study of published material - would be made to ascertain how serious the Kingdom of Iraq was for an increase in its population, and what its contribution would be to achieve this objective. (4)

If, as a result of these enquiries, it was concluded that the scheme contained merit, an association or syndicate would have to be formed in order to investigate the economic possibilities. Such an investigation, which would have to be undertaken by experts, would have to determine which lands the Iraqi Government might have available, their potential productivity and the financial aspects of resettlement. If the plan was then found to be economically feasible, some sort of company would be set up in order to deal with the monetary side. The directors of such an organisation would have to be "largely people of a character to inspire the highest confidence from all parties"; Jews from the Diaspora and Palestine; British, Iraqi, and Palestinian Government officials; and all classes of Palestine Arabs. Norman considered that it might be advisable to secure certain prominent Palestinian Arabs as directors. (5)

Representatives of this organisation would then enter into highly secret negotiations with the British Colonial Office "with a view to obtaining the consent of the British Government to the carrying out of the scheme and its assurances that no obstacles of any kind would be interposed by the Administration in Palestine." Negotiations would also have to be entered into with the Iraqi Government regarding making its land available, building the necessary irrigation works, and performing all the legal formalities. (6)

If the negotiations with the British and Iraqis were successful, then "arrangements would have to be made in Palestine for transporting the Palestinian Arabs who might consent to go to Iraq." The next stage would be negotiations with Arab landowners in Palestine. Norman considered that at first, all dealings should be for the purchase of Arab lands situated in the coastal plain, which were suitable for the growing of citrus fruit. Afterwards, hill and valley

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1 / Ibid., pp.8-10.

2 / Ibid., pp.10-12.

3 / Ibid., p.12.

4 / Ibid., p.13.

5 / Ibid., pp.14-15.

6 / Ibid., pp.15-16.



lands could be purchased. <sup>(1)</sup>

Arrangements would then be made with the banks in Palestine to finance the Jewish purchase of the land obtained from the Arabs. Norman then went briefly into technical points regarding the finance. He also pointed out that the company would need a staff in Palestine to negotiate with the landowners, assist the Arabs to depart and to handle the reselling of the land to the Jews. It would also need a staff in Iraq to handle resettling of the Arabs from Palestine. <sup>(2)</sup>

Norman concluded his draft report by pointing out that it was "only in tentative form" and was put forward as a "basis for discussion of a possibly practical method of dealing with the gravest question facing the development of the Jewish homeland." <sup>(3)</sup>

In the course of the following two years, the situation of Germany's Jews considerably worsened, and as a consequence, the high rate of Jewish immigration into Palestine not only continued but in fact increased. The Arabs as a result declared a general strike which lasted about six months, the purpose of the strike being to induce the British Government to forbid further Jewish immigration and purchase of land. This strike was accompanied by the massacre of many Jews. These factors caused the British to establish a Royal Commission (the Peel Commission) to investigate the Palestine question.

In February 1937, Norman brought out the second version of his plan, in which he referred to these events, and he warned that the local administration officials in Palestine might recommend to this Commission the severe curtailing of Jewish immigration. This would be a serious blow to the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe who urgently needed to find asylum. The gates of the countries of the world were closed to them and the only country in the entire world that had been able to absorb any quantity of the Jews was Palestine.

Norman argued that the attitude of the Arabs proved conclusively that "some new policy with regard to them must be formulated and pursued" otherwise further substantial immigration and purchase of land would "make the maintenance of peace and security impossible without the use of overwhelming force on the part of the British." He went on to show that the British, for a variety of reasons, would be unwilling to use force to preserve order and to make possible the settlement of a large number of Jews. Thus it would "not be possible to settle them there unless a peaceful means can be found or created to prevent the Arabs from objecting forcibly to such settlement."

Norman considered that neither the Jewish Agency nor the Zionist Organisation had "suggested any concrete, realistic policy for dealing with the Arab attitude other than to increase the Jewish population in order that it might reach a majority position as soon as possible." He then stated that "an entirely new approach is required" to this question. <sup>(4)</sup>

As in his first version, Norman again wrote about the fears for the future by the Arabs as the result of Jewish immigration, and the influence that the effendis had on the fellahin. He now went on to point out the "almost complete lack of a sense of social responsibility" of the effendis. They had no concept that when they sell land, "they are selling their country". They also did not realise that after they had sold their land their status in the country will have been altered; they would consequently lose their power and thus bear a "strong resentment toward the Jews."

In answer to this, the Jews had claimed that they had no intention of dominating the Arabs. Norman however held that this reply was "either an inconsistent disregard of facts or deliberate disingenuousness", since: the Jews speak of Palestine as "Eretz Israel"; they continually give evidence of their desire to reconstruct the Jewish national existence in Palestine; they insist on the employment of Jews and patronising of Jewish enterprises by Jews; and there is a large number of oppressed Jews in Europe whose only haven is Palestine. Norman answered that these Jewish aspirations and methods could not be criticised "in view of all that the Jews have suffered for over eighteen centuries as minority elements in many foreign

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.16-17.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.17.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., p.18.

<sup>4</sup> / Second Version, op. cit., section i - The General Situation.

lands, and it is but natural that they should long for a home of their own where they can be their own masters and live their lives in peace and freedom in their own way."

In view of the conflicting attitudes between Jew and Arab, Norman concluded that it was "useless and futile to expect peace and cooperation on any common grounds between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine." There were therefore two alternatives, the first being "strife and disorder" and the second that "one or the other of the two parties must abandon Palestine." He immediately dismissed the first possibility as disastrous for the future of the Jews in Palestine. With regard to the second possibility, Norman wrote that since there was no alternative to Palestine for the Jews and since they could not have the land whilst more than 800,000 Arabs lived there "the Arabs must be induced to give it up and a considerable portion of them to move elsewhere." <sup>(1)</sup>

As in his first version, Norman quoted various precedents for the transfer of population, and he now explained in much greater detail why he considered Iraq to be the obvious destination for the Arabs who were to be transferred from Palestine. <sup>(2)</sup>

Norman wrote in his second version of two indications "that the idea of the removal of the Arabs from Palestine would not be received in official British circles as unthinkable." <sup>(3)</sup> The first was a letter written by the London University lecturer, Edwyn Bevan to "The Times" in September 1936, proposing such a transfer to Iraq, and the second was a London despatch published in "The New York Times" in October 1936, from its staff correspondent, Ferdinand Kuhn, Jr. In this despatch, Kuhn asked how the British could on the one hand satisfy the Arabs without betraying the Jews, and on the other hand maintain a Jewish National Home without condemning the Arabs to be a subject race. Answering his own question, Kuhn wrote that the rivalry between Arab and Jew in Palestine could be ended "perhaps by a large scale transfer of the population, perhaps by a legislative council or some other scheme". <sup>(4)</sup> In fact, a few months later, Norman's "indications" were shown to be true indicators of Establishment policy, when the Peel Commission's Report proposed such a population transfer, compulsory if necessary.

Norman also brought a proof from the words of Menachem Ussishkin, President of the Actions Committee of the World Zionist Organisation, to show that the idea of transfer of Arabs from Palestine, "is not regarded by the Zionists as contrary to their policies". <sup>(5)</sup> In fact we know from sources presumably not seen by Norman, and also from documents which have now been declassified - dating from both before and after Norman's second memorandum - that Zionist leaders including Herzl, Ben-Gurion and Weizmann, made even more enthusiastic statements in favour of transfer.

In the third version of his plan, brought out in January 1938, in a much more concise form than the earlier two versions, Norman began by pointing out that up to then, attempts to solve the Palestine problem had been on political lines and were based on considerations involving Palestine alone. Norman completely disagreed with this approach, since he considered that the problem was economic in the sense that Jewish settlement in Palestine had given rise to the Arab population's fearing for its economic future. He felt that attempts to solve the problem by political means would emphasise the points of difference, whereas an economic solution would bring out the points of unity between Jew and Arab. <sup>(6)</sup>

Norman went on to stress the advantages that would accrue to the Arabs as a result of his plan. He explained that they made a very poor livelihood as the land cultivated by them was hilly, poor and dry, and wholly unsuited to extensive agriculture. Furthermore, most of the land tilled by the Arabs was owned by absentee landlords who had no hesitation in exploiting their tenants. Therefore, these Arabs would gain tremendously were they to be

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., section ii - The Situation in Palestine.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., section iii - Iraq.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., fn.50.

<sup>4</sup> / Ferdinand Kuhn, Jr., "Britain Applying Force upon Arabs", The New York Times, 4 October 1936, p.E5.

<sup>5</sup> / Second Version, op. cit., fn.51.

<sup>6</sup> / Edward Norman, An Approach to the Arab Question in Palestine, Third Version, New York City, January 1938, section i - General, (PRO CO 733/333 75156/35).

resettled on land elsewhere better suited to extensive agriculture, which they could hope to own in due course. This would also enable the landlords to sell their lands to Jews, which Norman claimed they had consistently shown themselves anxious to do, without being criticised that they were rendering their tenants homeless. Furthermore "such a resettlement of the Arab peasants outside of Palestine would enable the Administration to permit Jewish immigration on the basis of economic absorptive capacity" without objections from the Arabs that their livelihoods were being threatened. <sup>(1)</sup>

In addition to the reasons given in his first version for Iraq to be the best destination for the Arab transferees, Norman, in his subsequent versions, wrote about the recently completed dams in Iraq which had made enormous areas available for cultivation. However, the indigenous population of Iraq could not provide sufficient numbers of new settlers for the new areas opened up by these new dams and the only Arab people who could be induced to settle there were the peasants of Palestine. <sup>(2)</sup>

The first version only speaks in general terms of "experts" who would be utilised to obtain an accurate estimate of the total cost of the plan. However, in his second version he wrote that they would come from the staff of the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association. This organisation had for over half a century conducted large scale colonisation work in Palestine and was thus highly experienced in the field. <sup>(3)</sup> In his final version, Norman also included staff members from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which had done extensive colonisation work of Jews in certain areas of Russia. <sup>(4)</sup>

He also noted in his second and third versions, that Jewish organisations would have to purchase the land in Palestine immediately upon being vacated by the emigrating Arabs. <sup>(5)</sup> In his second version, Norman listed no fewer than sixteen Jewish financial agents to be approached for this purpose. <sup>(6)</sup>

In his first version, Norman did not consider the rate of transfer of Arabs, neither did he suggest performing a pilot plan. However, by the time he came to write the second version, he became more pragmatic. With regard to the rate of transfer, Norman wrote that his plan did not contemplate "the sudden and immediate moving of many thousands of Palestinian Arabs." He felt certain that at first no large number would be persuaded to move. The methodology he thus suggested in his second version was that initially one would have to find "one landlord who could be made to see the material advantage to himself of exchanging his not very productive land in Palestine ... for a larger and more productive property in a developing country." <sup>(7)</sup> In his final version, however, the emphasis was on the advantages to the tenant instead of the landlord, and he suggested finding "a very few villages that might be interested in improving their economic position by migrating to Iraq" and in their new country, instead of being "debt-ridden tenants" would be "freehold independent landowners." <sup>(8)</sup> In order not to destroy the "social organization of Arab peasant life", Norman proposed that whole villages be transferred intact with, (in the second version), the mukhtars remaining at the heads of their respective villages. He felt that "it would be sufficient in the first year to move not more than a dozen villages, involving only from three to five thousand Arabs." If this was successful and good reports came back to Palestine, the work could then be considerably accelerated so that "eventually perhaps fifty thousand Arabs a year could be moved to Iraq." To ensure the success of this plan, "trained instructors, preferably Arabs, would have to be employed to supervise the new villages in Iraq for at least one year each."

At the same time, an educational campaign would be carried out amongst the Arabs in Palestine in order to point out the advantages of living in Iraq "as compared to the difficult soil of Palestine."

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., section ii - Palestine.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., section iii - Iraq.

<sup>3</sup> / Second Version, op. cit., section iv para.7.

<sup>4</sup> / Third Version, op. cit., section iv para.7.

<sup>5</sup> / Second Version, op. cit., section v para.10 ; Third Version, op. cit., section iv para.10.

<sup>6</sup> / Second Version, op. cit., section v para.12.

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid., section iv para.11.

<sup>8</sup> / Third Version, op. cit., section iv para.11.

Norman hoped that, "Perhaps a widespread desire to go to Iraq as their true national home could be inculcated among the Palestine Arabs, similar to the emotional desire among the Jews of Eastern Europe to dwell in Palestine as their national home." <sup>(1)</sup>

The details for the plan's implementation are similarly structured in all three versions. However, there are some differences between the various versions (especially between the first and the subsequent versions), which we shall now point out:

The second and third versions were written far more professionally than the first version, and are followed by extensive footnotes and references.

The first version had envisaged that indirect enquiries would be made to determine whether Iraq would be willing to accept Arabs from Palestine. However, in his final version, Norman proposed a more direct albeit cautious approach. "Someone especially experienced in diplomacy, tact, and Arab and Iraqi affairs would have to proceed to Baghdad to discuss the matter with the Government officials, and also perhaps with the King." He suggested that at first the matter should be discussed in the general terms of the economy and development of the country, and if the Iraqis showed they were aware that their greatest economic problem was underpopulation, it could be suggested to them that "if they took the proper steps they might be able to attract to their country over a period of time a considerable proportion of the fellachin of Palestine." <sup>(2)</sup>

Norman had proposed in his first version that the monetary side of his plan be covered by Jews, Arabs, British and Iraqis, without specifying details of who did what. In the final version however, he decided that it would be the responsibility of the Iraqis to arrange the finance and resettlement of the Arabs in Iraq, by means of forming a special mortgage bank. "Jewish interests" would have to form a company whose objects would be "to buy and make immediate payment for the land that might be vacated by emigrating peasants in Palestine." <sup>(3)</sup>

In all his versions, Norman wrote that an agreement would have to be made with the British which would "ensure that no administrative obstacles would be interposed to the carrying out of the scheme". However, in the second and third versions he added that this agreement would also contain the condition that Arab immigration into Palestine be completely stopped in order to prevent Arabs from the neighbouring countries entering Palestine "to replace those who had gone to Iraq" and hence perpetuate the problem which this plan was supposed to help solve. On this latter point, Norman pointed out that under the terms of the Palestine Mandate, Arab immigration to Palestine "need not be permitted." Norman was obviously referring to Article 6 which spoke of facilitating Jewish immigration into Palestine.

Amongst the reasons advanced by Norman for entering into such an agreement with the British were: preservation of the prestige of Britain, non-capitulation to Arab riots and civil disobedience, and "that no other solution to the Palestine dilemma possibly can be proposed without arousing the antagonism of either the Arabs or the Jews." <sup>(4)</sup>

Some additional points were incorporated into the second version, which did not appear either in the first or last versions: Before negotiations could begin, it would be necessary "to obtain material support for it [the plan] from a substantial group of responsible Jews." <sup>(5)</sup> There would have to be a provision for an agreement binding the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Organisation not to "interfere with the execution of the plan ... except when specifically requested to do so", the object of this being "to prevent the plan from becoming involved in all sorts of political controversies that surely would render its execution impossible." <sup>(6)</sup>

In his last version, Norman specifically wrote that the Iraqi Government would invite

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<sup>1</sup> / Second Version, op. cit., section iv para.11-16 ; Third Version, op. cit., section iv para.11-16.

<sup>2</sup> / Third Version, op. cit., section v para.2.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., para.5-6.

<sup>4</sup> / Second Version, op. cit., section v para.13-15; Third Version, op. cit., section v para.8-10.

<sup>5</sup> / Second Version, section v para.1.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., para.4-5.

the peasants of Palestine to settle in Iraq. He pointed out that this would be the most difficult stage and "on its success the validity of the whole plan depends." Intelligence and tact by the Iraqi Government would be crucial here. <sup>(1)</sup>

He concluded this section with the suggestion that the procedure outlined in his plan could be "kept up for some twenty--five or thirty years, or until there was no more desire on the part of Arabs in Palestine to go to Iraq." <sup>(2)</sup>

Norman finished both his second and third versions with an almost identically worded "Conclusion". In it, he was realistic and perceived that his plan was "immense in scope", that there was a "vast number of obstacles in the way of carrying [it] out" and that an enormous amount of energy would be required. He felt that the only way to ascertain whether the difficulties were insurmountable was to make an effort to overcome them.

"Only two things are necessary before commencing to make the attempt:

(1) a decision that the objective is worth-while, and

(2) a resolution to proceed vigorously." <sup>(3)</sup>

Although Norman brought out the first version of his plan in 1934, he did not take steps to promote it until after he brought out his second version in 1937. Medoff suggests that the reason for this was that during these years Norman was "preoccupied by his own financial concerns during the early years of the Great Depression, and mollified by the cessation of Palestinian Arab violence in the years following the 1929 outbreaks" so that he "temporarily put his Iraq scheme on the back burner." <sup>(4)</sup> However, unlike many proposers of transfer, who just put forward details of a plan, but did nothing towards their implementation, Norman, as we shall now see, was true to his ideas.

### Early Meetings

In the latter part of the summer of 1937, Norman began to fully apply himself to the task of implementing his plan. He began by submitting the second version of his memorandum, to a "number of leading personages in the United States." According to him they all in principle approved it. <sup>(5)</sup>

In a report, Norman pointed out that in particular, there were two matters not covered in his memorandum, about which he could not obtain information without contacting leading people in Iraq. Firstly, why the Iraqi Government had undertaken to invest large sums of money to construct dams and irrigation works whilst their present population did not merit such investment, and secondly, whether they would be interested in a substantial immigration of Arab cultivators to settle on the land made cultivable by this construction work. <sup>(6)</sup>

With this end in mind, Norman wrote to Sir Robert Waley Cohen on 13 October 1937. [Sir Robert Waley Cohen was a British industrialist and Jewish communal leader who rose to high office in the Anglo-Jewish community. Although basically opposed to political Zionism, he contributed to the economic development of Palestine as chairman of the Economic Board for Palestine.]

Norman enclosed a copy of his paper to Waley Cohen - presumably the second edition of his transfer plan - and commented that Felix Warburg had "expressed considerable interest in it" and that Warburg "feels that the first step in proceeding to see what can be done with my plan is to find out what is the intention of the Iraqi government with regard to colonization of the area that will become cultivable as the result of the completion of the dam on the Tigris mentioned in my paper." Norman informed Waley Cohen that at that time there was in Paris an American lawyer employed by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee by the name of Nathan Katz and both Warburg and Norman had both written to him asking him to proceed to London to find out what he could on this matter. Norman added that he had

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<sup>1</sup> / Third Version, op. cit., section v para.11-12.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., para.15.

<sup>3</sup> / Second Version, op. cit., section vi ; Third Version, op. cit., section vi.

<sup>4</sup> / Medoff, thesis, pp.158-59.

<sup>5</sup> / Edward Norman, First Report on Iraq Scheme, 5 May 1938, p.1, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid.

suggested to Waley Cohen that "it might be worthwhile for him [Katz] to get in touch with you, in case he needs help or advice." <sup>(1)</sup>

On the same day, Norman wrote to Warburg, enclosing a letter for Katz and also the draft of a letter that Warburg might write to Katz. Norman requested that if this draft seems satisfactory to Warburg, the latter should write a covering note and have the two letters mailed together to Katz. Norman also enclosed a copy of the letter he had written to Waley Cohen. <sup>(2)</sup>

Indeed, a few days later, Warburg wrote to Katz enclosing a letter (untraced) from Norman and informed him that he was "most desirous of obtaining the information that Mr. Norman mentions in his letter" and he asked him "to do all possible to obtain it." <sup>(3)</sup>

However, a few days later, Norman had second thoughts on bringing in Katz. He felt that as soon as the Iraqis get to know that Jews were behind this, the whole transfer plan could come to naught. He considered that a better approach would be to show that the "whole plan is for the benefit of Iraq and that the first moves in connection with it should come from the Iraqians." Norman felt that Edwyn Bevan, a non-Jewish professor, who had in the previous year written a letter to "The Times" of London on the transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq should be approached to contact the Iraqis to point out the advantages of this plan. If Bevan succeeded then "the whole scheme would come before the world as emanating from Iraq, for the advantage of Iraq, and we would then be saved any possibility of being accused of plotting the deportation of the Palestine Arabs." Also, using this approach would make the British Colonial Office receive it more favourably. <sup>(4)</sup>

Likewise, in his report, Norman wrote that under the conditions then prevailing in the Near East, a Jew traveling to Iraq would have been suspect and would have probably aroused antagonism. It was therefore essential for this information to be verified by a non-Jew who would be persona grata to the Iraqis. <sup>(5)</sup>

Norman thus felt that Katz was not the person to speak to the Iraqis and he thus cabled to Katz: "Disregard letters Warburg Norman." Norman hoped that Warburg would "not be displeased" with using his name in this telegram. If, however, Warburg still felt that Katz was the right man, he could still instruct him to go to London. Indeed, before cabling Katz, Norman had for two days tried to contact Warburg but without success. <sup>(6)</sup> The reason for his being unable to make contact with Warburg became known to the world very soon after. Warburg had had a heart attack and on 20 October he died. Norman thus lost an important ally to advance his plan.

For nearly two months prior to Warburg's death, Norman had been trying to interest Warburg in his plan. On 6 September, Norman had written to him saying that "there are several matters that I feel a need of talking over with you, and I wonder if I could have the privilege of some of your time in the not distant future." <sup>(7)</sup> Norman did not specify which matters but it almost certainly included his transfer plan.

On the following day, he again wrote to Warburg informing him that for some years he had "been working on a fundamental plan to deal with the Arab problem in a basic way." He pointed out that he had recently given James Rosenberg, a member of the Joint Distribution Committee, a copy of it and that he just received word from Rosenberg that he should immediately furnish Warburg with a copy, which he did. He added that should they meet in the near future, as he [Norman] had requested they could "talk about it a little." <sup>(8)</sup>

On receiving his first letter, Warburg agreed to a meeting on 13 September. <sup>(9)</sup> and when

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<sup>1</sup> / Norman to Waley Cohen, 13 October 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>2</sup> / Norman to Warburg, 13 October 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>3</sup> / Warburg to Katz (Draft letter), 13(?) October 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>4</sup> / Norman to Warburg, 19 October 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>5</sup> / First Norman Report, op. cit., p.1.

<sup>6</sup> / Norman to Warburg, 19 October 1937, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> / Norman to Warburg, 6 September 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>8</sup> / Norman to Warburg, 7 September 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>9</sup> / Emanuel to Norman, 7 September 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4);

he received his second letter answered that he would "be glad to discuss this [the Arab problem] with you when next we meet." <sup>(1)</sup>

Following their meeting, Warburg discussed Norman's plan with a few other people and requested that Norman's secretary send him an extra copy. <sup>(2)</sup> Warburg's actions went beyond just a polite interest. Ronald Venables Vernon, (he had just retired after thirty-seven years in Colonial Office service), who met with Norman at the end of 1937, understood that the plan "was worked out largely in conjunction with the late Felix Warburg." <sup>(3)</sup> Whether or not, Vernon's comments are an exaggeration, we do know that when Norman submitted his plan to Warburg, the latter "was so enthusiastic in his approval that he offered to put into it \$10.00 for every \$1.00 which Mr. Norman would invest." Warburg however "felt that the plan should be further revised and perfected". <sup>(4)</sup>

About a couple of weeks later Warburg sent Norman an "interesting letter" on the subject of Iraq which he had just received from Jonah Wise, the National Chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee. <sup>(5)</sup> Wise suggested "that when the time comes for a check-up on the facts concerning Iraq," Warburg or Norman should consult with Professor Nelson Glueck, Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. <sup>(6)</sup> On 7 October, Warburg wrote to Norman informing him that he had written to Glueck, asking "his reaction on the possibilities in Irak (sic) and Trans-Jordania" <sup>(7)</sup> - presumably on the feasibility of using these as resettlement sites for the Arabs who would be transferred from Palestine.

Amongst the Warburg papers are several memoranda<sup>(8)</sup> giving the population, land area, cultivable or otherwise, of Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine. One of these memoranda is dated 24 September 1937 and has typed at the bottom "taken over the telephone from a.h.Katz." Medoff explains this footnote that Warburg had asked his agent in Europe, Nathan Katz "to supply data on the potential for settling in Transjordan and Iraq. Katz called back with the information on September 24, dictating the details to Warburg's secretary over the telephone." <sup>(9)</sup>

On 26 September 1937, Lewis Andrews, Governor of the Galilee District, was murdered by the Arabs. The British immediately took strong measures against the Arabs of Palestine which included declaring the Arab Higher Committee an illegal association and deporting some of its members, deposing the Mufti of Jerusalem as head of Palestine's Moslem Supreme Council and the imprisonment of a number of Arabs. Norman immediately telegraphed Warburg: "Yesterdays events in Palestine seem to indicate perhaps British Government has been driven to point of being ready for some fundamental solution of country's problem. It may be that this attitude will not last very long and it occurs to me that it probably presents a uniquely favourable moment for presenting Iraq scheme to Ormsby Gore [the British Colonial Secretary] and others." He added that if he had an "assurance of adequate financial backing" he would immediately go to London and with the help of Waley Cohen discuss the plan with the British Government. <sup>(10)</sup> On the same day Norman and Warburg discussed this subject together.

A few days later Norman wrote to Warburg asking "whether or not the time had now arrived for me to proceed to England to discuss with the British government officials the plan I have outlined for a gradual transference of Palestinian Arabs to Iraq." In his report, Norman wrote that a number of those who read his memorandum, "among them the late Mr. Felix M.

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Norman to Emanuel, 8 September 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>1</sup> / Warburg to Norman, 10 September 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>2</sup> / Emanuel to Norman, 23 September 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>3</sup> / Vernon to Shuckburgh, 20 December 1937, (PRO CO 733/333 75156/35).

<sup>4</sup> / Memorandum of Conversation, 16 November 1938, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>5</sup> / Warburg to Norman, 1 October 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>6</sup> / Medoff, *Baksheesh Diplomacy*, op. cit., p.108.

<sup>7</sup> / Warburg to Norman, 7 October 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>8</sup> / Various memoranda, one of them dated 24 September 1937, others undated, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 7).

<sup>9</sup> / Medoff, *Baksheesh Diplomacy*, op. cit., p.109.

<sup>10</sup> / Telegram, Norman to Warburg, 2 October 1937, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

Warburg," the Jewish banker, encouraged him to go to England in order to find someone who could obtain this information. <sup>(1)</sup>

In his letter, Norman went on to distinguish between a "plan" and a "proposal". For a plan to become a proposal "the intention and ability must have evidence of concrete substantiation." He felt that if he proceeded to England solely on his own initiative, he would "fail to win the cooperation of Jewish interests, non-Zionist as well as Zionist." To succeed would require substantial support from British Jewry. Norman also realised that he was, in his own words, "an unknown young man from a foreign country" whereas Warburg was a well known public figure in the Jewish world and with the authorities in London; hence the participation of Warburg in Norman's plan could spell the difference between success and failure. <sup>(2)</sup>

On the financial side, very large capital would be required to carry out such a plan, up to one million dollars just in the initial stage. Warburg also had plenty of money. However, at this stage, people would not be prepared to "write a blank cheque." Norman's solution to this problem was that "a syndicate or trusteeship be created, with yourself [Warburg] and two others who command confidence." The subscribed money would not be spent "until all arrangements with the Zionists, the British, the Iraqians, and finally some Palestinian Arabs willing to migrate, had been completed to the satisfaction of the trustees and until the further financing had been arranged." When one had reached the stage for the "commencement of actual population transfer operations" the money would be handed over to a corporation. Investors would first be sought from New York, and then from the rest of the United States, Britain, France and elsewhere. <sup>(3)</sup> Norman enclosed a "Tentative Draft" for an "Iraq Development Syndicate Subscription Agreement" which he himself had drawn up. <sup>(4)</sup> However, as we have already seen, two weeks later Warburg was dead and thus nothing seems to have come from this Syndicate plan.

On 12 November 1937, Norman wrote to Israel Benjamin Brodie, "It looks very much as though I will be leaving very shortly for London in connection with the Iraq plan." He went on to say that Sir Robert Waley Cohen was endeavouring to make some very important appointments for him and should he hear within the next few days that they had been made, he would leave for London within a fortnight. <sup>(5)</sup>

At that period, Norman had a chance meeting with Benjamin Akzin, at which Akzin recommended to Norman not to allow his [Norman's] "identity and connections to be revealed to the Iraqians or Palestinian Arabs if possible, as then the scheme would come to them as a Jewish one, possibly a nefarious plot." He also urged Norman to find a non-Jewish go-between who would investigate this matter and also carry out the negotiations with the Iraqis. <sup>(6)</sup>

We know about this meeting with Akzin from a diary entry made by Norman a few weeks later. It was between 22 November and 2 December 1937 that Norman kept a diary of his meetings in which he discussed his Iraq plan with various people.

Numerous attempts have been made by the author to obtain a copy of this diary, but as yet, have been unsuccessful. However, extracts from this diary and a photocopy of one of its pages are to be found in a book by Rafael Medoff. <sup>(7)</sup> From this book, we see that the page numbers in his diary are the odd numbers from 1 to 17. It would thus seem that Norman used just one side of each page in a numbered notebook.

From Medoff's book, it is possible to reconstruct the contents of Norman's diary. His meetings were thus as follows:

page 1: 22 November, New York, Professor Ephraim Speiser.

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<sup>1</sup> / First Norman Report, op. cit., p.1.

<sup>2</sup> / Norman to Warburg, 6 October 1937, pp.1-2, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., pp.2-4.

<sup>4</sup> / Tentative Draft, Iraq Development Syndicate Subscription Agreement, (American Jewish Archives, Felix Warburg papers, Box 341 Folder 4).

<sup>5</sup> / Norman to Brodie, 12 November 1937, (CZA A251/17a).

<sup>6</sup> / Medoff, Baksheesh Diplomacy, op. cit., p.112.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 9th page between pp.105-06, p.112, pp.114-18, pp.128-30.



page 3: 22 November, New York, Professor Ephraim Speiser.

page 5: 26 November, on board "Normandie," Otto Schiff; 27 November, on board "Normandie," Benjamin Akzin.

page 7: 27 November, on board "Normandie," Benjamin Akzin.

page 9: 27 November, on board "Normandie," Benjamin Akzin; 29 November, London, Walter S. Cohen.

page 11: 29 November, London, Walter S. Cohen; 30 November / 1 December, London, Walter S. Cohen.

page 13: 30 November / 1 December, London, Walter S. Cohen; 2 December, London, Sir Robert Waley Cohen.

page 15: 2 December, London, Sir Robert Waley Cohen; 2 December, London, Vladimir Jabotinsky.

page 17: 2 December, London, Vladimir Jabotinsky.

Let us now look at details of these meetings:

On 22 November, Norman had a luncheon meeting in New York with Ephraim Speiser, Professor of Semitic and Oriental Languages at the University of Pennsylvania. Having worked at the American School of Oriental Research in Baghdad and having "had to deal with the government officials in various departments," Speiser was considered an expert on Iraq, and Norman realised the importance of being well informed about the different aspects of that country.

Norman gained a lot at this meeting. For example, based on "the various reports" he had read, he envisioned that the area he had designated for the Arab transferees was "excessively dry." In fact, it was very swampy and as a result, Speiser and his party "had to use rowboats to cross numerous ponds." Speiser also pointed out the "very difficult, though not necessarily impossible" task of obtaining the agreement of the Iraqi government. Since Iraq had aligned itself with the struggle of the Arabs of Palestine against Britain and the Zionists, its leaders "probably would not want their country to appear to assist the Jews in increasing their hold over Palestine."

Another problem raised by Speiser and which Norman had not anticipated was that the "wealthy and influential" Jews of Iraq would oppose Norman's plan fearing that the Iraqi government might transfer them to Palestine, something which these Jews did not want. They might have even made it conditional on the transfer of Arabs from Palestine.

Speiser also commented that since the Iraqi leaders were Kurds, they "might not want to see the Arab population of the country substantially increased," and that the Iraqi regime could not be considered stable.

Although Speiser was willing to help Norman, he did not intend returning to Iraq. Norman summed up Speiser as "a profound, whole-souled person of great intelligence, & decisive." <sup>(1)</sup>

Two days later, Norman left the U.S.A. for Britain, on board the "Normandie." <sup>(2)</sup> On board the ship was Otto Schiff, the British financier who was first cousin to Felix Warburg's widow. On 26 November, Norman discussed his plan with him. In his diary he wrote that it was not new to Schiff since "he had heard it and me discussed in a meeting of Felix Warburg's associates in the Jewish Agency for Palestine at Mrs. Warburg's on November 15. He knew too little of the subject to discuss it much, but expressed a willingness to introduce me to a number of important British Jews. He is opposed to partition of Palestine, and therefore would be glad if my scheme could serve as a practical alternative." In Schiff's opinion Norman would do well to "keep close to Nathan Katz." Norman wrote that Schiff was "a very fine man, but not deep on general questions, although sound and solid on business and economic matters." <sup>(3)</sup>

On the same day, Norman met with Benjamin Akzin. At this meeting, Akzin suggested

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.114-15.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.114.

<sup>3</sup> / Photocopy from Norman's diary, reproduced in Medoff, Baksheesh Diplomacy, op. cit., 9th page between pp.105-06.

that Norman should speak with Sir Neill Malcolm, the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. He described him as a Revisionist sympathiser with the ability to make "good government contacts." He was suspicious of the British because of their increasingly pro-Arab attitude and he accordingly urged Norman not to allow "the discussion of my scheme to get on to a plan of Partition versus non-Partition," because the transfer scheme "is applicable with or without [partition]." Akzin was very wary of a possible trick by the British Colonial Office who might "offer to work out the Iraq scheme for the proposed Jewish State in return for agreement to Partition on the part of its Jewish official opponents" and then, "after Partition had been put into effect" they would "back out of the rest of the bargain." Norman obviously took this advice seriously since he then wrote in his diary that "this is a point to remember." On Akzin, Norman wrote that his "knowledge and brains are of the highest order, and he has a good judgment on political matters, but his influence is not wide.... His personality is not of the best, though he is pleasant, and a good companion." (1)

Norman arrived in London on 29 November and was met at his hotel by Walter S. Cohen, a British non-Zionist friend. Cohen was pessimistic about Norman's plan and expressed "great doubts of its possibility" because of the current "unfavourable political and psychological situation" in Palestine. Needless to say, Norman did not like Cohen's assessment and commented in his diary "Perhaps if it were not so bad, no one would be interested at all in any scheme, which may be a way of preventing the bad situation having worse results." (2)

Norman entered in his diary that Walter Cohen had arranged for him to meet with Sir Richard Storrs two days later. (3) [Storrs had been Governor of Jerusalem under Allenby and Herbert Samuel.] In his Report, Norman wrote "through Sir Robert Waley Cohen, I was put in touch with Sir Ronald Storrs," (4) although, exactly when he had done so, is not too clear. Since however Norman wrote both these statements, it would seem that both Cohens were involved in the arrangements for the meeting.

Whether or not Storrs was a potential asset or liability for the Norman plan is a subject of dispute. In 1921, the American Zionist leader, Henrietta Szold, described Storrs as an "evil genius" and that "he despises the Jews"; (5) on the other hand, in 1935, great praise was heaped upon him by the British Chief Rabbi, Dr. Joseph H. Hertz at a Jewish meeting chaired by Storrs. (6) It is of course possible that in the intervening fourteen years, Storrs radically changed his attitude towards the Jews.

Comments about Storrs suitability for helping Norman were made at the time when Norman came to London - (November 1937). Akzin warned Norman to be cautious, since according to gossip, he "is very shrewd". (7) Jabotinsky also viewed Storrs in a negative way and told Norman that he "should not count too much on Storrs.... He said he was not a strong chartered man, sort of a dilettante - his success was in Egypt as sort of a social secretary, but his record as a governor of Jerusalem was not brilliant, in Cyprus very bad, and in Northern Rhodesia calamitous." (8) Walter Cohen, however, was in favour of Storrs' participation and remarked to Norman that his timing was good since Storrs had planned "to go to Egypt this winter, and might go on to Iraq if he could be interested." He also commented that Storrs was "poor and in need of funds .... He might be interested in the Iraq plan as a job." (9)

In a similar vein, Norman wrote in his diary that Waley Cohen thought that Storrs' "experience in the Arab East is so wide" that he might well be suitable as a "gentile go-

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1 / Medoff, Baksheesh Diplomacy, op. cit., pp.115-16.

2 / Ibid., pp.116-17.

3 / Ibid., p.116.

4 / First Norman Report, op. cit., p.2.

5 / Marvin Lowenthal, Henrietta Szold, Life and Letters, (New York, 1942), pp.186-87.

6 / Great Britain and Palestine, (The Second Lucien Woolf Memorial Lecture - delivered by Herbert Samuel), (London, 1935), pp.27-28.

7 / Medoff, Baksheesh Diplomacy, op. cit., p.116.

8 / Ibid., p.118.

9 / Ibid., pp.116-17.

between." (1) However, by the 2 December, when Norman lunched with Sir Robert Waley Cohen at his Highgate home in London, the latter's pronounced assessment of Storrs had become very negative. Norman now wrote in his diary: "He doubted if [Storrs] would be a good man to conduct enquiries and negotiations in Iraq, because, as Sir Robert put it, 'there is a tin can tied to his tail' which bangs around wherever he goes - in other words he is too-well known and is known to be a political man, and wherever he went political motives would be suspected at once by the Arabs. Sir Robert advised not trying to hire Storrs to go to Iraq." (2)

When and who changed Waley Cohen's views on Storrs is not known.

The bottom line is that the meeting with Storrs had to be delayed due to Storrs' illness (3) and it is not known whether a face to face meeting ever took place. However, Norman wrote in his Report, "Sir Ronald [Storrs] unfortunately was committed by contract to deliver lectures throughout Europe and America during the ensuing fifteen months, and therefore was not available." (4) From his expression "unfortunately", Norman had obviously weighed up the pros and cons of using Storrs and come to the conclusion that it would have been an asset.

On the evening of 2 December, Norman dined with Jabotinsky at London's Hungaria restaurant. In his diary, Norman wrote that Jabotinsky "had already read the copy of my Iraq paper... He approved of the whole idea very much. He said that he felt, however, that the most difficult part would be to induce Arabs to leave Palestine." He suggested that instead of Storrs, Norman should use John Henry Patterson, a non-Jew, who had commanded the Jewish Legion during World War I and had afterwards become a Revisionist Zionist. (5) Medoff comments that there is no indication that Norman contacted Patterson, presumably because Patterson's Zionist connections would have aroused the Iraqis' suspicions. (6)

In England, Norman also met with a number of leading personalities in Anglo-Jewry. These included, Sir Osmond d'Avigdor-Goldsmid, Chairman of the British section of the Jewish Agency; Neville Laski, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews; Leonard Stein, the legal advisor to the Jewish Agency and author of books on Zionist history; Harry Sacher, a manager of Marks and Spencers and a British Zionist leader; and James A. de Rothschild, a member of the British Parliament. The contents of their discussions are not recorded. However, Norman writes that "all of them offered me all the help of which they were capable, and it was only with that help that I was able to accomplish anything at all." (7)

Norman also discussed his plans with Major C. S. Jarvis, who for eleven years until 1936 had been Governor of the Province of Sinai in Egypt. However, since he had been an outspoken friend of the Jews, he disqualified himself from the task of making contact with the Iraqis. (8)

After considering various other men for the task he finally chose H. T. Montague Bell. Walter Cohen had put Norman in touch with him. (9) Bell was a man in his early sixties who knew the Orient thoroughly. For a number of years he had been editor-in-chief of the British weekly periodical "Great Britain and the East" and prior to that, had been foreign correspondent for "The Times" of London. Bell had also spent three years in Baghdad and was on friendly terms with the King and other leading personalities in that country. As far as character was concerned, Bell impressed Norman as being a quiet, studious and highly respectable person. (10)

Bell had had a number of contacts with Zionism during the 1930s and from three private

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1 / Ibid., p.114.

2 / Ibid., p.117.

3 / Ibid.

4 / First Norman Report, op. cit., p.2.

5 / Schechtman, *Fighter & Prophet, The Vladimir Jabotinsky Story*, English ed., op cit., p.325; Medoff, *Baksheesh Diplomacy*, op. cit., p.117.

6 / Medoff, *Baksheesh Diplomacy*, op. cit., p.118.

7 / First Norman Report, op. cit., pp.1-2.

8 / Ibid., p.2

9 / Ibid.

10 / Ibid.

conversations between Montague Bell and high placed Zionist officials which took place in 1933 and 1934, one can get a good idea of Bell's views at that period towards the Zionist cause.

From the reports of these meetings we can see that Bell was very sceptical of the possibility of a large Jewish immigration into Palestine at that period. <sup>(1)</sup> He was also very critical of the lack of co-operation between the Jewish Agency in Palestine and the British Mandatory authorities. <sup>(2)</sup>

In the course of these conversations, Bell also put forward his views regarding the Arabs. We see from the report of the first of these conversations, that Bell said that "we paid much too much attention to what the Arabs said. In his opinion one Jew was worth ten Arabs, and if only we were more conscious of this superiority we should be less sensitive to things that seemed to us to be aimed against us. For example, as regards the Legislative Council, he was convinced that the Jews, even if in a minority on it, could easily outwit the Arabs". <sup>(3)</sup> In another of these conversations, Bell said that "it would be a mistake if the Palestine Government showed any weakness by the way of concessions in the face of disorder or threats of disorder by the Arabs." <sup>(4)</sup>

Included in the reports of these meetings, is an assessment by the Zionists present of Bell's attitudes towards Zionism. At the first of these meetings, the assessment was, "On the whole, Mr. Bell's attitude was one of expressing good-will towards the Jews and their work in Palestine, while disagreeing with their tactics." <sup>(5)</sup> The report of the last meeting states that "before leaving, Mr. Bell reiterated that despite his criticism, he was a friend of the Zionist movement." The response of the Zionists present was that "though he obviously had an understanding and appreciation of much of our point of view, any favourable reference to Zionism in the Near East [the paper Bell edited] was unusual, and we suggested that he should write an article in which expression was given to the sympathy felt by him towards the Zionist cause". Bell, however, could not accept this idea, since it might be used to reinforce the campaign being conducted against the British Government and the result would "merely militate against his own aim of a Palestine which was a single united whole." <sup>(6)</sup>

As far as his Arab transfer plans were concerned, Norman considered that Bell was entirely in sympathy with his (Norman's) objectives. This however, appears not to have been the case just a year and a half earlier. We can see this from a letter written by Bell to "The Times" in March 1936, where he supported the setting up of a legislative council in Palestine. He saw in such a council the "only practical means of bringing Arabs and Jews together" and that in the council chamber they would be "forced to discover that there is something to be said for one another's points of view, and that it is up to both to work in harmony for the well-being of their country." <sup>(7)</sup> A few days later, a letter was published from Norman Bentwich disagreeing with Bell's views. <sup>(8)</sup> Bell was obviously so firm in his opinion, since he wrote a further letter defending it. <sup>(9)</sup> It is of course possible that Bell's views on the subject radically changed in the following year and a half, or he was convinced by the weight of Norman's arguments. However, it seems more likely (as will be seen later) that Bell was attracted to the job by the remuneration he was to receive from Norman. As we shall see, having taken the work, Bell carried it out most conscientiously.

From the Iraqi Ambassador in London, Bell learned that Iraq had invested large sums, because the money had been accumulated in a special fund from oil royalties and these improvements had been suggested by a number of experts, and it "seemed wise to construct the works while the money was available, even though the benefits might not be realized for

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<sup>1</sup> / Note of a Conversation with Mr. Walter Cohen and Mr. Montague Bell, London, 30 January 1933, (CZA Z4/5190 viii); Note of Interview with Mr. Montague Bell, London, 30 October 1933, (CZA Z4/5190 viii).

<sup>2</sup> / Note of Conversation with Mr. Montague Bell, 11 June 1934, pp.1-2, (CZA Z4/5190 viii).

<sup>3</sup> / Conversation with Cohen and Bell, 30 January 1933, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> / Interview with Bell, 30 October 1933, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> / Conversation with Cohen and Bell, 30 January 1933, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> / Conversation with Bell, 11 June 1934, p.4, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> / H. T. Montague Bell, Letters to the Editor, The Times, (London), 18 March 1936, p.10.

<sup>8</sup> / Norman Bentwich, Letters to the Editor, The Times, (London), 20 March 1936, p.10.

<sup>9</sup> / H. T. Montague Bell, Letters to the Editor, The Times, (London), 24 March 1936, p.12

some time." The Ambassador was of the opinion that Iraq might be "interested in a scheme that would put the land to use in the near future." (1)

Norman employed Bell to go to Iraq in order to find out whether they were interested in a large Arab immigration. At all events he was to implant in the minds of the leading personages in Iraq the idea that the country's greatest need was an increased population of Arabs skilled in agriculture and that the "only place where any quantity of such people might be found who might have an economic reason of their own for going to Iraq is Palestine." (2)

One of Norman's meetings in London had been with Norman Bentwich (a former attorney general for the Palestine Mandate administration) and the latter introduced Edward Norman to Ronald Vernon. In the latter part of December 1937, Norman met with Vernon and explained his plan to him. Vernon liked the plan very much and, after the meeting Vernon wrote to Sir John Shuckburgh, who was Deputy Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, requesting an appointment for Norman, stating that he should "be taken seriously" and "should be listened to sympathetically." (3)

A meeting with Shuckburgh and Harold Downie, who was Assistant Secretary at the Colonial Office, took place at the that office on 19 January, in which Norman spoke for two hours giving a clear exposition of his plan. From a note written by Downie to Shuckburgh after the meeting, we can see that these British civil servants were hostile to the Norman plan right from the outset. In his note, Downie pronounced Norman's approach to be "entirely pragmatic and he achieves simplification by deliberate exclusion of the facts and factors which are really at the root of the trouble", and it is based on the assumption that the problem was economic and not political. He said that both the Peel Commission and the British Government took the contrary view and this "knocks the bottom out of any scheme" such as Norman's. He therefore felt that it was a "waste of time to comment on the details of Mr. Norman's proposal and that it was "difficult to take this proposal seriously." In order that Norman should not get the idea that the British Government endorsed his plan, Downie suggested the text of a letter to be sent to Norman. (4)

Shuckburgh wrote to Norman on the lines suggested by Downie, also pointing out that "the Government could not lend any support to a scheme which they must regard as proceeding upon an incorrect assumption, and consequently as impracticable." He added that should Norman pursue his scheme, his activities would "have not received either the encouragement or even the acquiescence of the British Government or any of its officials." (5) Norman replied that he agreed that his view of the fundamental difficulty in Palestine differed from that of the British Government. Were this not the case, he "would consider naturally that the matter was being dealt with effectively" and would not have involved himself with the issue of Palestine. He, nevertheless, wanted the British Government to be aware of the fact that he was trying to implement his plan. (6)

A week after his meeting with Shuckburgh, Norman asked him for the address of Sir Francis Humphrys. Prior to Iraq's independence, Humphrys had been the High Commissioner, and following independence in 1932 served as its British Ambassador for a period of three years. Shuckburgh gave Humphrys's address to Norman, (7) but then wrote to Humphrys warning him to expect Norman to be in contact with him. (8) Humphrys replied to Shuckburgh, that since returning from Iraq he had "been pestered with requests from the Press, societies and busybodies of all kinds who are interested in the Middle East, to write articles, attend meetings or give my views on the subject of Palestine." Norman was not as yet

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1 / First Norman Report, op. cit., pp.2-3.

2 / Ibid., p.3.

3 / Vernon to Shuckburgh, op. cit.

4 / Downie to Shuckburgh, 26 January 1938, (PRO CO 733/333 75156/35).

5 / Shuckburgh to Norman, 5 February 1938, (PRO FO 371/21885 E775).

6 / Norman to Shuckburgh, 7 February 1938, (PRO FO 371/21885 E1021).

7 / Shuckburgh to Norman, 26 January 1938, (PRO CO 733/333 75156/35).

8 / Shuckburgh to Humphrys, 26 January 1938, (PRO CO 733/333 75156/35).

amongst these people and Humphrys hoped "that the call will not materialise." <sup>(1)</sup> It is not recorded whether Norman ever contacted Humphrys.

A meeting did however take place with John Martin, who had been Secretary to the Peel Commission. No report of the contents of this meeting has been traced, although we do know that correspondence regarding Norman's memorandum passed through Martin's hands. <sup>(2)</sup>

The memorandum which Norman left with Shuckburgh was also studied by senior civil servants at the Foreign Office. Their comments were likewise far from favourable and even contained an element of sarcasm. "Mr. Norman's ingenious ideas might have received even wider elaboration at his hands if he had thought of transferring the Palestine Arabs to Iraq and the Assyrians to take their lands in Palestine." Another of them wrote that although it had evidently been worked out with considerable care it was "completely off the rails", adding that before the First World War, something might have been done on those lines, but to expect that in the late 1930s the Palestine Arabs would move to Iraq and leave Palestine to the Jews showed "a complete failure to appreciate the real nature of the problem." He felt that the Arabs "would rather starve than assist the settlement of the Jews." <sup>(3)</sup>

In passing one might mention that this type of comment was not limited to Norman's plans. As we shall see later, when at the same period, a Greek Jew named Edwin Saltiel put forward in a letter to the British Foreign Secretary, a proposal for a Jewish-Arab transfer of population, a senior civil servant at the Foreign Office made uncomplimentary comments about his plan.

This attitude was again illustrated on 4 February, when Bell who had known Shuckburgh for a number of years, telephoned him and suggested paying him a farewell visit before he left for Iraq. In a note written that day to Sir Cosmo Parkinson, who was Permanent Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, Shuckburgh wrote that he did not encourage this suggestion of Bell's. "I am sure that we had better keep clear of the whole business." <sup>(4)</sup>

Bell arrived in Baghdad on 15 February and remained in Iraq until 28 March. He gave as his reason for being in Iraq, the preparation of articles for the British and American press on the progress of the country since its complete independence in 1932. This made it reasonable for him to ask searching questions of the leading people in the country. During his first two weeks in Iraq, he travelled widely discussing the country's affairs with leading British officials who were still there. He also had an audience with the King, and the Prime Minister gave a dinner for him, which was attended by the entire cabinet. He succeeded in renewing all his old friendships and made many new friends. Norman considered that Bell "carried out his mission in an exceptionally capable manner." <sup>(5)</sup>

On his return to England, Bell submitted a complete report of his trip to Norman. Bell was of the opinion that if the matter were to be "properly handled", the scheme would be practicable, and that he had aroused considerable interest in it on the part of the leading Iraqis. Norman continued to employ Bell to write a number of articles about Iraq. These articles were to mention the need for increased population in Iraq to assist in its development. On publication, copies would be sent to the leading Iraqis. <sup>(6)</sup> In order to divert attention from the fact that Bell was particularly interested in Iraq, Norman reported that Bell's first article which appeared in "The Times" dealt with the problems of Kuwait. <sup>(7)</sup> However, a search of the indices of "The Times", has not yielded such an article.

In October of that year, on the sixth anniversary of Iraq's emergence as an independent state, an article of Bell's appeared in "The Times" of London. Bell wrote about the development of Iraq, emphasising the importance of the irrigation projects and stressing the

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<sup>1</sup> / Humphrys to Shuckburgh, 27 January 1938, (PRO CO 733/333 75156/35).

<sup>2</sup> / Martin to Baggallay, 7 February 1938, (PRO FO 371/21855 E775).

<sup>3</sup> / Foreign Office London, Departmental Comments, February 1938, (PRO FO 371/21885 E1021).

<sup>4</sup> / Shuckburgh to Parkinson, 4 February 1938, (PRO CO 733/333 75156/35).

<sup>5</sup> / First Norman Report, op. cit., p.3.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., pp.3-4.

<sup>7</sup> / Edward Norman, Second Report on Iraq Scheme, 15 May 1939, p.2, (CZA A246/29/1).

under-population of the country. "Iraq's paramount requirement is an increase of population. With from 3,500,000 to 4,000,000 inhabitants she cannot do justice to the potentialities of the land - the lack of labour is a constant problem - and she is at a disadvantage against Turkey and Iran with their far larger populations. The settlement of the nomads on the land may add to her wealth, but any substantial increase of population in the near future must come from outside." Although stressing Iraq's need for immigration "from outside", Bell did not mention Palestine directly. <sup>(1)</sup> This article of Bell's was referred to a few weeks later by Sir Walter Smiles in a debate in the British Parliament following the publication of the Woodhead Report. Smiles then commented, "Here is a chance for the King of Iraq to be helpful to the Arabs in Palestine by offering them work and land in Iraq. It would be much better than inciting them to rebellion." <sup>(2)</sup>

In August 1938, Bell had a meeting with Downie, during which he gave a report of his visit to Iraq. Bell reported that whilst the Iraqi ministers had said that the transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq "was out of the question at the present time, they were inclined to nibble at the idea as a future possibility." Downie noted that "Mr. Bell was careful not to mention Mr. Norman and his scheme, and tried to convey the impression that his investigations were purely personal." Bell's behaviour was in fact very understandable in view of the fact that Downie had been hostile to Norman's plan.

Bell emphasised the advantages of such a transfer, but fully appreciated that the scheme depended on the willingness of the Arabs of Palestine to transfer to Iraq, which at the time was most unlikely. He understood that the British Government could not associate itself with any such scheme. Downie then referred to the difference that the transferred Arabs would experience between the temperate climate of Palestine and the excessively hot climate of the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates. Towards the conclusion of the meeting, Bell asked Downie "what attitude the British Government would adopt to any proposal for encouraging the voluntary immigration of Palestinian Arabs to Iraq." Downie said he was not in a position to give an official answer, but in his own personal opinion, he saw no prospect of the Arabs being prepared to leave Palestine for Iraq, or the Iraqi government encouraging such a development. However, if at a future date, these Arabs would wish to migrate and the Iraqi Government be willing to receive them, he could "not see any reason why the Government of Palestine should stand in the way." <sup>(3)</sup>

In October, two of the most prominent Iraqi political leaders were in London for conferences with British officials in connection with the severe disturbances which then prevailed in Palestine. Bell undertook to utilise this opportunity to strengthen his already friendly relationship with them. <sup>(4)</sup>

At about the same time, Norman who was in the United States, had a meeting with Cyrus Adler, the President of the American Jewish Committee. Three months later, Adler reported on the contents of this meeting to Ben-Gurion. According to Ben-Gurion's diary, Adler had offered to assist Norman with his plan and to this end, had given him a number of sources. Norman was of the opinion, that if one were to give an Arab from fifty to two hundred and fifty acres of land in Iraq in exchange for his two to three acres in Palestine, he would go. This was the method which had been used by the American government to encourage the early settlers to migrate westwards. Adler had concluded that Norman was caught up with his transfer idea, and that he had already found supporters and that he would also find additional supporters. He observed that Sieff(?) was also dealing with this matter. <sup>(5)</sup>

### **Meetings with American Government Officials**

About 17 October 1938, Norman received a long letter from Montague Bell (letter untraced) who was in London. He had obviously asked Bell's advice on the wisdom of trying

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<sup>1</sup> / H. T. Montague Bell, "Iraq Today - Townsmen and Tribesmen", The Times, (London), 27 October 1938, p.13.

<sup>2</sup> / Parliamentary Debates, Commons, vol.341, 24 November 1938, (London, 1938), col.2057.

<sup>3</sup> / Note of interview with Mr. Montague Bell, 13 August 1938, (PRO FO 371/21885 E4957).

<sup>4</sup> / Second Norman Report, op. cit., p.3,

<sup>5</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 6 January 1939, (BGA) ; Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol.6, op. cit.,p.80.

to obtain a meeting with the British Colonial Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, in order to discuss his transfer plan. Bell answered that in his opinion "it would be very dangerous" to discuss this plan with MacDonald at that period. He felt that "it would be rejected" and thus "it might be very difficult to bring it up again". In addition it might leak out to the Arabs who would then completely denounce it. <sup>(1)</sup>

Following a meeting held between Norman and James McDonald on 15 October (namely, a few days before receiving Bell's letter), whose purpose was to discuss this plan, James McDonald prepared a long letter to send to the Colonial Secretary. He sent this letter to Norman to read and then mail. However after he received Bell's letter, Norman decided that it would be prudent not to send it. <sup>(2)</sup>

In this letter James McDonald wrote that he was "suggesting a way in which colonization of Palestinian Arabs in Iraq might contribute towards a solution of the problem of the Jewish homeland." We should remember that this was during the period of the Arab rebellion in Palestine and the Woodhead Commission was about to publish its report regarding the future of Palestine.

He pointed out that for the last year he had known of a scheme developed by Norman which is "far-reaching and may strike at the roots of the Palestine problem." In his letter, James McDonald went on to summarise the main points of the Norman plan, and he pointed out that increasing Iraq's population would strengthen that country and this would be of "strategic importance to Britain". He also explained that Norman's research had shown that the Iraqis would only permit the immigration of Arabs and that the only Arabs with reason to come were those from Palestine. Furthermore, it was also psychologically important that the Iraqis should themselves put forward this idea.

James McDonald concluded his letter by asking the Colonial Secretary "to consider this plan, which approaches the present impasse in a new and practical way. Mr. Norman is prepared to come to England at once to see you if you would like to discuss his plan with him. If you would wish him to come, you can cable me to that effect and he will leave on the first fast ship to sail." <sup>(3)</sup>

Norman had also asked advice from other people regarding this question. One of these was Justice Louis Brandeis, who thought that he should go to such a meeting. <sup>(4)</sup> At that period Brandeis had met with President Roosevelt and the latter had informed him of his views on "the need of keeping it [Palestine] whole and making it Jewish" and "he was tremendously interested ... on learning of the plentitude of land for Arabs in Arab countries." <sup>(5)</sup> It is not clear whether Brandeis had met with Roosevelt before the former wrote to Norman, and if so, whether Brandeis told Norman of this meeting with the President.

Norman also planned to discuss this matter with presidential advisor Ben Cohen and hoped that he would "be able to work it out so that I can go to London with an introduction from our Government in a month or so, when perhaps the British will have established better control in Palestine." <sup>(6)</sup>

Norman seems to have had a further meeting with Brandeis about 14 November 1938 and he was again put in touch with Ben Cohen, who arranged a meeting for him with the Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles. <sup>(7)</sup> This meeting with Welles took place on 16 November. The minutes of this meeting state that "Mr. Norman had formulated a plan regarding Palestine and that Mr. Welles had agreed to give him letters to our Embassy in London with a view to his meeting Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, British Colonial Secretary." <sup>(8)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Norman to James McDonald, 19 October 1938, (Columbia University, file: Norman, James McDonald papers).

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> / James McDonald to Malcolm MacDonald, 18 October 1938, (Columbia University, file: Norman, James McDonald papers).

<sup>4</sup> / Norman to James McDonald, 19 October 1938, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> / Frankfurter to Wise, 18 October 1938, (American Jewish Historical Society, P-134 Stephen S. Wise papers, box 106, folder "Brandeis Louis D.").

<sup>6</sup> / Norman to James McDonald, 19 October 1938, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> / Memorandum of Conversation, 16 November 1938, op. cit., pp.2-3.

<sup>8</sup> / Ibid., p.1.



Welles also suggested that Norman meet with Paul Alling, who was the Assistant Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs at the State Department, and this he did straight away. The meeting lasted for an hour and a half and during it he described his plan in some detail and also the steps which he had so far taken to carry it out. Norman told Alling that Bell was returning to Iraq on that very day and would spend the winter there, and that he himself "was expecting to visit Iraq after a week or two in London soon after the first [month - January] of the year." Norman asked whether it would be possible for Alling's office to give him letters for the U.S. representatives in Baghdad, Jerusalem and Beirut, to which Alling answered in the affirmative. When asked that if the Norman plan would prove successful, it would completely solve the Jewish refugee problem, Norman "replied with a categorical negative." At the end of the meeting, Norman requested that "for the time being at least" his plan should not be made known to the American representatives in the Near East. <sup>(1)</sup>

On 14 December 1938, Norman wrote a letter to Sumner Welles reminding him of the contents of their meeting of 16 November and of Welles' agreement to furnish him with "letters of introduction to the United States diplomatic and consular representatives in certain foreign countries." Norman pointed out that in all probability he would be leaving for England on 26 December and asked that Welles should prepare letters of introduction to the United States Ambassadors in Great Britain and France, the United States Ministers in Iraq and Egypt, and the United States Consuls General in Palestine and Syria. He also requested that these letters "not only would introduce me to them but would ask them to facilitate my meeting various personages in the respective countries to which they are accredited." <sup>(2)</sup>

On the following day, Welles wrote to Murray, asking him to draft out these letters of introduction and "send such word with regard to him to the diplomatic representatives mentioned in his letter, as may in your judgment be wise and appropriate." <sup>(3)</sup>

Two days later, Welles wrote to Norman enclosing letters of introduction to all these people adding, "I am sure that these representatives will be glad to assist you in meeting the persons with whom you may wish to discuss your plan." <sup>(4)</sup>

In these letters of introduction which Welles wrote to the various persons, he included "Mr. Norman may wish to meet certain personages, and I should be appreciative of any facilities in this respect which you may be able to extend to him." <sup>(5)</sup>

Welles sent copies of these letters of introduction to the various persons together with an accompanying letter "as well as a copy of a letter which I have received from him explaining the general nature of his plans during a proposed visit to Europe and the Near East." In the accompanying letter, Welles wrote that "Mr. Norman has come to me well recommended." He also pointed out that Norman might not find it necessary to call on him for assistance. <sup>(6)</sup>

It would seem that Norman only got as far as England and there is no record of his even meeting the United States Ambassador in Britain. The reason for his remaining in England was "to explore the practical possibilities" of his working together with Pinhas Rutenberg. <sup>(7)</sup>

On 22 December 1938, Norman wrote a long letter to Solomon Goldman, enclosing a copy of the latest version of his memorandum together with his progress report, stressing the need for secrecy. Norman informed Goldman that he had agreed that Rose Jacobs, the President of Hadassah, discuss the matter with Weizmann and Shertok and "she has sent word that the idea and plan appeal to them very much, and that they are pleased that the matter is being handled privately, inasmuch as they feel that if a public body were to become involved, and

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.1-3.

<sup>2</sup> / Norman to Welles, 14 December 1938, (NA 867N.01/1360).

<sup>3</sup> / Welles to Murray, 15 December 1938, (NA 867N.01/1360).

<sup>4</sup> / Welles to Norman, 17 December 1938, (NA 867N.01/1360).

<sup>5</sup> / Welles to various Ambassadors and Consuls, (Letters of Introduction), 17 December 1938, (NA 867N.01/1360).

<sup>6</sup> / Welles to various Ambassadors and Consuls, (Accompanying Letters), 17 December 1938, (NA 867N.01/1360).

<sup>7</sup> / Edward Norman, Second Report on Iraq Scheme, 15 May 1939, p.5. (CZA A246/29/1).

if that fact ever were to become public, there might be very serious repercussions" (1). A question that could be asked is when Rose Jacobs said "that the idea and plan appeal to them", does the word "them" include Rose Jacobs?

We do know that towards the end of 1940, Rose Jacobs was still involved with Norman's plan. It was at that period that Hadassah set up a (non-publicised!) "Committee for the Study of Arab-Jewish Relations" chaired by Rose Jacobs. She sent a member of this Committee, Dr. Max Schloessinger, some material which included material on the Norman plan. (Schloessinger was a scholar of Islamic Jewish literature, who held that the only hope for peace with the Arabs was to abrogate the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine.)

In his letter of reply to Rose Jacobs, dated 26 December 1940, Schloessinger wrote that it was "useless to discuss" Norman's plan then, "but even in 1937 I doubt whether the Arabs could be persuaded to sell out at home and start out anew." He then pointed out that "the argument in paragraph 21 (2) [of Norman's document], that the Jews in Palestine will crowd out the Arabs is positively dangerous, if used as a means of inducing the Arabs to emigrate as Norman seems to propose." (2) His comments seem to be in conformity with his views on Jewish statehood in Palestine!

The fact that Schloessinger refers to "paragraph 21 (2)" proves that he received the second version of Norman's plan. However, the archival file of this Committee (3) includes the third version of this plan and one might thus ask why he was not sent this latest version. It is possible that the reason is that the second version is more detailed, or, that he in fact received both these versions but he commented only on the second version.

In March 1941, Dov Joseph, the legal adviser to the Political Department of the Jewish Agency told the Hadassah National Board that the Arabs of Palestine would have to look elsewhere to give "satisfaction to their desire to live an Arab national life." He recommended Iraq as such a place. (4)

A month later Weizmann told the Hadassah National Board: "If you can organize the exodus of 150,000 Arabs [from Palestine], you already have room for [an additional] over 600,000 Jews ... It is not a problem which one would shirk at the end of this war. The change in old values will take place, and I believe we don't have to be too timid about it. We ought to take courage in the midst of this great upheaval." (5) The minutes of this meeting show that the Hadassah National Board members refrained from criticising this transfer plan of Weizmann's. (6)

At the end of April 1942, Waldo Heinrichs, a Professor of Contemporary Civilisation at Middlebury College in Vermont, lectured to the Hadassah Committee on Arab-Jewish Relations. In the course of this lecture he proposed that "a purchase of land could be made in the adjacent territories around Palestine, Syria, Trans Jordan, even Sinai, and therefore be irrigated and prepared for occupation ... and then that land turned over to Arabs living in Palestine on the condition that they occupy it and it become fertile." (7) The transcript of the discussion which followed this lecture shows that that none of the Hadassah leaders present questioned or criticised this proposal. This was not a question of politeness, since we can see from other lectures that these Hadassah members would readily criticise proposals which they did not agree with! (8)

Now to return to Norman's letter to Goldman of December 1938. He also included in it a resume of his work up to date and of his future plans on this project, and informed him that he wanted and needed help "and lots of it" but it had to be coordinated with his line of action,

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<sup>1</sup> / Norman to Goldman, 22 December 1938, (American Jewish Archives, Solomon Goldman Papers, Box 2).

<sup>2</sup> / Dr. Max Schloessinger's Comments on Arab-Jewish Relations. Material Submitted to him by Mrs. Jacobs, 26 December 1940, paragraph 9, (CZA F31/1).

<sup>3</sup> / Third version, op.cit., File on Hadassah Committee for the Study of Arab-Jewish Relations, (CZA F31/3).

<sup>4</sup> / Rafael Medoff, *Zionism and the Arabs*, (Westport, 1997), p.104.

<sup>5</sup> / *Ibid.*, pp.104-05.

<sup>6</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.105.

<sup>7</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.103.

<sup>8</sup> / *Ibid.*, pp.103-04.

otherwise it could be counter-productive. <sup>(1)</sup>

Norman had left a copy of the third version of his plan with the State Department. They read it carefully and wrote a number of handwritten notes in the margin. All these notes seem to be written in the same handwriting. Whether they are the work of just one official, or they are the collated comments of a number of officials is not known.

When Norman wrote about the economic incentives to encourage transfer, a marginal note asks: "Are there instances of such voluntary migrations of entire communities?" <sup>(2)</sup>

On Norman's proposal that Arab immigration to Palestine "be stopped completely and for ever", there is a marginal note: "But the natural increase in the Arab population could not be stopped thus by fiat. Between 1922 and 1937 the increase of the Jewish population by immigration was less than the natural increase of the Arab population." <sup>(3)</sup>

Norman's conclusion that whereas Jews would be loyal to British Empire interests, Arabs would not, is questioned in a marginal note: "? ? This is extremely questionable." <sup>(4)</sup> [One could comment here that the events of the Second World War, namely, when many of the Arab leaders sided with the Nazis, whilst the Jews of Palestine actively fought with the Allies, shows that Norman's prediction on this matter was correct.]

At the end of the section dealing with "Procedure" there is a note: "But in the meantime there would probably take place a progressive increase in the Arab population remaining in Palestine which has shown a remarkably interesting tendency to more than match the increase in the Jewish population by immigration." <sup>(5)</sup>

### **Bell's Second Visit to Iraq**

In November 1938, Bell returned to Iraq for an extended stay. He took one of his daughters with him and they rented a comfortable house in Baghdad. Thus, he was able to say that his return to Iraq "was in part for a rest and in part to continue his studies of Central Asian affairs in connection with his profession as a journalist and political student." <sup>(6)</sup>

Norman pointed out to Bell that this time he had to "accomplish something very definite." He informed him that the method he had to use to accomplish his task was "to gather material for the writing of a real book on present day Iraq." This book would then have to be written and published without much delay. In order to gather information for this book, Bell was instructed to "ask a great many questions of the leading people in Iraq, which questions must lead to very profound and lengthy discussions" regarding the most serious problems which faced the statesmen of that country. During these conversations, he must "attempt to more and more arouse these statesmen to feeling that the need for an increase in their population is a pressing one, from three main angles." These angles were: a return for the money which had been invested in the country's improvements; enabling the country's communications and other amenities to develop; and to put the country in a position where nobody could claim that its valuable resources were being neglected. In addition there was also the defence angle. Norman wrote that Bell should try and arouse the Iraqi statesmen "to a realization of the need of their country to increase its population at once with a considerable immigration of Arabs who will not form an unassimilated minority element, and who are farmers and who will immediately constitute productive factors." Bell had to aim to have these statesmen say that they were "fully convinced of the need for an increased population" and that they "desire financial help in obtaining it." It was also important that these Iraqi statesmen should be convinced that this was their own idea. If Bell were successful in influencing the Iraqi statesmen, he should tell them of his many acquaintances in London, who would be interested in discussing the financial aspects of such a population increase. <sup>(7)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Norman to Goldman, 22 December 1938, op.cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Edward Norman, "An Approach to the Arab Question in Palestine", third version, January 1938, marginal note to section iv para.11, (NA 867N.01/1618).

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., marginal note to section v para.8(b).

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., marginal note to section v para.10(d).

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., marginal note at end of section v

<sup>6</sup> / Second Norman Report, op. cit., p.3.

<sup>7</sup> / Norman to Bell, 4 November 1938, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

In reply to this letter, Bell wrote that he was in full agreement with Norman's "plan of campaign" except that he was against publishing a book in a hurry. "I should not care to be identified with a hurried, and therefore possibly slapdash work." Norman had obviously mentioned to Bell that he might himself come out to Iraq. In reply Bell wrote that an advantage of his coming out would be that they could "go over the ground more fully". Until such time, however, Bell urged "the advisability of minimum discussion with others." <sup>(1)</sup>

In a further letter written by Bell at the beginning of December, he told Norman that at his meeting with the Prime Minister of Iraq, he had raised "the question of Iraq's need of population and the advantage to be derived from attracting settlers from Palestine." The Prime Minister answered "that Iraq would welcome any Palestinians coming of their own accord."

This letter was written just a couple of months before the "London Conference", which was called by the British Government to discuss the future of Palestine. Representatives of the Jewish Agency, as well as Arabs from Palestine and from the various Arab States had been invited. However, Bell felt that in view of the then present frame of mind of the Arabs, he could not expect them to put forward "a proposal for the migration of the Palestinian Arabs" at the conference. In fact, the Prime Minister had informed him that "for the moment the Arabs were thinking more of the Jews leaving Palestine than of themselves doing so." <sup>(2)</sup>

In mid-December, Norman wrote to Bell asking him if he felt that by the end of the winter he could induce the leading Iraqis to favour increased immigration. He added that it would not be necessary at that time for them to make the matter public. On the contrary, it would be preferable that it should be on a "very quiet basis." However, Norman thought that it was "necessary to have as an objective the open desire for serious negotiations concerning immigration by the end of this winter." <sup>(3)</sup>

On 22 December Bell wrote that he had nothing to report since the members of the Iraqi Government felt that anything connected with Palestine must wait until after the London Conference. He added that meanwhile he was "proceeding with the collection of material with a view to preparing, if possible, a comprehensive programme of what Iraq should do, while steadily propogating the idea of supplementing the population of the country from Palestine." Bell also mentioned that a member of the opposition had suggested to him that his advocacy of immigration to Iraq might be a "device for easing the British Government's problem by eliminating Arabs from Palestine." Bell therefore led the talk back to the advantages to Iraq which would derive from such a scheme. <sup>(4)</sup> [It seems from his letter that this took place during Bell's previous visit to Iraq.]

In a further letter written by Bell a week later, he was optimistic that the Conference would grant some concession to the Arabs. As a result, it would then be psychologically possible to "put up a more or less concrete scheme" to the Iraqis by which they could "help their Palestine brothers and themselves". Bell felt sure that the Iraqi leaders would then be prepared to "welcome any constructive proposal that would enable Iraq to pose as a factor in Arab affairs. Psychology plays an important part in these things." <sup>(5)</sup>

In his reply dated 7 January 1939, Norman referred to Bell's remarks about the psychology and yearning for prestige of the Iraqis. He suggested that the forthcoming Conference might offer the right opportunity for Iraq to attract world esteem and attention and thus leadership among the Arab states "by openly offering to provide land and the necessary financing to as many Palestinian Arabs as would like to come to settle in Iraq." Norman recommended that the Iraqis proclaim that their country, now free, was on the road to reconstructing its former glory. Therefore, the peasants of Palestine "would be far better off economically than they can hope to be in Palestine, that rocky little spot that is being overrun by these foolish Jews." Norman pointed out that this last part was "meant to suggest the

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<sup>1</sup> / Bell to Norman, 23 November 1938, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>2</sup> / Bell to Norman, 4 December 1938, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>3</sup> / Norman to Bell, 15 December 1938, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>4</sup> / Bell to Norman, 22 December 1938, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>5</sup> / Bell to Norman, 29 December 1938, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

propaganda that would surround the project."

A revolution had taken place in Iraq towards the end of December 1938, and as a result, Nuri had become the new Prime Minister. Norman then asked Bell whether he thought there would be any good in his trying to convey this sort of idea to Nuri? "Could you do it without revealing that this was the real reason why you are in Iraq? Do you think there would be any chance of Nuri following such a line?" <sup>(1)</sup>

In a letter written by Bell on 16 January, (it is not clear whether he had already received Norman's letter of 7 January), he suggested that Lord Glenconner should privately suggest to Nuri that Iraq take advantage of the Conference to "hold out to the Palestinian Arabs the ultimate best solution for the Arab States that the Palestinians should migrate to Iraq." He added that only Nuri would know whether that was the right moment, and this would depend on the Palestinian frame of mind in London, which in turn would depend on "how the Conference pans out." Bell however felt that Nuri would "not take kindly to a scheme of which the outstanding feature can be represented as favouring the Jews." He pointed out that the emphasis would have to be on the "ultimate security and development of Iraq, and the possibility of using the existing situation in Palestine to 'make' the Jews pay for this development." Bell disagreed with Norman's comments regarding reconstructing Iraq's former glories, saying that he did not think that they would "cut much ice." He considered that a more "cogent motive" would be that thus Iraq would be enabled to stand up more confidently to Turkey and Iran. <sup>(2)</sup>

Towards the end of February, Bell wrote a letter from Iraq to Sir Lancelot Oliphant, who was Director General of the British Foreign Office. The main import of this letter, was the necessity for unifying the Arabs into a single state, comprising Iraq, Syria and Transjordan. At the end of his letter, as if thrown in as an afterthought, Bell mentioned the population transfer idea. He pointed out "at the risk of having you doubt my sanity" that he did "not despair of a time when Iraq will have attracted the great bulk of Palestine Arabs to Iraq, the cost of transfer and settlement being defrayed by the Jews." He concluded that such an "idea must come from the Iraqis themselves and not from an Englishman." <sup>(3)</sup> In reply Oliphant wrote that he agreed with what Bell had said in his letter, but the obstacles in the way of their realisation in the near future were formidable. <sup>(4)</sup> We should mention that one of the Foreign Office civil servants asked to comment on Bell's letter to Oliphant, realised what Bell was up to and pointed out that Bell was "not a disinterested observer" but was "only there to forward Mr. Norman's rather fantastic schemes, and to inculcate his ideas into the minds of the Iraqi authorities." <sup>(5)</sup>

### **Unsolicited and Unwanted Help**

Norman realised that the success of his plan depended on absolute discretion and no publicity. He was therefore apprehensive that at the forthcoming London Conference, the British Government or the Jewish Agency might put forward "the idea of transferring a large part of the Arab population of Palestine to Iraq," whereas it was crucial that the idea be put forward by Iraqi sources. He was also concerned that the desire of Pinhas Rutenberg, the managing director of the Palestine Electric Company, to engage in large scale economic cooperation with the Arabs in Palestine might make the realisation of Norman's scheme impossible. <sup>(6)</sup>

Norman discussed this situation with Justice Louis Brandeis, and Dr. Maurice Karpf, an American non-Zionist member of the Executive of the Jewish Agency who had privately endorsed Norman's plans for transfer. <sup>(7)</sup>, and also with Sir Robert Waley Cohen by

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<sup>1</sup> / Norman to Bell, 7 January 1939, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>2</sup> / Bell to Norman, 16 January 1939, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>3</sup> / Bell to Oliphant, 21 February 1939, (PRO FO 371/23245 E1517).

<sup>4</sup> / Oliphant to Bell, 14 March 1939, (PRO FO 371/23245 E1517).

<sup>5</sup> / Foreign Office London, Departmental Comment, 12 March 1939, (PRO FO 371/23245 E1517).

<sup>6</sup> / Second Norman Report, op. cit., pp.3-4.

<sup>7</sup> / Medoff, thesis, p.186.

telephone. Norman decided to go to London to discuss this matter with the various parties in order to ensure that "they understood the undesirability of the scheme's being put forward openly by any but Iraqi sources." He arrived in London on the last day of 1938 and remained until 25 March 1939. <sup>(1)</sup>

In preparation for this London Conference, the London Executive of the Jewish Agency felt it desirable that the "panel" should include a non-Zionist representative from America. In answer to a suggestion that Norman be such a representative, the U.S. Zionist leader and founder member of "Hadassah", Rose Jacobs answered "that in view of Mr. Norman's special interests, it might perhaps not be advisable for him to be identified with the panel." <sup>(2)</sup> She did not explain what she meant by "special interests", but it could well be his transfer plan. However, when the same proposal had been put forward a week earlier,<sup>(3)</sup> Rose Jacobs who was present at the meeting, <sup>(4)</sup> is not reported to have made any such objection. From an entry in Ben-Gurion's diary, we can see that Norman himself wanted to be a member of the "panel". <sup>(5)</sup>

In London, Norman met with a number of members of the Jewish Agency, with whom he had not previously discussed his Iraqi scheme, since they had all been in Palestine when Norman visited England in 1937 and 1938. These included Weizmann, Ben-Gurion and Shertok.

Norman observed that "they were very much interested in the scheme" and had thought of bringing up something like that at the conference. Once they were aware, however, of the desirability of allowing the Iraqis themselves, to propose it, they agreed to practice reticence. <sup>(6)</sup>

The meeting with Ben-Gurion took place on 3 February. At this meeting, Norman gave a resume of his plan, activities and expectations, adding that he himself was planning to go to Iraq "as an ordinary tourist, so that he would be able to answer if asked 'Have you been to Iraq?' 'Yes, I was there'." Ben-Gurion told Norman that the importance of transfer was in essence political; it would solve the difficulty of Arabs living within Palestine. It was not to make room for Jewish settlement, since at that time there was sufficient room. He summed up Norman as a sensible person, loyal to his ideas, and prepared to devote his own money and time without wanting any honour or recognition. <sup>(7)</sup> As we have already seen, at the same period Ben-Gurion was also considering the transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq, although there is no evidence that he disclosed this fact to Norman during their meeting.

Shertok reports on meeting Norman at London's Paddington station on 4 February. <sup>(8)</sup> Whether it was at this meeting they discussed the transfer plan or whether any other contact took place is not recorded. What we do know is, that on that day at Paddington station, a number of Zionist leaders went to meet a number of representatives of American Jewry who were just arriving in London. It is therefore not very likely that any detailed discussion on transfer took place that day between Shertok and Norman.

A few weeks earlier, Norman had written to Bell saying that his chief worry at that moment was Weizmann and some of the other Zionist leaders. Weizmann "is aware of our work, thinks well of it, and is tempted to speak of it openly because without it he apparently has nothing constructive to offer." Norman continued that he was taking it upon himself to impress on Weizmann and his associates the importance of continuing these indirect negotiations, and of making no open mention of the transfer of Arabs from Palestine as this "would be the one thing most calculated to strengthen those who for their own reasons want Palestine to remain largely Arab." He concluded that this would be the hardest task he had

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<sup>1</sup> / Second Norman Report, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 30 January 1939, p.2, (CZA S25/1020a).

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., 23 January 1939, p.2, (CZA S25/1020a).

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.1.

<sup>5</sup> / Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 3 February 1939, op. cit. ; Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol.6, op. cit., p.127.

<sup>6</sup> / Second Norman Report, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>7</sup> / Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 3 February 1939, op. cit. ; Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol.6., op. cit., pp.126-27.

<sup>8</sup> / Shertok, Handwritten Diary entry 4 February 1939, op. cit.; Diaries of Sharett, vol.iv, op. cit., p.16.

ever had to face!<sup>(1)</sup>

A letter written by Weizmann to the American Zionist leader, Solomon Goldman, after the London Conference shows that Weizmann did not maintain complete silence on the matter. He stated that during the period of the conference he mentioned this transfer idea to the Iraqis adding that "I did not wish to go deeply into this matter, because I knew that Mr. Edward Norman was dealing with it very discreetly and I believe very ably." Weizmann continued that it would be useful for Goldman to talk with Norman and Lewis Ruskin "on the subject of emigration to Iraq in connection with the President's remarks." <sup>(2)</sup> [Roosevelt, who was at the time President of the United States had just put forward his own proposal for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq.] Goldman answered that should Norman's Iraq plan materialise "we should be in a position to get large sums of money in the United States." <sup>(3)</sup>

A specific mention of Norman and his plan did appear in the American Jewish press towards the end of 1943. It was in an article which appeared in the journal "Hamigdal", which was the organ of the United States wing of the Religious Zionist movement. The article was written by Meir Grossman, the leader of the Jewish State Party, a splinter group of the Revisionists. In it, Grossman wrote: "... the support lent by Dr. Weizmann to a very similar project expounded by Edward Norman of New York City in 1937-38.... Mr. Norman's scheme, I understand, had the ear of the State Department and of some leading Iraqi statesmen." <sup>(4)</sup> There is nothing in Norman's extant correspondence which indicates that he was aware of this article. <sup>(5)</sup>

As we shall see, one person who at the end of the 1930s refused requests not to publicly propose transfer of Arabs to Iraq was the American Zionist leader, Emanuel Neumann.

In June of that year, Weizmann wrote to Norman that he had heard of the possibility of Nuri's being replaced as the Prime Minister of Iraq. Nuri had been considered the most intransigent among the non-Palestinian Arabs at the London Conference; hence Weizmann hoped that should he be replaced, there might be an opportunity of pressing Norman's plan further. To this end, Weizmann offered Norman his services. <sup>(6)</sup>

### **Norman and Rutenberg**

In the middle of January 1939, whilst in London, Norman met with Pinhas Rutenberg, who had just arrived from Palestine. Norman writes that "he found at once that his [Rutenberg's] ideas and mine had much in common, although he had not considered a transfer of peasants from Palestine to Iraq". Rutenberg felt that one could "win the confidence and friendship of an influential section of the Arabs... by the launching of fundamental economic enterprises, mostly of a public utility nature, in which the leading Arabs could take an interest and share in the direction." He hoped that by this method "the Arabs of both Palestine and the neighboring countries would develop a sense of partnership with the Jews". Rutenberg also thought that "if greater economic vitality could be stimulated in the various Arab countries, they might attract some of the attention of the Arabs that is now focused on Palestine, and there might even develop a migration of Arab labor from Palestine to those [neighbouring Arab] countries." Following a number of conversations, Norman and Rutenberg agreed that it would be desirable for them to cooperate with one another. <sup>(7)</sup>

The launching of any enterprise requires funding. As a result of preliminary inquiries, Norman concluded that the first person to approach for funding the corporation which he and Rutenberg desired to establish, was Albert D. Lasker. Lasker was an advertising pioneer and a communal leader in the U.S.A., who was active in Jewish affairs. He had also founded and endowed the Lasker Foundation for medical research. Solomon Goldman had already started

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<sup>1</sup> / Norman to Bell, 7 January 1939, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Weizmann to Goldman, 28 April 1939, (WA) ; Weizmann, Letters, vol.xix, (Jerusalem, 1979), no.52, p.55.

<sup>3</sup> / Goldman to Weizmann, 20 June 1939, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>4</sup> / Meir Grossman, "A Fair Solution of the Arab-Jewish Conflict", Hamigdal, (New York), December 1943, p.7

<sup>5</sup> / Medoff, Baksheesh Diplomacy, op. cit., p.176 fn.8.

<sup>6</sup> / Weizmann to Norman, 12 June 1939, (WA) ; Weizmann, Letters, vol.xix, op. cit., no.93, p.113.

<sup>7</sup> / Norman, Second Report, op. cit.

to direct Lasker's attention towards Palestine, and felt that the next steps should be a further conversation between Goldman and Lasker to be followed by a conversation between Lasker and Judge Louis Brandeis. Norman "thought this was very wise, and agreed to wait [for a consultation with Lasker] until these conversations had taken place." On 19 May 1939, Norman wrote to Goldman saying that he thought that this reasoning was very wise. However, since Goldman was now very busy, Norman suggested that he himself meet with Brandeis and following that with Lasker. Norman added that he did not like this alternative since he realised that Goldman's influence on Lasker "would be highly valuable." Since the matter was urgent, Norman asked Goldman for his opinion. <sup>(1)</sup>

Three days later, Goldman sent a telegram to Norman informing him that he had just spoken to Lasker, who said that he would not be coming to the east [coast?] before 11 June. Goldman promised to meet with him on his next visit to Chicago on 3 June, and suggested that Norman meet with Brandeis without waiting for Lasker to return. <sup>(2)</sup> Whether or not, such meetings took place or if they did, whether anything resulted from them, is not known.

Brandeis during the previous year or so had been assisting both Norman and President Roosevelt to advance their transfer proposals. In August 1939, Brandeis had a conference with Robert Szold. According to the minutes of this conference, Brandeis said that "the Rutenberg and Norman plans (Iraq) of cooperation with Arabs are good." <sup>(3)</sup> Later the minutes state: "11. L.D.B. [Brandeis] suggested that Norman give priority to and concentrate on the Iraq plan. He did not know where the funds for the Rutenberg ten million pound corporation could be raised." (499) It is not clear from these minutes whether Norman and Rutenberg were still cooperating. The fact that on both occasions in these minutes their names appear in close proximity might indicate that they were still cooperating.

One could ask, why Norman wanted to cooperate with Rutenberg. Did he think that it would advance his transfer plan, or did he think that by cooperation, Rutenberg would not do anything which could possibly (even unintentionally) wreck the transfer plan?

### Attempts at a Pilot Plan

The Latifiyah estate in Iraq was the site of a British company which had a concession for cotton growing on a large area of land near Baghdad. Due to the lack of labour, the company was able to cultivate only half its land.

During his first visit to Iraq, Bell suggested to the Manager that he "import some 500 or 600 Arab families from Palestine to work the rest of his land." This idea considerably appealed to the Manager and on his return to London, Bell followed this up with an approach to the officials of the company. <sup>(4)</sup> There had been some trouble between the company and the Iraqi Government, and just before Bell left England, an official of the company informed him that he would like to discuss his plan as soon as the negotiations with the Iraqi Government, which had already extended for two years, were concluded.

On his return to Iraq, Bell met by chance the Manager of this company, who informed him that the company had accepted the Iraqi Government's terms for being allowed to continue operations. Bell observed that between the time of his two visits to Iraq, the Manager had "abandoned his intransigent attitude". Bell wrote that after the four days' Moslem festival, he intended travelling to Latifiyah to learn details of the agreement with the Iraqi Government and to discuss the bearing on Norman's transfer plan. <sup>(5)</sup>

Both Bell and Norman realised the importance of applying their plan successfully to the company at Latifiyah. Although this involved the transfer of only a small number (about five hundred) of Arab families from Palestine to Iraq, it would be an important precedent and

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<sup>1</sup> / Norman to Goldman, 19 May 1939, (American Jewish Archives, Solomon Goldman Papers, Box 14, Folder 11 - Manuscript collection no. 203).

<sup>2</sup> / Telegram, Goldman to Norman, 22 May 1939, (American Jewish Archives, Solomon Goldman Papers, Box 14, Folder 11 - Manuscript collection no. 203).

<sup>3</sup> / Memorandum, Conferences with L.D.B. [Louis Brandeis] and R.S. [Robert Szold], 6 August 1939, at Chatham, p.2, (American Jewish Archives, Solomon Goldman Papers).

<sup>4</sup> / First Norman Report, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>5</sup> / Bell to Norman, 23 November 1938, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).



would show that the plan was feasible. Norman felt sure that "it would hasten the development of our larger scheme." <sup>(1)</sup> On 22 December, Bell told Norman that he had not been able to arrange a visit to the Latifiyah estate until the first week in January, because of the Manager's domestic affairs and the impassability of the roads due to the exceptionally heavy rains. He added that he would do all he could to influence the Latifiyah people at the Iraqi end. <sup>(2)</sup> At the beginning of January, Bell had his meeting with the Manager. At that period, the Latifiyah estate was so much in the debt of the Iraqi government, that Sir Maurice Peterson, who was at that time in Baghdad "had considerable difficulty in persuading the latter [Iraqi government] not to liquidate the whole concern." <sup>(3)</sup> However, the company did succeed in coming to terms with the Iraqi Government agreeing to pay off its debt in full to the Government, receiving in exchange tenure on additional land. In order to recoup the cost of this agreement, the company would have to pursue an active programme of development. Hence the Manager was "all the keener" to get additional labour "and would be glad enough to get Palestinians," as the local Iraqi labour force had been most unreliable. In preparation for Bell's talks in London, the Manager was to map out a programme of the development he would like to see on the Estate. Thus Bell would have something to put before the Directors as an inducement to provide a better labour force through immigration.

Bell then asked whether it would be possible, after the unrest in Palestine had subsided, to locate one or more villages there whose lands the Jews would like to purchase, and very carefully start pro-Iraqi propaganda among them. A Latifiyah agent would then offer "a complete transfer of from 20 to 50 families as a start." Bell felt that with a definite proposition such as this, it would be possible to obtain the agreement of the Iraqi Government for the facilities for transfer of large numbers of Arabs. One problem raised by the Manager was the difficulty of dismissing an unsatisfactory employee who was a transferee from Palestine. Bell concluded that this point needed more consideration than he had been able to give it. <sup>(4)</sup>

After a series of discussions, Bell was able to induce a majority of the directors of the company, including the chairman, to favour the idea of transferring Arabs from Palestine to Iraq to work on the company's land. Bell was hopeful that the company would proceed to carry out this plan after the completion of certain financial arrangements. <sup>(5)</sup>

No evidence of further developments in this direction have been found. However, a marginal note to a Foreign Office minute regarding the company's financial state in mid-1942, says "there is no reason to think that its position has improved." <sup>(6)</sup>

### **Meeting with the British Colonial Secretary**

Norman met with the Colonial Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, in the presence of Sir John Shuckburgh on 20 January 1939 and discoursed on his projects at considerable length. This meeting had been arranged by Sir Neill Malcolm, former League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from Germany, who was interested in Norman's plans. <sup>(7)</sup> At this meeting, Norman appeared very confident "that all was going swimmingly and that there would be no difficulty in getting the Iraq authorities to make the necessary move (i.e. to ask officially for Arab immigrants from Palestine) when the right moment arrived." He fully recognised and the Colonial Secretary was explicit "that there could be no question whatever of an official move by the British Government or any of its representatives." <sup>(8)</sup>

Norman said that MacDonald and Shuckburgh fully understood the undesirability of any official British mention of a transfer plan and had assured him that it would not be

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<sup>1</sup> / Norman to Bell, 15 December 1938, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Bell to Norman, 22 December 1938, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> / Foreign Office Minute, Sir Maurice Peterson, 4 May 1942, (PRO FO 371/31337 E2820/49/65).

<sup>4</sup> / Bell to Norman, 12 January 1939, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>5</sup> / Second Norman Report, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>6</sup> / Foreign Office Minute, 4 May 1942, op. cit., Marginal Comment dated 8 May (1942).

<sup>7</sup> / Second Norman Report, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>8</sup> / Minutes of meeting held on 20 January 1939 between Colonial Secretary and Norman, 23 January 1939, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

brought up by any British officials. This pledge was observed.

Norman added that he had no way of knowing whether the British Government "had ever thought of using it". <sup>(1)</sup> This statement of Norman's is difficult to understand, since he was surely aware of the fact that already in early 1938, the British Government was opposed to transfer of Arabs. They would thus obviously not propose it, (unless of course they had wanted to be Machiavellian and propose transfer, in order that the Iraqis would then reject it since it was not their own proposal!). In fact, commenting on Norman's plan at that time, a senior civil servant at the Foreign Office, wrote, "In itself Mr. Norman's scheme is fantastically impracticable and his veiled attempts to 'jump' the Iraqi authorities into unconscious concurrence are not only foolish but reprehensible." <sup>(2)</sup>

In mid-March 1939, Norman had a meeting with Iraqi and Egyptian delegates to the London Conference. At this meeting, these delegates who included Tewfik es Suwaidy, the Foreign Minister of Iraq, tried to impress on Norman that Iraq needed an immediate increase in population and that "the Palestinian Arab peasants constituted the most desirable immigrants, and that the Jews had an opportunity to decrease the Arab element in Palestine by cooperating in financing the migration." Norman realised that they were "quoting the ideas that had been implanted in their minds without their perceiving it by Mr. Bell, whose reports to me had mentioned these men as among those with whom he had had frequent and long talks." <sup>(3)</sup> Tewfik wanted to obtain Norman's co-operation "in securing funds to defray the expenses" of the transfer of these peasants. He was also interested in settling the peasants from Palestine in these newly reclaimed areas of Iraq, since without such settlers, the dam would be virtually useless. Its outlay would therefore not be earned back and it would thus not be possible to repay the loan for its construction to the London bankers. <sup>(4)</sup>

Before parting, they invited Norman to come to Baghdad "shortly after their return in April to see the country and discuss ways and means of cooperation." Norman explained that for personal reasons he could not come until the autumn, and they agreed that he would thus come in October or November. <sup>(5)</sup>

However, due to the outbreak of the Second World War on 1 September 1939, Norman decided not to go to Iraq as planned. He wrote to Tewfik informing him of his decision. In his reply Tewfik wrote that he was pleased that Norman was still interested in the scheme but agreed that "the time was inopportune for the discussion of a long-range development plan" and he suggested that he defer his visit "until a more propitious occasion." <sup>(6)</sup>

#### **Further Contacts with American Officials**

Norman had further lengthy conversations on 6 and 7 June 1939, with Wallace Murray who was Chief at the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, and his assistant Paul Alling, in which he updated them on the developments regarding his transfer plan. He related his chance meeting with Tewfik es Suwaidy, the Foreign Minister of Iraq and Azzam Bey, the Egyptian Minister in Baghdad, and how the former had invited him to visit Iraq in order to further his transfer plan. Norman concluded that from these conversations with these Arab ministers, he "felt that a very good start has been made, or at least the door has been opened, and he was reasonably hopeful that his conversations in Baghdad would open the way for an experimental settlement." So long as there was "any hope of success", Norman told Murray and Alling, he would be prepared to devote his time to this project. <sup>(7)</sup>

On the evening of 12 June, Murray briefly discussed Norman's plan with Adolf Berle, the Assistant Secretary of State. The next day he sent him a short letter enclosing Norman's various memoranda and felt that Berle "would be interested in meeting with and talking to

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<sup>1</sup> / Second Norman Report, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>2</sup> / Foreign Office London, Departmental Comment, 22 February 1939, (PRO FO 371/23245 E1340).

<sup>3</sup> / Second Norman Report, op. cit., pp.5-6.

<sup>4</sup> / Edward Norman, Supplementary Memorandum on the Iraq Scheme, October 1942, p.1, (CZA A246/29/1).

<sup>5</sup> / Second Norman Report, op. cit., p.6.

<sup>6</sup> / Supplementary Memorandum, op. cit., pp.1-2.

<sup>7</sup> / Memorandum of Conversation, Proposal for Settlement of the Palestine Problem, 7 June 1939, (NA 867N.01/1618).

Mr. Norman in the event he comes to Washington again". Murray concluded, "Personally I was very much impressed with Mr. Norman's reasonable views on the Palestine problem and his sincere desire to effect a settlement which would be fair to both the Jews and the Arabs." (1)

In an undated handwritten note, Berle wrote, "I should be interested to see Mr. Norman when he comes again." (2)

On 15 June, Murray sent the memoranda of Norman to Sumner Welles, and in an accompanying short note wrote, "I may say that we in this Division [of Near Eastern Affairs] have been very much impressed with Mr. Norman personally and with the skillful and intelligent manner in which he is proceeding with his plans." (3)

One can immediately see the completely different attitudes and appreciations to the Norman plan by the U.S. government on the one hand and the British government on the other. In all fairness, however, we should add that at that period, Britain was the Mandatory power over Palestine and was thus responsible for law and order and hence for any negative and violent reactions by the Arabs to such a transfer proposal. On the other hand, the U.S. government could encourage the proposals by Norman without having to deal with the consequences!

A few weeks later, the U.S. Secretary of State sent copies of the minutes of the meeting between Murray, Alling and Norman of 6 and 7 June and also Norman's confidential report of 15 May 1939, to the American Consular Officer in charge in Jerusalem, (4) the American Minister Resident and Consul General in Baghdad, (5), and the American Ambassador in London. (6)

In July 1939, Norman wrote to Sumner Welles, that he had heard from a "fairly reliable source" of a plan by Roosevelt in which he had proposed that the American government, the British and French governments, and World Jewry would each provide about one hundred million dollars for a "mass transference of the Palestine Arabs to Iraq, thus at one stroke solving the Palestine problem and providing the possibility of finding new homes in Palestine for a large number of European Jews."

Norman then continued, "Of course, I believe that in essence the idea is splendid." He however saw that in the light of his own experience on this subject which extended over a number of years he was "convinced that were the President actually to undertake to carry out the idea in the manner described above, not only would he be completely unsuccessful, but what is more serious, he would forever destroy the possibility of the scheme being carried out by other methods."

Norman explained the importance of the Iraqis thinking that such an idea was their own. Thus the President should wait until the Iraqis proposed the scheme and then Roosevelt's idea of financing it could be put forward "as a humanitarian responding to an appeal made by an Arab kingdom for the benefit of itself and all other Arabs and only incidentally involving any benefit to Jews."

He asked Welles to "ascertain how much truth there is to what I have been told, and if there is anything to it, if you could arrange somehow to have the President informed as to the destructive implications of his plan." In the event that Welles investigations would show that "there is any substance to this story", Norman said that he would request a meeting with the President. In any event, unless this information was found to be "absolutely false", Norman would want a meeting with Welles to discuss the matter. (7)

On receipt of Norman's letter, Welles immediately passed it on to Murray with an attached note, "If the President has any such ideas as those referred to in this letter, he has not spoken of them to me. Please let me have your opinion with regard to the matters taken up

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<sup>1</sup> / Murray to Berle, 13 June 1939, (NA 867N.01/1618).

<sup>2</sup> / Handwritten note from Berle, [n.d.], (NA 867N.01/1618).

<sup>3</sup> / Murray to Welles, 15 June 1939, (NA 867N.01/1618).

<sup>4</sup> / Secretary of State to American Consular Official in charge Jerusalem Palestine, 27 June 1939, (NA 867N.01/1618).

<sup>5</sup> / Secretary of State to American Minister Resident and Consul General Baghdad, 27 June 1939, (NA 867 N.01/1618).

<sup>6</sup> / Secretary of State to American Ambassador London, 27 June 1939, (NA 867N.01/1618).

<sup>7</sup> / Norman to Welles, 27 July 1939, (NA 867N.01/1649).

in the letter and your advice as to whether this inquiry deserves my taking it up personally with the President." (1)

In reply Murray wrote that he agreed with Norman's assessment that "any premature action or publicity regarding his plan to transfer Arabs from Palestine to Iraq might well jeopardize the success of the proposal", and that "if these Iraqi leaders suspected that the plan had been formulated in Jewish circles they would almost certainly reject it." Murray thus recommended that "if, therefore, there is any likelihood that the President has in mind any such plan as that referred to in Mr. Norman's letter it would seem desirable to acquaint him with the background of the situation." He personally felt that it was unlikely that Roosevelt did have such a plan and wondered whether the report Norman had received was "not a garbled version of the British proposal that the Governments interested in the refugee question should match, pound for pound, contributions made from private sources with a view to a large scale settlement of the refugee problem." (2)

Norman's "fairly reliable source" was obviously the Zionist leaders who had heard of this plan via Brandeis. As we know, from elsewhere in this book, the information that Norman had received was accurate. What is interesting however, was that top officials in Roosevelt's Department of State were not taken into his confidence in this matter. This might explain our inability to trace official letters on Roosevelt's transfer plan.

On 3 August, Welles replied to Norman that he had submitted the latter's inquiry to Roosevelt and on receiving a reply answered Norman: "while the plan to which you refer in your letter was given very careful study by him a year and a half ago, he does not feel that under present conditions it would seem to be practicable." Welles also offered to meet with Norman to discuss this question further. (3) It is not known whether such a meeting took place.

### **Contacts with Bell**

On 8 September 1939, Bell went to see Jesse John Paskin, the Principal Private Secretary to MacDonald, in order to offer his services for work in the Middle East, since the outbreak of war would interfere with the progress of Norman's scheme. (4) During this meeting, Bell told Paskin, that Norman had informed him after meeting with MacDonald in the previous January, that MacDonald "had expressed his sympathy with, and approval of this project."

Bell now wanted to know whether MacDonald "had really approved this project, or was merely 'being polite to an American' when he saw Mr. Norman." (5) In a handwritten internal note, MacDonald wrote that Shuckburgh's minute of 23 January "records what actually took place at my interview with Mr. Norman." (6) In a letter from Paskin to Bell, answering among other things, this query of Bell's, he wrote, "Mr. MacDonald asks me to make it clear that the position in regard to this project is that it is one which should not be regarded as having either the acquiescence or the encouragement of His Majesty's Government, and that the responsibility for it must rest solely with its sponsors." (7)

In March 1940, Weizmann wrote in a letter to Harry St John Philby that Norman was planning to visit the Middle East "before long". Philby, although a staunch Arab supporter and an anti-Zionist, had for pro-Arab reasons suggested a plan, a few months earlier, which incorporated the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. In his letter to Philby, Weizmann introduced Norman, adding that he had "been working for several years on a proposal for large-scale development in Irak, which I think has some merit and in which you may be interested." He stated that during his planned visit, Norman intended getting in touch with Philby. (8) A footnote in the published volume of "Weizmann's Letters", adds that there was

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1 / Welles to Murray, 28 July 1939, (NA 867N.01/1649).

2 / Murray to Welles, 31 July 1939, (NA 867N.01/1649).

3 / Welles to Norman, 3 August 1939, (NA 867N.01/1649).

4 / Bell to Malcolm McDonald, [n.d.] (September 1939), (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

5 / Paskin to Shuckburgh, 8 September 1939, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

6 / Note from Malcolm McDonald, 15 September 1939, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

7 / Paskin to Bell, 19 September 1939, (PRO FO 371/23245 E1340).

8 / Weizmann to Philby, 3 March 1940, (WA) ; Weizmann, Letters, vol.xix, op. cit., no.233, p.242.

no record of Norman's meeting with Philby. <sup>(1)</sup>

Three months later, Bell wrote that he had met with Sir Andrew McFadyean, (who was a member of the Council of the Royal Institute of International Affairs), whom he reported as one, "who agrees with the movement and believes that there must be a World Conference at the end of the war when the Arabs could bring forward the solution" at which Norman was working. <sup>(2)</sup> Norman had first discussed his plans with McFadyean towards the end of 1937. <sup>(3)</sup> McFadyean was obviously very impressed by the plan. This we know from an independent source, namely, the High Commissioner for Palestine, Sir Harold MacMichael, who wrote that Norman's plan had been "backed" by McFadyean, and that the latter had left a copy of the plan with him in February 1938, before taking up his position as High Commissioner. <sup>(4)</sup> McFadyean again came into the picture in November 1938, when Norman informed Bell that if he succeeded in convincing the Iraqi statesman of the need for increased population, and financial help was thus required to absorb the new immigrants, he would take the matter up with McFadyean and other financiers in the City of London. <sup>(5)</sup> There is however no record of a meeting between Norman and financiers in London, but since Bell did not succeed in advancing Norman's plan to the stage of implementation, this is in fact not surprising.

### **Request by Bell for Permit to Travel to Iraq**

Although the outbreak of the Second World War seemed to have put a virtual stop on Norman's efforts to advance his plan, this was certainly not the case with Bell. Maybe the reason was that his livelihood depended on the continuance of the plan. However, Bell came up against the problem of exit visas from Britain.

Prior to the outbreak of the war in September 1939, the British government, whilst not supporting Norman's transfer plan, had no power to stop Montague Bell from travelling to Iraq. After the commencement of the war, however, all this changed; Britain discouraged foreign travel, and no-one was allowed to leave the shores of Britain without an exit permit from the British authorities. As we shall see, senior civil servants at the Colonial Office and Foreign Office utilised this fact to deny Bell an exit permit and hence prevented any chance of implementing Norman's plan. We now know that during the Second World War, officers at the British Passport Control Office "were not regular foreign service employees, but members of MI6 [the British Secret Service] seconded to the Foreign office as a cover." <sup>(6)</sup>

In a book by Eliahu Ben-Horin which was published in 1943, the author observed, "A certain project dealing with the transfer of the Palestinian Arabs to Iraq was welcomed by the Iraqi Government. The outbreak of the war unfortunately interrupted the negotiations over the materialisation of such a project." <sup>(7)</sup>

Ben-Horin did not mention the author of the project by name, but it seems very likely that he is referring to Norman's plan, since unlike the instigators of several other contemporary proposals for the transfer of Arabs to Iraq, Norman did not just make a proposal, but entered into actual negotiations via Bell on its implementation.

The historian Rafael Medoff is also of the view that the transfer proposal brought by Ben-Horin in his book is the proposal by Norman. Furthermore Medoff holds that "it may be that Norman was the source of Ben-Horin's discussion of Arab transfer", <sup>(8)</sup> This, however, does not seem to be correct, since in a letter written by Ben-Horin to Hugh Gibson, who was co-author with former President Herbert Hoover of a book which contains a transfer proposal, he wrote that it was this book which inspired him to propose the transfer of Arabs from

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<sup>1</sup> / Weizmann, Letters, vol.xix, op. cit., no.233, p.242, fn

<sup>2</sup> / Comment on letter from Bell to Norman, 26 June 1940, (PRO CO 733/428 75906).

<sup>3</sup> / First Norman Report, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>4</sup> / MacMichael to Moyne, 1 September 1941, p.2, (PRO CO 733/444 75872/115).

<sup>5</sup> / Norman to Bell, 4 November 1938, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> / Abraham Edelheit, *The Yishuv in the Shadow of the Holocaust*, (Boulder, Colorado: 1996), p.314.

<sup>7</sup> / Ben-Horin Eliahu, *The Middle East: Crossroads of History*, (New York, 1943), p.224.

<sup>8</sup> / Rafael Medoff, "Herbert Hoover's Plan for Palestine. A Forgotten Episode in American Middle East Diplomacy", *American Jewish History*, (Waltham Massachusetts), vol.lxxix, no.4, 1990, pp.463-64.

Palestine to Iraq. <sup>(1)</sup>

We do know however that Ben-Horin was acquainted with Norman and his specialities in Zionism, when the former wrote his book, since he sent him a copy of the manuscript for him to offer an "opinion and criticism" and also to "introduce small changes". <sup>(2)</sup> In his reply, Norman did not even comment on the "certain project dealing with the transfer of Palestinian Arabs to Iraq ..." which was presumably brought in this manuscript. However it is very likely that he did not finish reading the entire manuscript <sup>(3)</sup> by the time Ben-Horin requested its return. <sup>(4)</sup>

When the book was published, Norman received an inscribed copy, and he then wrote to Ben-Horin commenting, "However in regard to Iraq, I know of no negotiations looking to the settlement of immigrants in the country that were carried out with the government or any officials. All I know of were very tentative and general conversations, that certainly could not be characterized as negotiations." <sup>(5)</sup>

However, whatever term one uses to describe the attempts for the advancement of Norman's transfer plan, it would be more correct to say that it was the "utilisation" of war-time regulations by the British officials, rather than the actual outbreak of war that interrupted these conversations/negotiations. It will thus be instructive to study in detail the progress of Bell's application for an exit permit.

In December 1939, which was only a few months after the outbreak of war, Bell called at the Passport Office and handed in applications for exit permits on behalf of himself and his daughter, for the purpose of travelling to Iraq. He explained that the real reason for his journey was "to study a scheme for the transference of Arab populations in the Middle East." He showed the official of the Passport Office, Richard Moore, a letter from the Colonial Office which disclaimed official support for his mission but added that this was by way of "official caution". Moore said that he would refer the matter to the appropriate government departments and let Bell know of their decision. He added that if indeed this project had even the unofficial support of the Colonial Office and the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, then the Passport Office could agree to grant both Bell and his daughter exit permits. <sup>(6)</sup>

Eight days later, the Passport Office passed on Bell's request to the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office to obtain their views on this request. <sup>(7)</sup> In answer, the official, C.B.A. Darling said that Bell's mission was "not supported either officially or unofficially by this Dept and his application should therefore receive no special preference." <sup>(8)</sup>

John Sloman Bennett who sat at Palestine desk at the Colonial Office, whilst concurring with Darling, added that Bell had evidently tried to persuade the Passport Office that the letter from the Colonial Office had been "worded cautiously so as to be non-committal on paper, but that he has been told privately that we support him." Bennett then commented that "such a suggestion is quite unwarranted." <sup>(9)</sup> In fact, a study of the Passport Office minute shows that Bell had never given such an explanation to Moore.

The reply of Darling was obviously an invitation for the Passport Office to refuse Bell's request. However, Sir John Shuckburgh was prepared to take a more favourable stand. In a note to Sir Cosmo Parkinson, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office, Shuckburgh felt that Norman had "been 'encouraged' at least to the extent of being given a personal interview" by the Colonial Secretary. He suggested that the Passport Office be told that whilst Bell's mission was not supported by the Colonial Office, they had known about it for

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<sup>1</sup> / Ben-Horin to Gibson, 11 June 1952, (HH PPI - Ben-Horin, Eliahu).

<sup>2</sup> / Ben-Horin to Norman, 7 March 1943, (CZA A300/64).

<sup>3</sup> / Norman to Ben-Horin, 6 April 1943, (CZA A300/64).

<sup>4</sup> / Ben-Horin to Norman, 30 March 1943, (CZA A300/64).

<sup>5</sup> / Norman to Ben-Horin, 3 October 1943, (CZA A300/37).

<sup>6</sup> / Minutes of Passport Office, Richard Moore, 20 December 1939, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>7</sup> / R. B. to Colonial Office, Middle East Department, 28 December 1939, (PRO CO 713/413 75906).

<sup>8</sup> / Note, Darling, 2 January 1940, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>9</sup> / Note, Bennett, 8 January 1940, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

some two years and had never gone out their way to discourage it. He concluded that the Colonial Office "should not be sorry to hear that it had been found possible to meet Mr. Bell's wishes." <sup>(1)</sup>

Parkinson was not so sympathetic, and in a marginal note questioned Shuckburgh's use of the word "encouraged" <sup>(2)</sup> and in a note to Downie wrote, "we must not let Mr. Bell get away with his misrepresentation" of the Colonial Office letter to him. <sup>(3)</sup>

On the basis of Shuckburgh's observation and Parkinson's amendment, Bennett drew up a draft answer for the Passport Office, which he took to the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office to discuss with Harry Maurice Eyres. Eyres, however, took a less favourable view of this reply, feeling that it "was a little too forthcoming". <sup>(4)</sup> Therefore, using a minute written by Herbert Lacy Baggallay, First Secretary at the Foreign Office,<sup>(5)</sup> and a letter he had received from Eyres, <sup>(6)</sup> Bennett proposed some amendments which were accepted by Downie at the Colonial Office. <sup>(7)</sup> He then notified the Passport Office of the agreed views of the Colonial and Foreign offices. <sup>(8)</sup>

About 25 January 1940, Bell received a reply. The actual reply has not been traced, although it is certainly a rejection of his application. Bell's reaction was a letter (untraced) written on 8 February to Sir Robert Vansittart. By some oversight, this letter remained unanswered until probably the beginning of April, and then once again Bell received a rejection of his application.

On receiving this reply, Bell went to see Baggallay. Bell could not understand why, if both the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office had no objections to his journey, the Passport Office had declined to give him an exit visa. Baggallay pointed out to Bell that this was not sufficient, and that a visa would be granted only where there was some "definite reason" for undertaking such a journey. Bell felt it was strange that whereas his own typist, as well as many other British subjects, had been given permission to go abroad on mere holidays, he was denied permission to travel on a matter which he considered to be of "national importance". Bell pointed out that he had been indisposed for several weeks and as a result it was too late for him "to entertain the idea of visiting Iraq until the heat of the summer was over", but he might want to travel in the coming autumn. Baggallay advised him not to make a further application until then, "By that time much might have happened." <sup>(9)</sup>

It seems that in fact Bell renewed his application only at the beginning of 1941. He obviously realised that if he made an application in the usual manner to the Passport Office, it would almost certainly be rejected. He therefore first went to the India Office to see Leopold Amery, who referred him to Shuckburgh. Amery was obviously sympathetic to the transfer solution, since he himself was to propose the same idea some months later in a letter which he was to write to the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill.

Bell met Shuckburgh on 27 January and pointed out that he stood no chance of obtaining a passage by aeroplane unless either the Colonial Office or the Foreign Office informed the Air Ministry that they regarded his going to Iraq to be "in the public interest". He added that the "neutral statement", made a year earlier, to the effect that the Colonial Office had no objection to his travelling to Iraq was insufficient, he needed a positive recommendation. Shuckburgh passed the buck, and said that it was the business of the Foreign Office. <sup>(10)</sup>

At the end of his conversation with Shuckburgh, Bell informed him "that his income depended upon his continuing his work for Mr. Norman and that for financial reasons it was essential to him that he should be enabled to proceed with the project." On this fact

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<sup>1</sup> / Shuckburgh to Parkinson, 9 January 1940, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., Marginal comment by Parkinson.

<sup>3</sup> / Parkinson to Downie, 10 January 1940, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>4</sup> / Note, Bennett, 12 January 1940, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes, Baggallay, 11 January 1940 (mistakenly dated 1939), (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>6</sup> / Eyres to Bennett, 11 January 1940, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>7</sup> / Downie to Shuckburgh, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>8</sup> / Note from Bennett, 16 January 1940, (PRO CO 733/413 75906).

<sup>9</sup> / Minute, Foreign Office, "Desire of Mr. Montague Bell to travel abroad", 10 April 1940, (PRO CO 733/428 75906).

<sup>10</sup> / Note from Shuckburgh, 28 January 1941, (PRO CO 733/428 75906).

Shuckburgh commented, "It is perhaps not too cynical to suggest that this is the primary motive underlying his persistency." <sup>(1)</sup>

. Bell could see that he stood little chance of being granted an exit permit for the purpose of pursuing his population transfer scheme. Therefore, on the following day, Bell wrote to Shuckburgh stating that there was a non-political reason for his wishing to go to Iraq which might simplify matters. "I am to be entrusted with negotiations for a project to use Iraqi dates for war purposes (chemical): it is a serious scheme, but it may not be necessary to say more than this at the moment." <sup>(2)</sup>

Shuckburgh passed Bell's request on to the Foreign Office. <sup>(3)</sup> A few days later, Eyres of the Foreign Office replied, "We have never been able to see that Mr. Bell's resettlement scheme was likely to be of any real interest or advantage to His Majesty's Government, and in the circumstances we see no particular reason why you should ask the Air Ministry to facilitate any part of his journey", adding, however, that they had "no objection in principle to Mr. Bell going out to Iraq."

Bell's mentioning an "Iraqi date project" seems to have made an impression on Eyres, since he wrote in the last paragraph of his letter, "If you can convince the departments concerned that his date project is of importance from the point of view of our war effort, they might be able to help him." <sup>(4)</sup> Others, however, were not so responsive, since a note was added in the margin of this letter (probably by Shuckburgh), "Why we? It is for Mr. B., if anybody." <sup>(5)</sup>

After receiving this reply from Eyres, Bennett of the Colonial Office, in a departmental note wrote, "If the Foreign Office, who are the Dept. responsible for Iraq, see no reason why we should ask the A/M [Air Ministry] to facilitate any part of his journey, I feel that we should definitely decline to help him. It seems to me that the time has come when we cannot avoid defining our attitude towards Mr. Bell & his plans." Significantly, Bennett ignored the Foreign Office comment of having "no objection in principle". He recommended that a polite but firm note should be written to Bell pointing out the Government's inability to intervene on his behalf. <sup>(6)</sup> In a concurring note, Downie added, "It is obvious to me that Mr. Bell's plan for encouraging this transfer of Palestinian Arabs to Iraq to make room for Jews, so far from being of service to H.M.G. [His Majesty's Government] is likely to embarrass us." <sup>(7)</sup>

On 5 February, Bell telephoned Shuckburgh asking him for a speedy reply to his application since he wanted to be back in England before the beginning of the hot Iraqi summer season. Shuckburgh pressed him for more details regarding his project "to use Iraqi dates for war purposes." Bell was rather reticent, but he did say that Weizmann was the moving spirit in this matter. On the following day Shuckburgh telephoned Weizmann, who told him that since Iraqi dates, which were cut off from their normal markets were probably running to waste, it might be possible to utilise them for chemical purposes in connection with the war effort. Weizmann had suggested to Bell that if he were going out to Iraq he might utilise this opportunity to look into this question as well. In reporting these two telephone conversations to Sir Cosmo Parkinson, Shuckburgh observed, "The Zionists are apparently favourably disposed towards Mr. Bell's political project: naturally, they would be." <sup>(8)</sup>

In his official reply to Bell's application, Shuckburgh wrote that neither the Colonial Office nor the Foreign Office thought that they were justified in complying with his request. They did not feel that the circumstances to be such, as would warrant their taking so definite a line, as declaring his journey to be "essential in the national interest." Shuckburgh added that there was nothing in the Iraqi dates idea which would affect their decision in this matter. Although he also pointed out in his letter that neither the Colonial nor Foreign

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<sup>1</sup> / Shuckburgh to Parkinson, 11 February 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

<sup>2</sup> / Bell to Shuckburgh, 28 January 1941, (PRO CO 733/428 75906).

<sup>3</sup> / Luke to Eyres, 30 January 1941, (PRO CO 733/428 75906).

<sup>4</sup> / Eyres to Luke, 3 February 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

<sup>5</sup> / Eyres to Luke, 3 February 1941, op. cit., Marginal Note (by Shuckburgh?).

<sup>6</sup> / Note from Bennett, 5 February 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

<sup>7</sup> / Note from Downie, 6 February 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

<sup>8</sup> / Shuckburgh to Parkinson, 6 February 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).



offices had "any desire to place obstacles" in his way <sup>(1)</sup>, this was obviously an example of "British politeness", since the internal departmental comments in fact showed the opposite to be the case.

Shuckburgh's letter angered Bell. He telephoned Shuckburgh and informed him that unless he changed his decision, he himself would go straight to the Prime Minister, to which Shuckburgh replied that he was "not very fond of listening to threats." Bell then repeated over and over again, that no question could be of "greater national interest than the settlement of the Palestine problem" and that the Government should therefore help him with his project which was the only one offering a chance of success. To this Shuckburgh replied that the Government did not share his views on the importance of his plans. <sup>(2)</sup>

Ten days later Bell wrote to the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, summarising the main aims of his plan. Bell then pointed out that both the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office refused to consider this plan as coming under the category of "national importance" in order to qualify for a priority passage to the Middle East. Bell added that this plan could only be put through "by a non-prominent non-official, who attracts no attention, but yet has the confidence of the Iraqis." He asked that the Prime Minister issue a ruling which would enable him to receive an exit permit. <sup>(3)</sup>

Sir John Martin, a private secretary to Churchill (and formerly secretary to the Peel Commission) sent copies of Bell's letter to both the Foreign Office <sup>(4)</sup> and the Colonial Office <sup>(5)</sup> for their comments.

He also sent an acknowledgment to Bell and said that he would receive a reply as soon as possible. <sup>(6)</sup> Bell did not however wait for such a reply and a few days later "called" Martin (presumably by telephone). He asked Martin what he thought of the scheme but the latter "refused to be drawn on that, but asked him [Bell] to explain it further." In his answer, Bell recognised that there were "practical difficulties of migration" but suggested that initially this transfer be done on a small scale and hoped that as a result, the Iraqi authorities would then implement a larger scheme.

Martin commented that Bell did "not ask for official approval of his proposal" but just "for assistance in getting to Iraq to make further progress with it." Bell said that without such approval he had little hope in arriving in Iraq "for many months." <sup>(7)</sup>

There is a note dated 28 February from Downing Street (the Prime Minister's Office) on this project. It was pointed out that there was no evidence that the Iraqi government would be willing to make such a request for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine "and it is indeed incredible that they would do so, since the whole purpose of the transfer would be to facilitate a new large Jewish immigration into Palestine. For the same reason it is certain that the Palestinian Arabs would reject any such proposal outright, and therefore that the transfer, if carried out at all, would have to be done forcibly." The note went on to point out that when the Peel Commission had proposed such a transfer it "caused great indignation among the Arabs of Palestine" and any suggestion that the British Government would revive such a plan "would have the most dangerous political repercussions." <sup>(8)</sup>

In answer to Martin's request, Bennett of the Colonial Office prepared a memorandum on the subject. Whilst outlining the plan, Bennett described it as "thoroughly amateurish and impractical." As in the note from Downing Street, Bennett pointed out that the principle of population transfer to solve the Palestine problem dated back to the Peel Commission and

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<sup>1</sup> / (Draft), Shuckburgh to Bell, February 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

<sup>2</sup> / Shuckburgh to Parkinson, 11 February 1941, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> / Bell to Prime Minister, 21 February 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

<sup>4</sup> / Martin to Mallet, 22 February 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/51).

<sup>5</sup> / Martin to Eastwood, 22 February 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/49); Martin to Eastwood, 22 February 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

<sup>6</sup> / Martin to Bell, 22 February 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/50).

<sup>7</sup> / Note by Martin, 26 February 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/52).

<sup>8</sup> / Note on Mr. Montague Bell's Project, Downing Street (Prime Minister's Office), 28 February 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/53); Note on Mr. Montague Bell's Project, Downing Street (Prime Minister's Office), 28 February 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

that it was this recommendation, more than any other single factor in the Peel Report "which excited the fear and hatred of the Arabs of Palestine and contributed largely to popular backing for the Arab rebellion." Bennett wrote that "the Montague Bell scheme involves the removal of about a million Arabs" and he considered that there was not the slightest reason to suppose that the Arabs would go willingly nor that the Iraqi Government would request their transfer. "The only purpose of such a move would be to turn the whole of Palestine over to the Jews." Bennett felt that the major fallacy of this scheme was that it was built on the assumption that "all the Arabs of Palestine want is 'living space'" when in fact their whole political conviction is that "Palestine is an Arab country." In conclusion, Bennett wrote that there was "no reason for us to relax our refusal to give Mr. Bell official backing." (1)

Following this memorandum, the Colonial Office (2) wrote to Martin, recommending that the Prime Minister not agree "that Mr. Bell's journey to Iraq is of a character to warrant, in these difficult time, a priority passage." In a similar vein, the Foreign Office wrote that they could "see no reason why Mr. Bell should receive any official support for his self-imposed mission to Iraq." (3)

Since by the 3 March, Bell had not heard from Martin, he sent him a letter. He wrote that "the sympathetic hearing you gave me last week prompts me to believe that I shall yet hear a favourable answer from Mr. Churchill, and that I shall be allowed to go out by air, as the season in Iraq is already well advanced." He added that since this was his "sole means of livelihood", he hoped they would be more inclined to grant his request. (4)

Martin, who was at that time out of town, had Bell's letter forwarded to him. He replied to Anthony Bevir (another of Churchill's private secretaries): "I expect that by now he has been given his answer - presumably 'no', though I am sorry because I liked him and think there may be something in his scheme." (5) We should remember that Martin had been secretary to the Peel Commission and thus his remark "that there may be something in his scheme" was made with an extensive background knowledge of the situation in Palestine.

Bevir sent Bell's letter together with a note to Churchill, in which he wrote that "the Foreign Office and Colonial Office did not recommend that facilities should be given." (6) Churchill annotated this note in his own handwriting with the comment "civil disengage" (7) - a euphemistic term for saying no politely.

On 8 March, Bevir thus wrote to Bell saying that the Prime Minister "regrets that he cannot see his way to making arrangements for you to have special facilities for a priority passage for a journey to Iraq to deal with the project which you have in mind." (8)

Bell did not give up and at the beginning of July again wrote (letter untraced) to Martin. In reply Martin wrote that the Prime Minister could not intervene in this matter and his letter was being forwarded to the Foreign Office. (9) At the same time Martin asked the Foreign Office to deal with Bell directly. (10)

Obviously, Bell's application for an exit visa was again rejected, although the letter to him has not been traced. We can see however, that the opposition to Norman's transfer plan by the British government officials had in fact intensified since the previous year.

### **Change in Attitude of American Government**

About the end of 1941, Dr. Immanuel Velikovsky was urging Norman to further his Iraq project. Velikovsky was born in Russia in 1895. His father was, with Herzl, one of the

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1 / Memorandum from Bennett, 26 February 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

2 / Eastwood to Martin, 28 February 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/54); (Draft), Eastwood to Martin, February 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

3 / Mallet to Martin, 4 March 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

4 / Bell to Martin, 3 March 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/55).

5 / Martin to Bevir, 5 March 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/57).

6 / Bevir to Prime Minister, 6 March 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/59).

7 / Ibid.

8 / Bevir to Bell, 8 March 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/60).

9 / Martin to Bell, 8 July 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/70).

10 / Martin to Mallet, 8 July 1941, (Churchill Archives CHAR 20/24/69).

founders of modern political Zionism. Immanuel Velikovsky was a prominent scientist who had put forward the idea that a great natural catastrophe had taken place at the period of the Exodus from Egypt. He then researched this idea and wrote his books "Ages in Chaos" and "Worlds in Collision". Between 1924 and 1939, he lived in Palestine, but after that he took up residence in the United States.

As a result of Velikovsky's urging, Norman invited a number of people to a meeting at his house. At this meeting, he said that he had reached the stage in this matter where he was no longer willing to proceed entirely on his own initiative, without any other Jewish leaders being willing to share with him in the responsibilities of thinking through the practical plan of action to be pursued. <sup>(1)</sup>

A few months later, at the beginning of March 1942, Norman wrote a memorandum entitled "The Jews and the Post-War World" <sup>(2)</sup> which he submitted a few weeks later during a meeting with the State Department. In his memorandum, Norman wrote that as a result of the "racial" policies of "totalitarian" governments, the Jews of Europe would find it very difficult to rehabilitate financially after the war. He felt it might be beneficial if a large proportion of the Jews were to leave Europe, but the difficulty would be in finding a country which would be ready to accept them. <sup>(3)</sup>

Norman stated that research on this question had shown that the only suitable area for Jewish settlement was Palestine. There were however at that time restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine as a result of the opposition of the Arab leaders.

Norman's solution to this was "if a large proportion of the Arabs of Palestine could be induced to leave the country and to settle elsewhere." He went on to summarise the work which he himself had done in this field since 1938. <sup>(4)</sup> He felt that the time was ripe "for taking the matter in hand again, perhaps with more boldness than previously." Norman considered that the government of Iraq was firmly in the hands of Nuri es Said, who was considering declaring war on the Axis. In contrast to this, the former Mufti was carrying on intensive propaganda among the Arabs, "particularly in Palestine, in favor of the Axis." Norman felt that the anti-Axis cause could be assisted "if the attention of the Palestinian Arabs could be diverted to a scheme whereby they might be able to better themselves, particularly as they are now known to be desirous to sell their land in Palestine at almost any price, in fear of an Axis invasion." <sup>(5)</sup>

Amongst his conclusions, Norman felt that "if the matter were to be taken in hand very soon, it might be possible at the very least to cause the government of Iraq publicly to offer the necessary land to Arab settlers from Palestine." <sup>(6)</sup>

On 25 March, Murray wrote to Norman, pointing out that since their recent meeting "information has come in to the effect that Nuri Pasha's position is far from stable" and that the State department "are not inclined to believe that the approach which you have in mind would be practicable in present circumstances." <sup>(7)</sup>

Norman obviously could not refute Murray's statement regarding the instability of Nuri Pasha's position. He therefore in his reply considerably modified the views he expressed in his memorandum and said that although none of the governments in the Middle East could be considered very stable, in order to accomplish something, one had to deal with such "governments as one finds them." Norman proposed giving very careful thought to this entire question and was of the opinion that "if the present government of Iraq, insecure though it may be at the present juncture, should make a public offer of land for settlement by Arab peasants from outside of Iraq, it would be very difficult, in the event of an anti-Axis victory in the war, for any subsequent government of Iraq to repudiate this offer." <sup>(8)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Norman to Weizmann, 13 May 1942, (CZA Z5/1391).

<sup>2</sup> / Edward Norman, "The Jews and the Post-War World", (NA 840.4016/15).

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., I - Europe, II - The World at Large.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., III - Palestine, IV - Iraq.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., V - The Present Situation.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., VI - Conclusion.

<sup>7</sup> . Murray to Norman, 25 March 1942, (NA 840.4016/15).

<sup>8</sup> / Norman to Murray, 27 March 1942, (NA 840.4016/16).

The fact that emerges from the Norman-Murray exchanges is that the positive attitude of the American Government towards the Norman plan in the late 1930s had completely evaporated by 1942. In contrast to this, President Roosevelt, continued in private to support transfer.

In a letter to Weizmann, written in May of that year, Norman said that he had gone to the State Department to suggest that he "be sent to Iraq in some capacity or other for the United States Government" so that he could pursue this scheme. They considered his suggestion but politely declined it! In his letter to Weizmann, he thus concluded: "Until now I have been unable to think of any other way of accomplishing anything, unless I can obtain a berth in the Army that would take me to Iraq. I am now feeling out my way in this direction."<sup>(1)</sup>

It was soon after that period, that Loy Henderson, the U.S. Minister to Iraq expressed the view that such a transfer of Arabs to Iraq would be "most helpful" This occurred at a meeting at the U.S. State Department between Henderson and Dr. Nahum Goldmann on 23 September 1943.

At this meeting, Henderson asked Goldmann for his frank opinion on "the eventual transfer of the Arabs to Iraq". According to the minutes of this meeting, written up by Goldmann, Goldmann replied that such transfer was not part of the Zionist demands and that there was enough room in Palestine for the Arabs. "However", he continued, "if the Arabs wanted, voluntarily, to be transferred, Zionists would be willing to help them in acquiring and developing land in Iraq".

To this Henderson replied that "he understood the Zionist attitude and thought it wise, but he thought if a transfer could be arranged, it would be most helpful".

Goldmann then answered "that the Zionists were a democratic people and would not ask any Arab to remain in Palestine if he preferred to go to Iraq, to which Mr. Henderson replied "This is very generous of you"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Furthermore, at about that period, a number of Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish published articles advocating Arab transfer.

One of these advocates was Oscar Janowsky, Associate Professor of History in the City College of New York, who, towards the end of 1943 published an article entitled "Zionism Today" in "The Menorah Journal". In this article, he pointed out that were Palestine not inhabited by non-Jews, a Jewish State would be the logical result of Jewish immigration. Thus he declared, "If considerable numbers of Arabs could be transferred from Palestine to neighboring countries, a Jewish State would likewise be feasible." He felt that the "lure of good land plus other incentives might then induce large numbers of Palestine Arabs to move eastward." In listing the points for "The Essentials of a Sound Zionist Position", Janowsky stated that a plan involving the "reclamation of large areas in Iraq, for example, might induce considerable numbers of Palestine Arabs voluntarily to migrate to new and more fertile lands."<sup>(3)</sup>

Earlier in the same year, the novelist Ludwig Lewisohn, writing about the conscience of Christendom on the martyrdom of European Jewry, asked "does Christendom care so little for its ethical integrity that it cannot envisage the resettlement of half or more of the Palestinian Arabs in the congenial and broad and sparsely settle Kingdom of Iraq?"<sup>(4)</sup>

This was not the first time that Lewisohn had proposed Arab transfer A few years earlier, in his book entitled "The Answer", Lewisohn had written, "If man were not still a barbarian, there would be founded a great international bank to buy out the 1,000,000 Arabs in Eretz Yisrael and to resettle them in Iraq, in Arabia, in North Africa... Gentiles ought to finance this undertaking."<sup>(5)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Norman to Weizmann, 13 May 1942, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Minute of Conversation with Mr. Loy Henderson, U.S. Minister to Iraq, State Department Washington D.C., 23 September 1943, p.1, (CZA Z5/666).

<sup>3</sup> / Oscar Janowsky, "Zionism Today", The Menorah Journal, (New York), vol.xxxi, no.3, October - December 1943, pp.248-255.

<sup>4</sup> / Ludwig Lewisohn, "Vigilance and Vigilantes", The New Palestine, (New York), vol.xxxiii, no.5, 8 January 1943, p.8.

<sup>5</sup> / Ludwig Lewisohn, The Answer, (New York, 1939), p.188.

During 1943, Walter Duranty, a non-Jewish veteran correspondent of the "New York Times" writing on the rights of the Arabs in Palestine stated that in a Jewish state "provision would be made for the fair treatment of the Arab minority, and such Arabs as were unwilling to accept the change could retire to Arabia or anywhere else they liked." (1)

At the end of the following year, Ruth Karpf, wife of Maurice Karpf, a non-Zionist member of the Jewish Agency, suggested that in exchange for the Jews agreeing to finance and organise the development of Transjordan, Transjordan would "declare its readiness to receive within its boundaries all Palestinian Arabs who prefer to live in an all-Arab community." (2)

Also at the end of 1944, a proposal for transfer was made by Roberto Bachi, who was Professor of Statistics and Demography at the Hebrew University Jerusalem. In a secret detailed memorandum on his forecasts for the Jewish and Arab populations in Palestine in the decades to follow, he stated that the birthrate of Arabs in Palestine was the highest in the world (3) and even with a Jewish immigration of one million within the following five years, the Jewish population of Palestine would after about sixty years have dropped to between about one fifth and one third of the total population. (4) A solution which he put forward to solve this problem was for the Jews "to create financial or political conditions" to allow peaceful transfer of "a large part" of the Arabs of Palestine to other countries. (5)

### Further Developments

In a report written by Norman in October 1942, he stated that he had taken no further steps in his project since the outbreak of war in September 1939. (6) However, this conflicts with the fact that he had been in contact with the American Government in March 1942 and also that during 1941, a number of letters were exchanged between Bell and Norman, although the only one which has been traced was written by Bell on 9 October. In this letter, Bell referred to Norman's letter of 7 October, in which the latter asked Bell for a "concrete plan of procedure". In answer, Bell wrote that he was "strongly of opinion that the movement for federation is invaluable to the carrying out of the [transfer] Scheme, and I would like to see the two combined." He felt that "the desire for federation exists" and that it was "sine qua non that any federal project has to incorporate the Scheme". Many of the details would have to be determined by the actual course of the events. Bell felt that it might be necessary to get the transfer scheme working before pressing for federation. (7)

In December 1941, Norman had a meeting with Ben-Gurion. Norman was obviously having doubts about his plan, because he asked Ben-Gurion whether he should continue with it. Ben-Gurion advised him to continue, even though there was not much hope of success. (8)

A month later, in a letter to Weizmann, Bell again expressed concern regarding the setting up of a federation without incorporating transfer. At that time, ideas were being tossed around the British ministries regarding the establishment of an Arab Federation of States which was to have included a Jewish State. Bell hoped that nothing would be done in this direction until he resumed his mission, which he hoped to do by September. Were the federation to be set up without this population transfer, it would be much more difficult to incorporate it later, since there would be an "inevitable tendency to avoid further changes." Bell asked that if Weizmann, who was about to leave for America, agreed with this reasoning, he should impress it on Norman, when he met with him. (9) Weizmann's trip to

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<sup>1</sup> / Walter Duranty, "A People Without A Country", The New Palestine, (New York), vol. xxxiii, no.12, 16 April 1943, p.5.

<sup>2</sup> / Ruth Karpf, "A New Deal for the Near East", The New Palestine, (New York), vol.xxxv, no.5, 15 December 1944, pp.59-60.

<sup>3</sup> / Roberto Bachi, Memorandum, Political Conclusions from my Research on the Demographic Development of Jews and Arabs in Palestine, December 1944, p.1. (CZA S25/8223).

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.5.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> / Norman, Supplementary Memorandum, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>7</sup> / Bell to Norman, 9 October 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75906).

<sup>8</sup> / Ben-Gurion, Diary entry for 9 December 1941, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> / Bell to Weizmann, 15 January 1942, (WA).

America was delayed by a few months, due to the death of his son, an R.A.F. pilot. In May of that year, Norman called on Weizmann in New York. Weizmann, however, was not at home and he subsequently wrote to Norman that he hoped to see him soon. <sup>(1)</sup> It is not recorded whether they actually met.

Also that month, Bell met with Sir Maurice Peterson of the Foreign Office to discuss Norman's plan and to request assistance for a travel permit to Iraq. He felt that "the chances of success for this scheme would be greatly enhanced if it could be combined with the tactful promotion of a scheme of Arab Federation." In reply, Peterson said that a lot of people were thinking of how to solve the Palestine problem, and that he should consult the Foreign Office nearer to the autumn regarding an exit permit. <sup>(2)</sup>

A few days after this meeting, Peterson spoke with Sir Harold MacMichael, the High Commissioner for Palestine, who was familiar with Norman's plan. According to Peterson, MacMichael "has no objection to the scheme in principle - rather favours it in fact - but is doubtful of the possibility of moving Arab villagers, which he thinks do not possess the necessary cohesion, 'en masse'." <sup>(3)</sup>

Confirmation of the positive views of the High Commissioner Sir Harold MacMichael on the transfer of Arabs from Palestine comes from a letter written by Norman to Solomon Goldman at the end of 1938. Norman had met with MacMichael soon after he had been appointed High Commissioner for Palestine, and at this meeting discussed Norman's plan. According to Norman, MacMichael "expressed hearty approval of the whole idea, and even went as far as to say that if it would not be possible to place a sufficient number of Arabs in Iraq to ease the situation in Palestine, he thought that he could be of help in settling the balance in the Sudan, where he had previously been Governor General." <sup>(4)</sup>

It is of interest to note here, that in contrast to the hostile attitude of the British government ministries, the British High Commissioner to Palestine favoured the Norman plan, although he had doubts on certain of its aspects.

It seems that Bell had in early 1942, been continuing his efforts to get an exit permit, since in May of that year, Eyres of the Foreign Office had written in an internal minute, "Mr. Bell has been worrying the P.M. [Prime Minister], the C.O. and ourselves [the F.O.] for a priority passage to Iraq." (Whether Eyres was referring to Bell's contact with the P.M. in February 1941, or whether he had made further contact, is not clear from this minute.) Eyres reiterated that the F.O. had "always taken the line that we could not say that his self-imposed mission is one of national importance ... There seems to be no reason to change our views." He concluded by suggesting that the real reason that Bell wanted to go to Iraq was that "he is not a rich man and the loss of the salary which he was paid to investigating the possibilities of the scheme is a serious matter to him." <sup>(5)</sup>

From the contents of this minute, Bell obviously did not receive the required exit-permit and in addition, there is no record of his going to Iraq that year.

In October 1942, Norman began again in earnest to revive his plan. In a memorandum written that month, Norman noted that there were a number of new factors in relation to Iraq which appeared to make a start towards carrying out his plan possible and desirable. The transfer of peasants from the badly eroded hills and mountains of Palestine to the far more fertile and more easily cultivated rich alluvial land of Iraq, would enable them to produce a considerable surplus of grains and fodder. These urgently required foodstuffs would not only supply the resident populations of the area, but also the large numbers of British, American and other United Nations troops serving in the region. <sup>(6)</sup>

Norman did not feel that "any insuperable difficulties would be encountered in inducing Palestinian Arab peasants to proceed to Iraq to cultivate the land." The use of "intelligent

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<sup>1</sup> / Weizmann Letters, vol.xx, op. cit., no.284, p.295.

<sup>2</sup> / Foreign Office Minute, Sir Maurice Peterson, 4 May 1942 (PRO FO 371/31337 E2820/49/65).

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., 12 May 1942, (PRO FO 371/31337 E2820/49/65).

<sup>4</sup> / Norman to Goldman, 22 December 1938, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> / Foreign Office Minute, Eyres, 8 May 1942, (PRO FO 371/31337 E2820/49/65).

<sup>6</sup> / Norman, Supplementary Memorandum, op. cit., pp.2-3.

and careful propaganda methods" could be utilised to persuade them of the economic and spiritual advantages of migrating to Iraq and restoring it to its former glory and power. He downplayed the criticism regarding the differences in climate between Palestine and Iraq, and concluded that it should "not prove to be a serious deterrent".<sup>(1)</sup>

In April 1943, a Christian Palestinian citizen named Francis A. Kettaneh submitted a memorandum to the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden in which he proposed the establishment of a Jewish Home in the Cameroons. In the course of this memorandum he wrote that Norman had "widely distributed a memorandum in which he urges that the United Nations forcibly expatriate and transplant all Arabs, whether Moslem or Christian out of Palestine and settle them in Iraq. This action is urged so as to make place immediately for one million Jews who could immediately immigrate into the country."<sup>(2)</sup> In the absence of this memorandum of Norman's, it is difficult to assess how objectively Kettaneh, was representing the intentions of Norman.

At the end of 1943, Bell had discussions with an unnamed person in the Zionist Organisation regarding his return to Iraq to resume his work,<sup>(3)</sup> but it seems to have gone no further than the discussion stage, since there is no record of Bell's returning to Iraq.<sup>(4)</sup> From the indices to the "Correspondence of the Foreign Office",<sup>(5)</sup> we know that Bell put in an application in both 1943 and 1944 to travel to Iraq. Unfortunately, however, the appropriate files of the Foreign Office have not been preserved.<sup>(6)</sup> We do, however, know from a letter written by Bell in August 1942, that he "had received (this time unsolicited) information from the F.O. [Foreign Office] that as soon as I [Bell] am prepared to go out [to Iraq], I could count on the necessary facilities. A volte-face from two years ago."<sup>(7)</sup> However, as we shall see later, the problem was then was one of financing his trip to Iraq.

Although there is no record of Bell's involvement with the plan after 1944, Norman still continued his efforts. On 3 October 1945, Norman brought out a short memorandum entitled "A Fundamental Solution of the Palestinian Problem", in which he considerably toned down his expectations. In it he referred to the resolution of the British Labour Party which included the clause, "Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out, as the Jews move in." This resolution had been passed almost unanimously at their Annual Conference of 1944, and was again reiterated at the following year's Annual Conference.

Norman pointed out that the Palestine problem was not insoluble "particularly if the statesmanlike suggestion for Arab resettlement elsewhere" contained in this resolution were to be considered. Norman at this time maintained that from the economic standpoint it would not be necessary to transfer the Arabs, but that there might be non-Jews living in the country who would not care to continue living there or "agree to remain peaceable" in the event of the immigration of a large number of Jews being permitted. At that period Jewish immigration had been almost completely barred by the British. Norman therefore suggested that those Arabs who did not wish to remain in Palestine be offered a practical alternative place to settle. He said that it should not be necessary to compel any non-Jews to emigrate from the country, but that it would be necessary for the governing authority to suppress by police action any forcible attempts to interfere with Jewish immigration or attacks on Jews or their property. Norman said that anyone who objected to such Jewish immigration "would be faced with the alternatives of peaceful acquiescence or of emigrating." To enable the implementation of this second alternative for those who would not have a place to emigrate to, or would not have the money to go there, Norman suggested that it be made possible for

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., p.3.

<sup>2</sup> / Memorandum, Francis A. Kettaneh to Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, April 1943, p.2, (PRO FO 371/35034 E2686/87/31).

<sup>3</sup> / Norman to Weizmann, 28 December 1943, (WA).

<sup>4</sup> / Weizmann Letters, vol.xxi, (Jerusalem, 1979), no.117, p.117, fn.

<sup>5</sup> / Index to the Correspondence of the Foreign Office for the Year 1943, part 1, A to D, (Nendeln/Liechtenstein, 1972), p.376 ; Index to the Correspondence of the Foreign Office for the Year 1944, part 1, A to D, (Nendeln/Liechtenstein, 1972), p.345.

<sup>6</sup> / Private Communication from PRO, 16 January 1989.

<sup>7</sup> / Bell to Brodetsky, 5 August 1942, (CZA Z4/14626)

these Arabs to settle in Iraq. <sup>(1)</sup>

However, as we shall soon see, just a few weeks later Norman was to return to his original bold plan.

### **Remuneration to Bell**

Until about mid-1940, Bell's retainer and all expenses including his two trips to Iraq were paid for by Norman. <sup>(2)</sup> After that date he stopped paying Bell his retainer, <sup>(3)</sup> thus putting the continuation of the scheme (and also Bell's financial situation!) in jeopardy. Because of this, Bell tried to get the Zionist Organisation to help in this matter. Following a meeting with Professor Selig Brodetsky in mid-November 1940, Bell wrote to him clarifying the points he had made at this meeting.

Bell pointed out that because Norman had wanted to accompany Bell on his next visit to Iraq during the winter of 1939-40, he had postponed his departure until it was too late to go out that winter. Only towards the summer of 1940 had he suggested that Bell go out by himself, but by that time summer was approaching and for various reasons Bell felt that it was not the time to go and instead he suggested September or October. Norman replied that not much could be done during the war and the plan should thus be postponed until after the war. Meanwhile he would not be able to continue paying Bell his retaining fee.

Bell however considered that it was important that his work be continued without interruption and he gave his own assessment of the political situation. In addition he was very concerned with the loss of his retaining fee.

He asked that the Zionist Organisation should tell Norman that the scheme should be carried on despite the war and that they should pay him the retaining fee for the period that Norman had not paid him. He did not know whether they would be prepared to discuss with Norman any further financing by him of the scheme. <sup>(4)</sup>

Brodetsky reported on his meeting with Bell to the Jewish Agency Executive and sent them a copy of his letter. <sup>(5)</sup>

A few days later Bell's request was discussed by this Executive. Weizmann felt that "Bell should be put in a position to carry on his work," and suggested that Brodetsky, should find out how much money would be necessary for this purpose, with a ceiling of 500 pounds. It would seem that Weizmann intended the Zionist Organisation to advance money for the continuation of efforts to obtain a successful conclusion to the Norman plan. He hoped that Norman would repay any monies thus advanced to Bell. <sup>(6)</sup> In December 1940, Weizmann made an advance payment to Bell <sup>(7)</sup> - amount not known.

In a further letter written by Bell to Brodetsky after this meeting, he began by saying that he was "glad to learn that you and your colleagues are of opinion that the work already begun in the Middle East should be continued without undue delay.... I hold myself at your disposal to return to Iraq as soon as possible." He then informed him of the details of payments which had been made to him by Norman. He pointed out that even if Norman would tell him to go to Iraq "tomorrow" and pay him as in the past, he would find it very difficult to go without having received the back-pay. Bell seemed to favour an arrangement in which Norman together with the Zionist Organisation would jointly finance the scheme. <sup>(8)</sup>

About a month and a half later, the Acting political Secretary of the Zionist Organisation, Joseph Linton, wrote to Bell: "Dr. Weizmann has asked me to let you know that he hopes it will shortly be possible to make definite arrangements for your journey.... Dr. Weizmann trusts it will be possible for him to arrange an early appointment with you in order

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<sup>1</sup> / Edward Norman, A Fundamental Solution of the Palestine Problem, 3 October 1945, (CZA A246/29/1).

<sup>2</sup> / First Norman Report, op. cit., pp.3-4.

<sup>3</sup> / Comment on letter from Bell to Norman, 26 June 1940, (PRO CO 733/428 75906).

<sup>4</sup> / Bell to Brodetsky, 15 November 1940, (CZA Z4/14626).

<sup>5</sup> / Brodetsky to The Executive, 21 November 1940, (CZA Z4/14626).

<sup>6</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 28 November 1940, p.5, (CZA Z4/302/24).

<sup>7</sup> / Bell to Weizmann, 15 January 1942, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> / Bell to Brodetsky, 3 December 1940, (CZA Z4/14626).



to discuss the final arrangements." (1)

A few weeks later, Linton wrote "to confirm the financial arrangements on which we have agreed in connection with your journey to Iraq." Details of the payments then follow: A payment of 300 pounds to cover the six months when he received no payment from Norman; remuneration of 75 pounds per month from January 1941; travelling expenses and the cost of a return journey to Iraq. He added that "the above payments are of course subject to your being able to travel to Iraq this spring season ... and the arrangement is limited to a period of six months... The question of continuing the work after that date, and of any subsequent journey to Iraq, will be decided by Dr. Weizmann on the basis of your report, and in the light of circumstances as they may exist at the time." (2)

As we have seen earlier, during the war one required a travel permit to leave Britain. As soon as Bell learned of this offer from the Zionist Organisation he tried desperately to receive such a permit, even going as far as to appeal to the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. But all to no avail!

As a result of this refusal for such a permit, on 10 March, Linton informed Bell that the Zionist Organisation "did not see its way" to pay Bell "anything" since he could not "go out at once to Iraq." (3) In reply Bell asked that, in order to be in a position to continue his work after the summer, Linton should "arrange for an immediate grant, or loan, of 500 pounds to be recovered" by the Zionist Organisation from Norman. (4)

It would thus seem that he received no such money, since on 31 March, Norman wrote to Weizmann saying that he had "received an airmail letter from Montague Bell, which indicates that he is in pretty bad financial shape, which makes our further discussion somewhat urgent." (5) In his reply Weizmann agreed to such a meeting. (6) No details of such a meeting have been traced.

On 8 September 1941, Bell had a meeting with Weizmann and following this meeting telegraphed Norman asking him to arrange for the resumption of the work. He made it clear that until he had the funds to pay for a passage to Iraq, he was not even prepared to apply for such a passage. (7)

At that period, Bell wrote to Doris May, Weizmann's private secretary in London, asking whether Weizmann really wanted him to go to Iraq? (8) Whether he also asked such a question to Linton, or whether May passed on Bell's letter to Linton is not known. However, Linton wrote to Bell that "my own impression is that he [Weizmann] is really keen on the idea [of Bell going to Iraq]." (9)

In a letter to Norman written in the second week of October, Bell again said he had to have the money for the fares to Iraq before he could ask for a ticket." (10) Nearly two weeks later, Weizmann cabled Norman: "Montague [Bell] asking urgently for payment stop is prepared to leave immediately stop please settle matter." (11)

A few weeks later, in a meeting between Norman and Ben-Gurion, Norman asked whether he should continue with his Iraq plan. "It costs 100 Palestinian pounds a month [plus] 100 Palestinian pounds for expenses." Ben-Gurion advised him to continue. (12) It is clear from various letters of that period, that Norman was not at that time actually paying Bell this sum each month, but was just telling Ben-Gurion what it would cost to continue with his Iraq plan.

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1 / Linton to Bell, 14 January 1941, (CZA Z4/14626).

2 / Linton to Bell, 27 January 1941, (CZA Z4/14626).

3 / Bell to Weizmann, 10 March 1941, (WA).

4 / Ibid.

5 / Norman to Weizmann, 31 March 1941, (CZA Z5/1391).

6 / Weizmann to Norman, 6 April 1941, (CZA Z5/1391).

7 / Bell to Weizmann, 23 September 1941, (CZA Z4/14626).

8 / Bell to May, 26 September 1941, (CZA Z4/14626).

9 / Linton to Bell, 29 September 1941, (CZA Z4/14626).

10 / Bell to Norman, 9 October 1941, op. cit.

11 / Telegram, Weizmann to Norman, 21 November 1941, (CZA Z4/14626).

12 / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 9 December 1941, (BGA).

During 1941, when Weizmann was in the United States, he succeeded in arranging for 250 pounds to be given to Bell and, also probably due to Weizmann's efforts, Norman paid him 500 pounds. <sup>(1)</sup>

Bell also refers to an outlay of 2500 pounds by Weizmann. <sup>(2)</sup> This was the first installment of a 10,000 pounds bribe given to Suwaidy, the Foreign Minister of Iraq, to encourage him to support Norman's transfer plan. <sup>(3)</sup> It is possible that this money was underwritten by Norman himself. <sup>(4)</sup> We do know that Norman was "very pleased" about the meeting with Suwaidy on this matter. <sup>(5)</sup> There is no record of any further installment being paid. <sup>(6)</sup>

In January 1942, Bell wrote to Weizmann that in order to return to Iraq in September 1942, he would require at least another 500 pounds. <sup>(7)</sup> A few months later, Weizmann wrote to Norman that he was under the impression that he, Norman, was going to settle the financial matter with Bell. Weizmann pointed out that Bell was "in great difficulties and it would be a pity if he were to nurse a grievance against us", and Weizmann trusted that Norman would take care of this problem. <sup>(8)</sup> [A footnote in Weizmann's printed book of letters states that no reply by Norman to this letter of Weizmann's was traced. <sup>(9)</sup> In fact this reply can be found in the Central Zionist Archives.]

In his reply Norman writes that he could not understand this attitude of Bell's since he had during 1941 given him 580 pounds - (Bell reports this sum as 500 pounds!) - and even Weizmann had agreed that this was an adequate "severance payment". Norman writes: "I cannot see that I am under any further obligation to him now in any way.... When I first employed Mr. Bell, as of February 1, 1938, he was without employment, and as far as I could tell without prospects of employment, so that I think he did very well, in the material sense, during the period that he received remuneration from me." <sup>(10)</sup>

A month later, Norman wrote to Weizmann asking "whether or not you will be able to secure a sum like \$10,000.00 with which we could send Mr. Bell to continue the work that was begun several years ago." <sup>(11)</sup> On the same day, the two of them met together and they discussed no fewer than three letters and a cablegram which Bell had sent Norman during the previous two months. They were in complete agreement on the importance of taking up the work again but the sticking point was the finance. Norman said he was unable to carry the burden by himself. Weizmann said that "the burden should rest on a broader foundation" and "that it might be possible for him to obtain the necessary for a year's work, but it would take some days for him to see if he could do so." <sup>(12)</sup>

After a further month, Weizmann wrote to Norman: "With regard to Bell: - I have not failed to give this matter consideration. As you know his activities will require a considerable amount of money, which, as soon as we have it, will be forwarded." <sup>(13)</sup>

No further developments on this subject have been traced until the end of 1943. It was then that Bell had discussions with the Zionist Organisation and came to "satisfactory arrangements" regarding his "pay and expenses". The Zionist Organisation was unwilling, however, to include his previous debts and Norman wrote to Weizmann that this fact had "rather surprised" him, since it was proper to regard these debts as part of the aggregate. <sup>(14)</sup> Weizmann replied that he could "really hardly see how the Zionist Organisation can be

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<sup>1</sup> / Bell to Weizmann, 15 January 1942, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> / Medoff, Baksheesh Diplomacy, op. cit., pp.161, 163.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., Prologue.

<sup>5</sup> / Ruskin to Weizmann, 5 June 1939, (WA).

<sup>6</sup> / Medoff, Baksheesh Diplomacy, op. cit., p.161.

<sup>7</sup> / Bell to Weizmann, 15 January 1942, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> / Weizmann to Norman, 12 May 1942, (WA) ; Weizmann Letters, vol.xx, op. cit., no.284, p.295.

<sup>9</sup> / Weizmann Letters, vol.xx, op. cit., no.284, p.295, fn.

<sup>10</sup> / Norman to Weizmann, 13 May 1942, (CZA Z5/1391).

<sup>11</sup> / Norman to Weizmann, 16 June 1942, (CZA Z5/1391).

<sup>12</sup> / Norman to Bell, 16 June 1942, (CZA Z5/1391).

<sup>13</sup> / Weizmann to Norman, 17 July 1942, (CZA Z5/1391).

<sup>14</sup> / Norman to Weizmann, 28 December 1943, op. cit.

expected to take over the debts which Mr. Montague Bell claims to have contracted as a result of the arrangements which he had with you." He pointed out that they were "perfectly willing to give him an opportunity of continuing his work, and have set aside some 1,500 to 2,000 pounds for that purpose." This was in fact a considerable sum and it was thus unjustifiable to expect the Zionist Organisation to undertake further expenditure. Weizmann felt that it would be only fair for Norman himself to take over these debts (about 500 pounds), although not necessarily in full. He hoped that Norman would clear up this matter with him in order that he might leave for Iraq as soon as possible. <sup>(1)</sup> There were obviously contacts between Weizmann and Norman on this matter during the next couple of months, since on 21 March, Weizmann wrote to Bell: "I think I have settled the matter with Mr. Norman. He is prepared to pay 450 pounds." <sup>(2)</sup>

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, Norman had enlisted in the United States Navy and in the summer of 1944 he was based in London. It would thus seem that as a result of being in the armed forces in London, he could not at that time pay his own money over to Bell. He therefore wrote to Weizmann in mid-May that he had informed Bell that Weizmann would arrange for him to receive 500 pounds as soon as possible. Weizmann had promised Norman that he would arrange for the Keren Hayesod to advance this sum to Bell. In return, Norman undertook to repay this amount to the Keren Hayesod within one year. <sup>(3)</sup> Whether or not such a loan came through or Bell received any money, is not known.

From all this we can see that Weizmann and various Zionist institutions were very interested in the success of Norman's plan to transfer the Arabs from Palestine even to the extent of arranging the financing of Bell's missions to Iraq.

A further point to note is that Norman was not a poor man - he was a multimillionaire! Why then was he not prepared to give Bell a few thousand dollars to advance his very own plan which he had already worked on for about a decade? Was he losing interest in the advancement of his plan?

#### **Contacts with the American Government**

Up to the autumn of 1945, Norman's efforts had been mainly with the British government. However, all his actions had been futile. Not only were the British civil servants, on the whole, hostile to his plan but they had repeatedly, year after year during the war, refused to grant Montague Bell an exit visa to travel to Iraq. After the Labour party's sweeping victory in the British general election in the summer of 1945, it was hoped that they would implement their Palestine resolution of December 1944. However, by the end of 1945 it was already clear that the officials in the British Foreign Office had persuaded Foreign Secretary Bevin to continue with their anti-Palestine policy. The subsequent outcry caused the new President of the United States, Harry S. Truman to send Earl Harrison to Europe to study the question of Jewish refugees. Following his report, Truman wrote to Attlee asking for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish refugees into Palestine. This was the reason that Norman now turned his attention to the American government.

On 4 October, Norman wrote to the President of the United States, Harry S. Truman, offering to put at his disposal information he had compiled on this question of transfer. In his letter, he pointed out, quoting a number of examples, that the "solution of political questions by means of the transfer of population has become a recognized procedure." In connection with Palestine, he quoted the relevant section of the British Labour Party resolution pointing out that "the difficulties that are met with in Palestine arise because of the presence of the Arabs, who might have been transferred to other locations outside of Palestine although within Arab lands." Norman pointed out that he had "made a thorough study of the capacity of Iraq to absorb a large proportion of the Palestinian Arabs" and that his findings indicated that "the resettling of some 750,000 Palestinian Arab peasants in Iraq would involve no

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<sup>1</sup> / Weizmann to Norman, 3 January 1944, (WA) ; Weizmann, Letters, vol.xxi, op. cit., no.117, p.117.

<sup>2</sup> / Weizmann to Bell, 21 March 1944, (WA).

<sup>3</sup> / Norman to Weizmann, 14 May 1944, (WA).

practical (as distinguished from political) difficulties." <sup>(1)</sup>

On 24th of that month, William Hassett, the Secretary to the President, replied to this letter, (reply untraced), showing interest and requesting information. <sup>(2)</sup> As a result, Norman prepared a memorandum on "The Practical Possibilities of Settling a Large Number of Palestinian Arab Peasants in Iraq", which he then sent to Hassett.

In his introduction to this memorandum, Norman referred to the British Labour Party resolution of 1944, and considered that "mass transfer of Arabs to any land other than a free one with a predominantly Arab population and culture obviously would be impractical, for social, psychological, and political reasons." After considering the various Arab countries, he concluded that only Iraq was suitable for such a transfer. <sup>(3)</sup>

As in his earlier memoranda, Norman wrote about the great potential of Iraq, a country which was underpopulated, yet extremely fertile, quoting a number of authorities to support his thesis. He explained that the recent construction of dams had made a large area of thinly-inhabited land available for cultivation but the present population of the country was unable to supply more than a very few settlers to populate these newly available areas. <sup>(4)</sup>

He felt that "the transportation of a large number of people, together with their personal belongings and livestock, from Palestine to Iraq should present no practical difficulties." Because of "the attachment of the Arab peasants to their fellow-villagers", Norman considered that the transfer "would be done best by entire villages". The plans would also have to include provision for temporary accommodation for the settlers until they could build their own houses, and also supplying them with food until their new lands would yield their own produce. <sup>(5)</sup>

He went on to discuss the financing of such a plan. Norman concluded that were the government of Iraq to furnish the Arab transferees with land free of charge, then the money raised by the sale of Arab land in Palestine would be sufficient to transport 700,000 Arab peasants to Iraq, feed them and their animals for six months and cover other overhead expenses. <sup>(6)</sup>

In his final section, Norman pointed out that his memorandum only dealt with the resettling in Iraq of "Arab peasants" but did not deal with the half a million "urban Arabs" living in Palestine. He held the view that "many of these, such as artisans and merchants, would want to sell out their premises in Palestine and follow the peasants to Iraq." He did not envisage any difficulty in finding Jewish purchasers for their properties in Palestine. <sup>(7)</sup>

Norman had previously encountered criticism from the British government officials on his total neglect of the political aspects to his plan. This was presumably the reason why in the last paragraph of his memorandum to the American president, Norman stated that he had made no attempt to deal with the political side of the transfer, This he defined as inducing Iraq to accept the immigrants, giving them free land and inducing the Palestinian Arab peasants to move to Iraq. "Those matters", wrote Norman, "are subjects for negotiation between governments". <sup>(8)</sup>

Norman was, to put it mildly, over-optimistic that Iraq would be amenable to his plan. When, only a few weeks later, ex-President Herbert Hoover put forward a similar plan in the course of a newspaper interview, the immediate reaction of the Iraqi press was extremely hostile.

Hoover however was not deterred by this Iraqi reaction and on 30 November which was about ten days later, he met with Norman. <sup>(9)</sup> This meeting had been arranged by a mutual

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<sup>1</sup> / Norman to President Truman, 4 October 1945, (NA 867N.01/11-145).

<sup>2</sup> / Norman to Hassett, 1 November 1945, (NA 867N.01/11-145).

<sup>3</sup> / Edward Norman, Memorandum on the Practical Possibilities of Settling a Large Number of Palestinian Arab Peasants in Iraq, New York, 1 November 1945, Section i - Transfer of Arabs out of Palestine, (NA 867N.01/11-145).

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., Section ii - Iraq.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., Section iii - Resettlement in Iraq.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., Section iv - Financing.

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid., Section v - Other Considerations.

<sup>8</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> / Calendar, 30 November 1945, (HH Presidential Papers - Calendar).

friend George Sokolsky, a columnist for the "New York Post" and a member of the executive committee of the American Resettlement Committee for Uprooted European Jewry.

At this meeting, they discussed the possibility of Norman appearing before the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry in order to put forward his transfer plan. On 11 December, Hoover wrote to James McDonald, who had just been appointed a member of this Commission, to suggest that he meet with Norman to discuss the plan. <sup>(1)</sup> On the same day, Norman had written to Hoover stating that he was "available with all material prepared to be placed before the commission, provided the commission should indicate a desire to hear me." <sup>(2)</sup> Hoover informed Norman that he had written to McDonald on this question. <sup>(3)</sup> McDonald replied to Hoover that he had written to Norman requesting a meeting, <sup>(4)</sup> although it seems that a face to face meeting did not materialise and that further contacts between them were only by correspondence and telephone.

McDonald added in this letter that he knew Norman well, "having discussed with him a few years ago in considerable detail his Iraq ideas". <sup>(5)</sup> The only meeting between the two of them which we have a record of, is the meeting of October 1938; however the phrase "a few years ago", used at the end of 1945, would seem to indicate a meeting around 1942.

About the end of December, Norman again wrote to Hoover (letter undated) to update him on developments. He said that McDonald had asked him (Norman) to "furnish him with a brief memorandum, with a half dozen copies thereof" of the transfer plan. He said that if he received them immediately he would place them before his colleagues on the commission and "would suggest to them that I be called to testify during their public hearings".

For several weeks Norman heard nothing more from McDonald. It was on day previous to writing this letter that McDonald informed Norman that although he had done what he could, it was unlikely that the commission would call him to give evidence. McDonald added that he would try and take the matter up with the British members of the commission, but Norman was not optimistic. <sup>(6)</sup>

### **Resettlement Plan for Arab Refugees**

The last stage of Norman's efforts in this field (as far as can be traced), took place in late 1948. In the months preceeding and following the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948, there was a mass exodus of Arabs - some by expulsion and some by freewill. <sup>(7)</sup>

On 8 August 1948, Norman wrote a letter (untraced) to Moshe Shertok, Foreign Minister of the provisional government of Israel, regarding the "revival of his plan about resettlement of Arabs in Iraq." By 15 October, Shertok had not yet replied to this letter. In consequence, Arthur Lourie, a member of the Israel foreign service, pointed out to Shertok that Norman was "a bit put out" by this omission, and suggested that he drop him a few lines thanking him for his suggestions and indicating "that the matter is not yet ripe for action at this time, or else that it would be useful for him to pursue his studies." <sup>(8)</sup>

Two and a half months later, Shertok replied to Norman's letter apologising for the delay. He explained that the reason was that the provisional Israeli government was "engaged in setting up a small committee of investigation of the very subject which you have raised, and I thought that after a little time I might be able to tell you something of its findings and proposals." The committee Shertok was referring to was the transfer committee comprising Joseph Weitz, Ezra Danin and Zalman Lipschitz.

Shertok pointed out that the committee had taken longer than expected to prepare its report. Lipschitz was at the time in the United States and Shertok suggested that Norman meet with him to receive "in detail (of) the results of his and his colleagues' research."

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<sup>1</sup> / Hoover to James McDonald, 11 December 1945, (HH PPI - McDonald James G).

<sup>2</sup> / Norman to Hoover, 11 December 1945, (HH PPS - Jewish-Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>3</sup> / Hoover to Norman, 12 December 1945, (HH PPS - Jewish- Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>4</sup> / James McDonald to Hoover, 12 December 1945, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> / Norman to Hoover, [n.d.] (late December 1945 ?), (HH PPS - Jewish-Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>7</sup> / Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*, (Cambridge, 1987), passim.

<sup>8</sup> / Lourie to Shertok, 15 October 1948, (ISA FM 2402/15).

Shertok felt sure that Norman would share with Lipschitz his knowledge of the subject. "We are only at the very inception of the great historic task," concluded Shertok, "and every place of knowledge and constructive thinking can be of distinct value at this formative stage." <sup>(1)</sup>

Immediately on receipt of this letter, Norman replied saying, "I was very pleased to learn that the very idea that I had taken upon myself the liberty of proposing to you already had occurred to the minds of yourself and some others in Israel." He informed Shertok that through the initiative of Eliahu Epstein, a meeting had already been held in the previous week in Washington between Epstein, Lipschitz, Elisha Friedman, Joseph Schechtman and himself. All these participants were people who had studied or had been involved in proposals to transfer Arabs from Palestine. Lipschitz informed this meeting about the Transfer Committee and felt that those present could work in two directions. The first was "the presentation of ideas and supporting data, on which a plan to be adopted by the Government of Israel might be based." The second idea was "to mobilize the leaders of public opinion in this country [U.S.A.] to speak out in support of such a plan as soon as the Government of Israel would make public announcement of it." The meeting had agreed that Friedman, Schechtman and Norman who were American citizens "would be considered a sort of advisory committee" under the chairmanship of Norman. Norman stated that it would be the advisory committee's "purpose now to produce a more or less detailed plan, which presumably will be forwarded to you for your consideration and possible presentation eventually to your [Israeli] government." He hoped they could be of service in the solution of this "very serious problem of the Arabs with which your government is confronted." <sup>(2)</sup> It is not known what were the future activities, if any, of this advisory committee.

We do, however know that a few weeks after the establishment of this Resettlement Committee, Norman resigned in protest after Shertok violated the secrecy by divulging to the "New York Times", the very plan for the resettlement of the Arab refugees which Norman was supposed to recruit non-Jews to propose. <sup>(3)</sup>

We also know that on 6 December 1948, Schechtman wrote a letter to Ezra Danin addressed to the "Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ha-Kiryat, Tel-Aviv, Israel". Enclosed with this letter was material obtained from Norman concerning his transfer proposals. According to Schechtman, Norman had insisted "that a personal letter be sent to him by Mr. M. Shertok (and by Mr. Shertok only!) expressing recognition for all he has done in this particular field and for his putting at the disposal of the Israeli Government the results of his earlier activities." Schechtman had promised him that he would receive such a letter and therefore asked Danin to ensure that Shertok would send it. <sup>(4)</sup>

The only letter that can be traced from Shertok to Norman is the letter of 17 December (referred to above), but this does not mention the papers handed over by Norman. Also, a search of the files of the Israel Foreign Ministry has not yielded them. It is of interest to note that this letter of Schechtman addressed to the Foreign Ministry was found, together with a number of Norman's memoranda and reports, in a file at the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. It was only discovered in 1986, in an un-numbered file, <sup>(5)</sup> amongst the papers of Joseph Weitz, who had been a member of the various transfer committees. It is therefore very possible that the contents of this file was the material sent by Schechtman to Danin. It was then passed on to Weitz to study, and then somehow got mixed up with his papers and ended up at the Central Zionist Archives.

Bartley Crum, who had been a member of the Anglo American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine, wrote an article entitled "Bold New Plan for Palestine" which appeared in the November 1949 edition of the Bnai Brith journal "The National Jewish Monthly". Norman had helped Crum to compose a five- paragraph appendix to this article. This appendix comprised a very brief summary of Norman's plan and its advantages and how it could now be

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<sup>1</sup> / Shertok to Norman, 17 December 1948, (ISA FM 2402/15).

<sup>2</sup> / Norman to Shertok, 24 December 1948, (ISA FM 2402/15).

<sup>3</sup> / Medoff, thesis, p.316.

<sup>4</sup> / Schechtman to Danin, 6 December 1948, (CZA A246/29/1).

<sup>5</sup> / Now numbered CZA A246/29 and A246/29/1.

utilised to solve the Arab refugee problem. <sup>(1)</sup> This seems to be one of the very few occasions when Norman's plans were publicly mentioned during his lifetime and also for many years afterwards.

### The Saltiel Proposal

At the beginning of 1938, a Greek Jew by the name of Edwin N. Saltiel sent a letter to Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, proposing a Jewish-Arab transfer of population. There was absolutely no connection between Saltiel and Norman or Bell - the only connection was in the comments of a senior civil servant in the Foreign Office, "Another wild scheme which is not dissimilar from that recently proposed to the CO (Colonial Office) by a certain Mr. Norman. It is to be noted that the author of this letter is a Jew." <sup>(2)</sup>

Saltiel had studied the partition scheme which had recently been proposed by the Peel Commission and wrote a letter to Anthony Eden, the Foreign Secretary, pointing out that the fact that he lived in Greece was probably responsible for the suggestion which he wished to make. Saltiel spoke of the "very bold decision" which had been taken at the Lausanne Conference fifteen years previously to implement a compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey. Although at the time this drastic measure had been criticised, history had shown that it was a good decision.

Saltiel believed that "with good will on the part of all concerned a similar happy result could be arrived at if the Arabs of Palestine were persuaded (or compelled) with the consent of the Rulers of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Transjordan to emigrate to those countries in exchange for the Jews living in the countries in question who would have to be persuaded (or compelled) to emigrate to Palestine." (The words in parenthesis "or compelled" are Saltiel's). Saltiel added that the property left behind by the respective populations would serve to indemnify the other party and that the Jews and Arabs affected by this transfer would be assisted financially under the auspices of the League of Nations. <sup>(3)</sup>

As to be expected, the hostile comments of the Foreign Office civil servant (quoted above) together with a letter which he drafted, caused this plan to be still-born.

### EMANUEL NEUMANN

Emanuel Neumann was an American Zionist leader who had been active in Zionist affairs from the days of his youth. During the course of his life, he held a number of Zionist offices including President of the Jewish National Fund in the United States, member of the Jewish Agency and Vice-Chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council.

Following the 1939 invitation to the Arab States to participate in the London Conference on the future of Palestine, Neumann published an article first in Hebrew in the Palestinian daily newspaper "Haboker", <sup>(4)</sup> and two days later in English in the "Palestine Review". <sup>(5)</sup>

In this article, Neumann said that the one advantage of including the Arab States in such a conference was to give an opportunity for Jewish and Arab nationalist aspirations to be seen in true proportion and perspective. He considered that with a bold and radical plan, the Palestine problem was "entirely and permanently soluble."

After referring to the respective proposals of Zangwill and the Peel Commission for population exchange in Palestine, Neumann explained that the Arab States, especially Iraq, had large empty spaces crying out for population and development. He recommended that "the masses of Palestinian Arabs be transferred peaceably and in orderly fashion to Iraq and

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<sup>1</sup> / Bartley Crum, "Bold New Plan For Palestine", The National Jewish Monthly, (Mount Morris, Illinois), November 1949, Appendix, pp.93-94.

<sup>2</sup> / Foreign Office London, Departmental Note, 28 February 1938, (PRO FO 371/21885 E1022).

<sup>3</sup> / Saltiel to Anthony Eden, 14 February 1938, (PRO FO 371/21885 E1022).

<sup>4</sup> / Emanuel Neumann, "Hapitaron Hasofi", Haboker, (Tel-Aviv), 8 February 1939, pp.2, 5.

<sup>5</sup> / Emanuel Neumann, "A Territorial Solution", Palestine Review, (Jerusalem), vol.iii, no.43, 10 February 1939, pp.682-83.

the Iraqi Jews to Palestine." Such a transfer to Iraq would not only increase its military strength but also add to its agricultural, industrial and commercial development. He felt that there were two practical considerations. The first and most important was, "Will Palestine Arabs trek? What of their traditional devotion and attachment to the land?" To this he answered that the Arabs of Palestine were no more attached to Palestine than had been masses in various European countries who had left their countries and sought better conditions across the seas. Before the First World War, "Palestine and Syria were no exceptions and likewise sent contingents to the New World." Neumann added that if the "tales about the miserable plight of the Arab masses in Palestine have any truth in them," they should take the opportunity to establish themselves in an Arab State so that their transfer would not be "a mad flight, unorganised and undirected but an orderly transfer and resettlement under the guidance and with the assistance of Government agencies."

The second consideration was finance, which would involve many millions of pounds. These sums, Neumann considered, should be provided by the Iraqi Government, the British Government and the Jewish people.

In conclusion, Neumann said, "What might have been regarded as fantastic a generation ago is the reality of to-day. Bold far-sighted statesmanship is wanted."

At this period, Edward Norman was quietly working on his own plan to transfer Arabs from Palestine to Iraq. From a letter written by RLE (Rehabiah Lewin-Epstein ?) to Norman on 10 February (the day of publication of Neumann's article in the "Palestine Review"), we see that there was concern in American Zionist circles that these newspaper articles might harm Norman's negotiations.

In this letter, RLE told Norman that he had met Neumann the night before his article had appeared in "Haboker". When Neumann told RLE that his article would appear in the newspapers the following day, RLE asked him to "recall it" since someone, without mentioning any names, was working on this behind the scenes, and "the less publicity appears on this subject, the better." In view of the fact that the article was not recalled, RLE wrote that apparently Neumann "was more interested in publicity than in my suggestion." <sup>(1)</sup>

Five years later, in February 1944, Neumann gave evidence before the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives, on the question of the "Jewish National Home in Palestine".

In the course of his evidence, he stated that "at no time in the long history of the Zionist movement in its many conventions and congresses and public declarations and pronouncements by its official spokesmen, at no time in its long history has the Zionist movement ever demanded the removal of the Arabs from Palestine. The head of the Zionist Organization has opposed it..." <sup>(2)</sup> Was Neumann "unaware" of what had been said on transfer by the head of the Zionist Organization and its official spokesmen at (for example) the 20th Zionist Congress?!

Two years later, on 8 January 1948, Neumann again gave evidence before a public committee. This time it was the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine and he represented the American Zionist Emergency Council.

During cross-examination, the British Conservative M.P. Major Reginald Manningham-Buller asked Neumann: "I wasn't quite clear, when you were dealing with the population outside Palestine, whether you were or were not suggesting that in the course of time some of the Arab population within Palestine might move or be moved outside."

To this Neumann answered: "No, sir. I made no such suggestion.... We have never, the Zionist movement has never, suggested the displacement of a single Arab from Palestine. There is no need for it. And we would under no circumstances base the creation of a Jewish policy upon the forced removal of people who have lived there for centuries.... I would only like to say to you, sir, that the suggestion regarding that idea was made by the British Labour

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<sup>1</sup> / RLE to Norman, 10 February 1939, (CZA A251/17a).

<sup>2</sup> / "The Jewish National Home in Palestine", Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, February 8, 9, 15 and 16, 1944, Washington D.C., 1944, p.307.



Party, as you probably know." (1)

At this last statement there was some laughter from the audience, and it also caused some embarrassment to the British Labour M.P. Richard Crossman who was a member of this committee (2) and whose party had completely gone back on its pro-Zionist policy after coming to power in the summer of 1945. Manningham-Buller immediately commented: "I am not fully acquainted, I am afraid, with all the [British Labour] party has said." (3)

Neumann's statements before these two public committees are other examples of how Zionist leaders would blatantly deny the fact that leading Zionists had proposed transfer of Arabs from Palestine! As we have just seen, in 1939, Neumann had himself proposed the transfer of Arabs by writing articles which appeared in several Palestine newspapers! He was also fully aware that he was not the only Zionist leader to have made such a proposal!

## JOSEPH WEITZ

Joseph Weitz who was born in 1890, was in 1911 one of the founders of the Union of Agricultural Labourers in Palestine. From 1932, he was Director of the Jewish National Fund's Land Development Division and played an important role in the acquisition and development of land for the Jewish National Fund and the planning of agricultural settlement.

In his diary entry for 20 December 1940, written in Jerusalem, Weitz wrote of a meeting that he had had with the surveying engineer Zalman Lipschitz (Lif). During their conversation, Lipschitz spoke of the need to prepare material in connection with the future of Palestine. Such material would include details of every Arab village, property ownership and the possibility of developing intensive agriculture.

Weitz answered, "It should be clear to us that there is no room in Palestine for these two peoples. No 'development' will bring us to our goal of independent nationhood in this small country. Without the Arabs, the land will become wide and spacious for us; with the Arabs, the land will remain sparse and cramped... The only solution is Palestine, at least Western Palestine, without Arabs. There is no room here for compromises!... The way is to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries, all of them, except perhaps those from Bethlehem, Nazareth and the Old City of Jerusalem." Although the vast majority of Arabs in Palestine were Moslems, Weitz's only exceptions referred to places which were especially sacred to the Christian world and contained Christian inhabitants. Possibly the reason for these exceptions was to minimise opposition from the Western Christian world to his proposals.

Weitz continued, "Not one village, not one tribe should be left. And the form of the transfer needs to be the creation of a refuge for them in Iraq, in Syria and even in Transjordan." He felt that for this objective, large sums of money could be found. Only with such a transfer would the land be able to absorb millions of Jews thus solving the Jewish problem. "There is no other way out," concluded Weitz.

How did Lipschitz react to these proposals of Weitz's? The diary entry notes that Lipschitz agreed to these ideas regarding the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine but added that preparations should also be made for partial solutions. To this Weitz replied that investigations should be made in the neighbouring countries in order to determine their capacity to absorb the Arabs of Palestine. Weitz notes that he and Lipschitz agreed between them to apply to the appropriate department and suggest that they initiate work in this direction in preparation for a "detailed plan for the transfer of Palestinian Arabs to the neighbouring countries." (4)

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<sup>1</sup> / Stenographic Report, Hearing before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, Washington D.C., 8 January 1946, pp.102-03, (CZA gimmel 9960 b ii).

<sup>2</sup> / Emanuel Neumann, *In the Arena*, (New York, 1976), p.219 ; Bartley Crum, *Behind the Silken Curtain*, (London, 1947), p.24.

<sup>3</sup> / Hearing, op. cit., p.103.

<sup>4</sup> / Joseph Weitz, *Handwritten Diary entry 20 December 1940*, pp.1090-91, (CZA A246/7) ; Joseph Weitz, *My Diary and Letters to the Children*, (Ramat Gan, 1965), vol.2, pp.181-82.

During the months which followed, Weitz's views on the inability of Jews and Arabs to live together in Palestine, and of the danger of an Arab majority, and hence of the critical need for transfer of Arabs so that Palestine would be solely for Jews, repeatedly found expression in his diary. <sup>(1)</sup> However, Weitz did not leave this question just to diary-jottings and conversations, but towards the middle of 1941 he actively began to develop a plan for the practical realisation of Arab transfer. On 22 June, he wrote, "From now on it is necessary to work on a secret but fundamental plan [on transfer of] the Arabs from here which would be implemented under the supervision of an American--Anglo committee." <sup>(2)</sup>

A few days later, he again wrote in his diary about the need for Anglo and American involvement in such a plan. Weitz had travelled to the lands of an Arab village and to Tel-Aviv, and afterwards wrote that throughout the entire journey his mind had been occupied with a transfer plan. He realised that there were many difficulties to surmount to implement such a plan, and that one must not run away from them but overcome them. He thus continued, "[We must] find a receptive ear principally in America, afterwards in Britain and then in the neighbouring countries..We will set up an apparatus composed of experts from the Yishuv, and they will supervise the [Arab] transfer and the preparations for resettlement 'there' [outside Palestine]." <sup>(3)</sup>

Two weeks later, Weitz succeeded after much effort in obtaining a short meeting with Moshe Shertok and Eliezer Kaplan. In his diary, Weitz reported how at this meeting he had lectured to Shertok that "our redemption will come only if the land is vacated for us". He pointed out that "the transfer of the Arab population is essential" in order to solve the Jewish question. Weitz suggested that the Jewish Agency set up a committee comprising between three to five people "to investigate the possibility of Arab settlement in Iraq, Syria and Transjordan". Such a committee would have to make a thorough study of this subject which would be able to stand up to expert scrutiny and it would have to do its work quickly and without publicity. Both Shertok and Kaplan were prepared to participate in such a plan. Weitz also put forward ideas for financing such transfer. <sup>(4)</sup>

Towards the end of August 1941, Weitz spoke at length with Berl Katznelson. Commenting on this meeting, Weitz wrote in his diary, "On the question of 'population transfer', it appears that he has supported this idea for many years, and furthermore, like me, he sees in it the only solution to our problem in Palestine." Katznelson believed that after the war, the world leaders would support the idea of population transfer and he encouraged Weitz to assemble material for a plan to settle the Arabs of Palestine in the neighbouring countries, and he promised to speak to Kaplan and Shertok about this matter. <sup>(5)</sup>

On 1 September, Weitz received a visa to travel to Syria and Lebanon, the purpose of his visit being to look into the practical possibilities of Arab transfer. <sup>(6)</sup>

Five days later, Weitz went to visit the kibbutz Migdal Haemek - a kibbutz founded on land from which Arabs had been transferred. He spoke to some of the kibbutz members in detail "on the plan for population transfer". Ya'akov Hazan answered that he and his kibbutz movement would oppose it because it was useless, could not be implemented and would harm relations with the Arabs. Some members of the kibbutz bombarded him with questions whose essence was that they did not believe in its feasibility, although they liked the idea. <sup>(7)</sup>

On the following morning whilst in Haifa, he spoke to Eliahu Epstein and informed him of the reason for his journey to Syria. "In his [Epstein's] opinion", he wrote in his diary, "the plan for transfer of population is the only plan which will solve the Palestine problem." <sup>(8)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entries: 13 February 1941, p.1117, 18 March 1941, p.1126, 20 March 1941, p.1127, 4 May 1941, p.1142, 13 May 1941, p.1149, 22 June 1941, p.1169, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid., pp.190, 191-92, 192, 195, 202.

<sup>2</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 22 June 1941, pp.1169-70, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid., p.202.

<sup>3</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 26 June 1941, pp.1172-73, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid., p.203.

<sup>4</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 10 July 1941, pp.1180-81, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid., pp.205-06.

<sup>5</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 28 August 1941, p.1207, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid., p.214.

<sup>6</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 1 September 1941, p.1209, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 6 September 1941, pp.1212-13, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid., p.215.

<sup>8</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 7 September 1941, p.1213, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid.

On 11 September, Weitz was in Damascus, and he went to study literature dealing with the population of the Jezireh area. <sup>(1)</sup> A week later he arrived in the Jezireh area and he concluded that "there is no doubt that in the future the Jezireh could serve as an enormous absorbing home." He felt that if the nations of the world "will want to solve the Jewish question, they will be able in large measure to accomplish these aims by transferring part of the Arab population of Palestine to the Syrian Jezireh, and without any doubt also to the Iraqi Jezireh." <sup>(2)</sup>

On his return to Jerusalem, Weitz met with Kaplan on 4 October. Weitz asked him to convene a meeting of the Inner Council together with the Political Department of the Jewish Agency in order to decide if the idea of population transfer could become one of the permitted projects or whether it would be forbidden to deal with it. Kaplan answered that he could not give the answer of the Political Department, but his own opinion was positive; however he added that very great caution would be required. Weitz then suggested to Kaplan that together with Shertok, they should invite for consultations a number of people including Dr. Dov Joseph, Katznelson and Epstein to study the transfer question. Kaplan agreed to this proposal. <sup>(3)</sup>

Towards the end of October, Dov Joseph travelled to the Jezireh, and before he left, Weitz met with him and asked him to check whether the technical experts working in Syria for Solel Boneh, (the Histadrut's building corporation), could carry out research in the Jezireh region. Joseph promised that on his return he would immediately arrange a committee for this purpose in a "serious, thorough and consistent manner. <sup>(4)</sup> A month later a meeting took place in Joseph's house, where it was decided to make a study of the climate in the Jezireh and of the water in both the Jezireh and Transjordan. <sup>(5)</sup> Although Weitz does not state so specifically, it is probable that these studies were proposed for the purpose of assembling information for a transfer plan.

The next entry on transfer in Weitz's diary is in May of the following year. He reported on a talk with Eliezer Granot, which was mainly on the "population transfer" question. Granot spoke of a committee comprising himself, Kaplan, Shertok, and Joseph to study and prepare a plan of activities. He was very sympathetic towards a population transfer plan, adding that it would have to be done with great caution. They agreed that Granot would prepare the outline of a plan and bring it to a meeting to be held between the two of them two days later. <sup>(6)</sup>

On the following day a meeting took place to discuss the draining of the Huleh swamps. The question was raised whether to begin this work now. Weitz answered with an emphatic negative, adding however that one needs "to prepare a detailed and fundamental plan which would wait until the area would be vacated of its [Arab] inhabitants living there today." <sup>(7)</sup>

Again in 1942, Weitz would bring up the question of Arab transfer. In September of that year during a journey to Nahalel he spoke with his travelling companions on this question. <sup>(8)</sup> A few weeks later, he asked Professor Bodenheimer, who was about to travel to Iraq, to utilise the opportunity to investigate the possibility of population transfer. <sup>(9)</sup>

Weitz was also interested in purchasing land in Transjordan on which to resettle the transferred Arabs. During 1943, an Arab sheikh called Mitkal Pachah suggested selling tens of thousands of dunams of his land in Transjordan to the J.N.F., and for this he received an advance payment. In April 1944, a delegation of four members of the J.N.F., which included Weitz, went to inspect this land and determine whether there would be sufficient water sources for agriculture (which presumably the transferees would be involved in). Their

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<sup>1</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 11 September 1941, p.1214, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid., p.216.

<sup>2</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 18 September 1941, pp.1215-16, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 4 October 1941, pp.1224-25, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid., p.219.

<sup>4</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 21 October 1941, p.1237, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid., p.223.

<sup>5</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 25 November 1941, p.1256, (CZA A246/7) ; Ibid., p.228.

<sup>6</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 31 May 1942, p.1337, (CZA A246/8) ; Ibid., p.259.

<sup>7</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 1 June 1942, p.1338, (CZA A246/8) ; Ibid., p.259.

<sup>8</sup> / Weitz, My Diary and Letters to the Children, op. cit., vol.2., p.275.

<sup>9</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 24 September 1942, p.1400, (CZA A246/8).

inspection showed that there was no water in the entire area and thus on returning to Jerusalem, they reported that their impressions were negative. <sup>(1)</sup>

After the establishment of the State of Israel, Weitz continued to take a great interest in the transfer of Arabs.

At the end of May 1948, in a meeting with Foreign Minister Shertok, Weitz brought up the question of, in his own words "post facto transfer". He proposed the establishment of a committee of three members which included himself, whose function it would be to see that the Arab refugees would never return to Israel. Shertok praised Weitz's initiative on this question <sup>(2)</sup> and such a "Transfer Committee", with the composition proposed by Weitz was indeed set up.

The historian Benny Morris made a detailed comparison of Weitz' diary entries for 1948 and of the published version of his diary brought out in the 1960s and concluded: "while his notebook [diary] entries abound with references to [Arab] population transfer, such references are almost completely absent from the published diary!" <sup>(3)</sup>

In 1951, Weitz was actively involved in a plan to transfer Christian Arabs from the upper Galilee to South America. The plan was put before Foreign Minister Sharett (formerly Shertok) and then to the Prime Minister Ben-Gurion and they both gave it their blessing. Weitz then travelled to Argentina to advance this transfer plan. <sup>(4)</sup>

Yosef Weitz' son Ra'anani (who in the 1950s became head of the Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency), was also involved in proposing the transfer of Arabs. In 1943 he wrote a memorandum to Ben-Gurion and to other Zionist leaders in which he proposed the need to prepare for debates in a peace conference on the establishment of a Jewish State.

In this memorandum, he put forward three possibilities for organising ways to statehood and he suggested the preparation of working material for each of these possibilities.

The first of these methods involved a maximum Arab transfer and was based on the assumption that it would be politically feasible to transfer a majority of the Arabs of Palestine to the neighbouring Arab countries. Ra'anani wrote that such a programme would require research in order to obtain information in a number of spheres. These included having a knowledge of the climatic and economic conditions, and of the tribal and communal composition of the area to which the Arabs would be transferred, and of the possibilities of mass absorption.

The second method involved a maximum development of Palestine and a partial Arab transfer. This possibility was based on the following principles: By means of land reclamation and the transporting of large quantities of water from one area of Palestine to another, two concentrated regions of Jewish settlement - namely in the Negev and in the mountain region - would be established. Arabs living in the area between these two regions and also in other areas essential for Jewish settlement would be transferred to the neighbouring countries.

The third method was a maximum development of Palestine coupled with a regional concentration of the Arabs. Ra'anani commented that this possibility was more modest in its requirements regarding the Arabs. The Arabs would only be transferred between different areas or within different areas of Palestine. <sup>(5)</sup>

## ISRAEL SIEFF

Israel Sieff, who was a British industrialist and Zionist, was born in 1889 in

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<sup>1</sup> / Joseph Weitz, "The Negotiations with the Sheikh in Connection with Transjordan", Ma'ariv, (Tel-Aviv), 18 October 1967, p.26.

<sup>2</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 28 May 1948, p.2403, (CZA A246/13) ; Weitz, My Diary and Letters to the Children, op. cit., vol.3, p.293.

<sup>3</sup> / Benny Morris, "Falsifying the Record: A Fresh Look at Zionist Documentation of 1948", Journal of Palestine Studies, (Berkeley), vol.XXIV, no.3 (Spring 1995), p.46.

<sup>4</sup> / Weitz, My Diary and Letters to the Children, op. cit., vol.4, pp.154, 155, 164, 166-67, 184, 186-87.

<sup>5</sup> / Ra'anani Weitz, Nihoah Hashita Hakotzanit, (Jerusalem, 1997), pp.236-40.

Manchester, England. He collaborated with Weizmann in Zionist affairs and was associated with a number of Zionist and educational organisations in England. He, together with other members of his family, founded the Daniel Sieff Research Institute in Rehovot, from which the Weizmann Institute developed. Sieff was a vice-chairman and joint managing director of Marks and Spencer and in 1967 became its president. In 1966, he was made a life peer.

During the Second World War, Sieff was asked by the British Board of Trade to go to the United States in order to try to sell as many British goods as possible in order to help finance the war effort. <sup>(1)</sup>

Whilst in the United States, he was also to lecture on Zionism. In his memoirs, Sieff reports that he was in the middle of such a speech when the news of the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbour (7 December 1941) reached America. <sup>(2)</sup> A few weeks earlier, in another address, Sieff had proposed Arab transfer from Palestine and this even caused a Question to be asked in the British Parliament. This however is not even hinted at, let alone mentioned in his memoirs!

It was on the 16 or 17 November 1941 that Sieff addressed five hundred delegates at a meeting of the New York Region of the United Palestine Appeal in Albany, New York. In his speech, Sieff estimated that between one and three million European Jews would be homeless after the war, and he put forward three proposals to deal with this situation: 1) the settling of one million Jews in Palestine over the course of the next ten years, with inter-governmental assistance 2) "large sections of the Arab population of Palestine should be transplanted to Iraq and other Middle-Eastern Arab States, allowing, however, Arabs who were willing to live in an autonomous Jewish State to remain in Palestine" 3) the present boundaries of Palestine should be extended to include Transjordan. <sup>(3)</sup> [This speech of Sieff's has not been found in his archives at "Marks & Spencer". <sup>(4)</sup> However, it was reported in a number of newspapers.]

A few weeks later, a question was tabled to the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, in the House of Commons of the British Parliament. The questioner was Cyril Tom Culverwell, who had been the Conservative M.P. for Bristol West since 1928, and the subject of his question was the Exit Permit granted to Sieff. [During the war one required a permit to leave the British Isles.]

Culverwell asked the Home Secretary "upon what grounds permission was granted for Mr. Israel Sieff to travel to the United States of America, in view of the propaganda against, and attacks upon, the policy of His Majesty's Government in relation to Palestine in which this man has indulged?" The Home Secretary answered that he had been granted an exit permit on 16 September in order that he might promote export sales to the U.S.A.

In a supplementary question, Culverwell then asked whether the Home Secretary was aware that Sieff was "stirring up anti-British feeling among his co-religionists in America, and that he is antagonising the Arabs by urging that they should be sent to other Arab countries in order to make room for more Jews in Palestine?" He demanded that such propaganda be stopped. The Home Secretary replied that he had no evidence that Sieff desired or wanted to stir up anti-British feeling. "While there are various views on the question of Palestine, I think everybody is entitled to have his opinions."

Culverwell then asked whether the Home Secretary had "seen the report of a speech which Mr. Sieff made in New York, to which I drew his attention, urging that the Arabs should be displaced in order to make room for Jews, and ought not British subjects who are given trade permits to go to America be told to keep their mouths shut?" The Home Secretary answered that anyone possessing an exit permit should be discreet and promised that if his department had received a report of this speech of Sieff's, he would look at it. However he did "not want to go so far as to seek to prevent a British subject travelling abroad from

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<sup>1</sup> / Israel Sieff, *Memoirs*, (London, 1970), p.177.

<sup>2</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.179.

<sup>3</sup> / "1,000,000 Settlers in Ten Years", *The Jewish Chronicle*, (London), 21 November 1941, p.7; "O.Z.O. Adopts Evacuation Programme", *The Jewish Standard*, (London), 21 November 1941, p.3; "The Hare Plays Lion", *Zionews*, (New York), 2 January 1942, p.3; *Der Tog*, (New York), 17 November 1941, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>4</sup> / Private Communication from Marks & Spencer, 8 July 1997.

expressing reasonable views on matters on which there is not universal agreement." <sup>(1)</sup>

Two important points that emerge from the Home Secretary's answers are that transfer of Arabs from Palestine came under the heading of "reasonable views" and that he had no intention of muzzling such views. What is more, this was during the period when the British Government was implementing the White Paper and preventing land sales to Jews, and was doing its best to gain Arab support for the Allies' war effort.

Although a report of Sieff's address in New York was limited to a few Jewish newspapers, and even there the accounts were fairly brief, the subsequent Parliamentary question and its aftermath received far wider coverage. As we shall see, newspapers in both Britain and Palestine reported in detail on this Parliamentary question and its answer. There were also a number of editorials arising from it, and Culverwell himself wrote letters of explanation to two British Jewish newspapers.

Both question and answer were reported verbatim in the bulletin of the "Palcor News Agency" <sup>(2)</sup> and in the newspaper "The New Judaea" <sup>(3)</sup> and in a summarised form in both "The Jewish Chronicle" <sup>(4)</sup> and "The Jewish Standard". <sup>(5)</sup> The Palestine newspaper the "Palestine Post", <sup>(6)</sup> quoting from the "Palcor News Agency" also went into some detail on this Parliamentary question, but completely omitted the phrases regarding Arab transfer! Similarly the Hebrew Palestinian newspapers "Haolam" <sup>(7)</sup> and "Hamashkif" <sup>(8)</sup> also omitted the phrase on Arab transfer! It is very possible that because of the draconic censorship in Palestine at that period <sup>(9)</sup> any mention of Arab transfer was cut out..

According to the index of the British Foreign Office, <sup>(10)</sup> there were two files on the subject of this Parliamentary question, but these files have unfortunately not been preserved <sup>(11)</sup> and so we do not know their content.

Sieff's reaction to Culverwell's question was a denial to the New York representative of the "Sunday Express" that "there is any truth in the allegations made against him in the House of Commons." <sup>(12)</sup> It would seem from his statement that he did not deny having proposed transfer of Arabs from Palestine but denied the suggestion that he was engaging in anti-British propaganda in the United States.

Following the Home Secretary's answer to Culverwell's question, the M.P. Commander Locker-Lampson said (presumably to Culverwell): "Why be anti-Semitic? That is what Hitler wants." <sup>(13)</sup>

The idea that anti-Semitism was behind Culverwell's question was brought up in the course of editorials in several British Jewish newspapers. "The Jewish Chronicle" pointed out that this was "not the first occasion on which Mr. Sieff has been the subject of Parliamentary questions, and that the same unsolicited attention has been bestowed on one of his business colleagues, Mr. Simon Marks." This led the editorial writer to ask if there was any ulterior motive for this "somewhat strange vendetta? Is it a case of the persons who prompt those innocent Parliamentary instruments indulging in mere anti-Jewish skirmishing, with a well-known Jewish firm as the object of attack?" He regarded such behavior as "mean and intensely

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<sup>1</sup> / Parliamentary Debates, Commons, vol.376, 11 December 1941, cols.1653-54.

<sup>2</sup> / Palcor News Agency, Bulletin no. 61, vol.5, 12 December 1941, p.4.

<sup>3</sup> / "Palestine: Questions in Parliament", The New Judaea, (London), January 1942, p.55.

<sup>4</sup> / "Mr. Sieff Virulently Attacked", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 19 December 1941, p.5.

<sup>5</sup> / "Is Zionism Anti-British?", The Jewish Standard, (London), 19 December 1941, p.8.

<sup>6</sup> / "Two Questions Go Unanswered", Palestine Post, (Jerusalem), 14 December 1941, p.1.

<sup>7</sup> / "In the Zionist World", Haolam, (Jerusalem), no.12, 18 December 1941, p.95.

<sup>8</sup> / Hamashkif, (Tel-Aviv), 14 December 1941, p.1.

<sup>9</sup> / see for example: "Palestine's Censorship", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 9 January 1942, p.22; "Palestine Censorship Severely Criticized", The Jewish Standard, (London), 30 January 1942, p.1.

<sup>10</sup> / Index to the Correspondence of the Foreign Office for the Year 1941, part IV, S to Z, (Nendeln/Liechtenstein, 1972), p.118; Index to the Correspondence of the Foreign Office for the Year 1942, part IV, S to Z, (Nendeln/Liechtenstein, 1972), p.99.

<sup>11</sup> / Private Communication from PRO, 2 June 1997.

<sup>12</sup> / "Mr. Israel Sieff: Denial of Commons Allegations", Daily News Bulletin, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, (London), vol.xxii, no.287, 15 December 1941, p.2; "Allegations Untrue", The Jewish Standard, (London), 19 December 1941, p.8.

<sup>13</sup> / Parliamentary Debates, Commons, op. cit., col.1654.

un-English in pursuing this campaign under cover of Parliamentary privilege in a place where the victims cannot be present to answer it - and especially so when the insinuations are so serious and unfounded." (1)

The "New Judaea" also suggested that anti-Semitism was behind this question. "It would probably be doing Mr. Culverwell an injustice to imagine that he really wants any such embargo [i.e. preventing a British subject from travelling abroad] to be imposed - except, of course, on Mr. Sieff, or any one else who is not only a British subject, but also a Jew and a Zionist." (2)

The question of anti-Semitism is also found in an editorial in "The Jewish Standard", the organ of the British Revisionists, who wrote, "But we cannot help feeling disquieted by what appears to be some sort of campaign against Jews and their right to advocate what they consider to be the just claims of the Jewish people... That even M.P.'s were not free from certain noxious infections of a semi-fascist and anti-semitic character was proved by what leaked out regarding the roll of members of Captain Ramsay's notorious 'Right Club'." (3)

Another point made in these editorials was the question of free speech. The Home Secretary had answered that he did not want to muzzle people. "The New Judaea" was in complete agreement with this view. (4) "The Jewish Standard" in even stronger language wrote: "Without going into the merits of the particular utterance at issue (such as asking what the Arabs have done for Britain in this war to deserve such tender solicitude on the part of British M.P.'s) we, in common with all men of good will, must emphatically reject any attempt to muzzle us, and that in the very centre of embattled democracy." (5)

A further editorial on this subject appeared in the following week's edition of "The Jewish Standard". Here the editorial specifically dealt with Sieff's transfer plan. Whilst defending Sieff's right to make such a proposal, the editorial writer strongly disagreed with this transfer proposal. He felt that "Mr. Sieff's utterances... reveal once more the old Zionist aptitude for saying the wrong thing at the least opportune moment" and that his proposal "is as puerile as the moment for this suggestion is ill-timed ... We must condemn Mr. Sieff's suggested solution not only as impracticable and ill-timed but also as undemocratic." (6) The basis for the editorial writer's comments was, as he stated, Jabotinsky's publicised views on Arab transfer. However, from now available archival material, we can see that Jabotinsky's private views on transfer may well have been quite different!

In contrast to the editorial in "The Jewish Standard", an editorial in "The Jewish Chronicle" cautiously endorsed transfer. "The proposal [to transfer Arabs from Palestine] is, of course, not a new one, and the principle underlying it was adopted in another country with salutary effect." (7) The "New Judaea" took a middle course by neither endorsing nor condemning transfer. It only recalled the fact that Duff Cooper, the former First Lord of the British Admiralty, "when in the United States, after the outbreak of the war before he joined the Government, went much further in his utterances on Palestine than Mr. Sieff." (8)

[The editorial writer did not identify Duff Cooper's speech, but he is very likely referring to the address delivered by him in January 1940 to the National Conference of the United Palestine Appeal in Washington. In this address, Cooper called upon Britain not only to honour the pledge contained in the Balfour Declaration, but also to strengthen it in word and spirit. (9)

In the course of the address, Cooper suggested transfer of Arabs as one of the ways to honour this pledge. He said that "those [Arabs] who wish to emigrate, we will assist to

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1 / "M. & S.... A Hidden Hand?", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 26 December 1941, p.10.

2 / The New Judaea, (London), January 1942, p.43.

3 / "By Way of Comment", The Jewish Standard, (London), 19 December 1941, p.5.

4 / New Judaea, January 1942, op. cit.

5 / Jewish Standard, 19 December 1941, op. cit.

6 / "By Way of Comment", The Jewish Standard, 26 December 1941, p.3.

7 / "M. & S.", Jewish Chronicle, 26 December 1941, op. cit.

8 / New Judaea, January 1942, op. cit.

9 / A Proposal for the Solution of the Palestine Problem by the Right Honorable Alfred Duff Cooper, Former First Lord of the British Admiralty, part 1, p.1, (CZA Z4/6017).

emigrate." He promised that they would have a fresh start in Arab countries and would be moving into territories where Arabs had lived for generations and were still living. He felt that the Arabs would have nothing to fear from such a solution. (1)]

Following the strong criticism of Culverwell in the British Jewish press, he wrote letters to both "The Jewish Standard" and "The Jewish Chronicle".

In his letter to "The Jewish Standard", published in the edition dated 2 January 1942., Culverwell said that "the best, if not the only, hope for the future of Jewry lies in an Allied victory" and thus one would expect that "Jews everywhere would abstain from any speech or action which might antagonize or hamper their potential saviours." At a time when the Allies needed all the support they could obtain, a proposal to transfer Arabs from Palestine "must obviously antagonize the Arabs and might, if adopted by the Government, drive them into the Axis camp." (2)

In the same edition of "The Jewish Standard", an editorial answered Culverwell's letter. The editorial writer accepted the fact that because the Jews were Hitler's main target, they had no alternative and would support the Allies. However, even to this there was a limit and thus Culverwell should "not take it for granted that the Allies on their side are entitled to expect from us an abandonment of our claims and a turning aside from our own national destiny simply because it might interfere with the ornamental outline of this or that policy of one of the Allies." In the view of the editorial writer, British policy in relation to Palestine had brought Britain no Arab support in the Middle East. (3)

Culverwell's letter to "The Jewish Chronicle" (4) was published the following week. It was shorter but of similar content to his letter to "The Jewish Standard". The editor of the paper added his comments, which were of a rather defensive nature, at the end of the letter. He explained that the editorial "certainly did not suggest that he [Culverwell] was engaged in a sinister or malicious conspiracy against Jews in general and Mr. Sieff in particular. We suggested the possibility of Mr. Culverwell and others having been misled by persons of less high-minded purpose". He also felt that a suggestion by a Jew that "some sort of voluntary exchange of population should be considered is scarcely likely to have much effect one way or the other" on relations with the Arabs. (5)

The organ of the American Revisionists, "Zionews", also had an editorial dealing with Sieff's speech and articles on the same subject. After summarising Sieff's speech and pointing out that the Revisionists had never demanded "a forced ejection of the Arabs" from Palestine, the writer reminded his readers of proposals for transfer of Arabs which he said had been made in the previous months. These included the proposal by Blanche Dugdale which had appeared in "The Congress Weekly", which was the organ of the American Jewish Congress, and that of Akiva Ettinger which had been published in the organ of the American Poale Zion, "The Jewish Frontier". He thus came to the conclusion that "these [sic] is certainly not only coincidence; such coincidence happens seldom, if ever at all. Something is cooking in the excited, confused minds of the Agency Zionists. It is sometimes interesting to stand at the sidelines and watch their feverish totterings." (6)

Another person upset by Sieff's speech was Edward Norman. As we have seen, Norman was at that time very discreetly pursuing his own plan to transfer Arabs from Palestine to Iraq and he was worried that any publicity given to such a scheme could topple his own plan.

In a letter that Norman had written to Weizmann in May 1942, Norman referred to a conversation that he had had with Sieff on this matter. In this letter, he commented that "to my mind in a most irresponsible manner, [Sieff] made a public address that was widely reported in the papers, advocating that the Jewish people should adopt the policy now of demanding that after the defeat of the Axis the United Nations should undertake to

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1 / Ibid., part 2, p.2.

2 / C. T. Culverwell, Letters to the Editor, The Jewish Standard, (London), 2 January 1942, p.7.

3 / "Half a Loaf", The Jewish Standard, (London), 2 January 1942, p.4

4 / C. T. Culverwell, Letters to the Editor, The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 9 January 1942, p.8.

5 / Editor's Comments on Culverwell's letter, The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 9 January 1942, p.8.

6 / Zionews, 2 January 1942, op. cit.



evacuate the Arabs of Palestine to Iraq." Norman felt that the matter was made even worse since "Israel Sieff stated at my house" in the presence of a number of people "that his proposal had been based entirely upon my plans, which he knew about, through some channel that he did not disclose. There are several people through whom he might have learned of my scheme and work, such as Simon Marks...." (1)

Norman obviously immediately had some regrets in writing this about Sieff, since on the very next day he wrote a further letter to Weizmann which was solely on this matter. In it he pointed out that after he had spoken to Sieff, the latter "agreed that it had been unwise on his part to have made public reference to any scheme for resettlement of the Palestinian Arabs in Iraq or any other country, and he would not do so in the future." In view of this, Norman considered the matter closed and thus he did not want Weizmann to even mention it to Sieff. (2)

## ERNST FRANKENSTEIN

Ernst Frankenstein was a German-Jewish jurist, and authority on international law. Before settling in London, he had been a member of the Berlin Bar and legal adviser to the Italian Embassy, and served as lecturer at the Academy of International Law at The Hague. In 1944, his book "Justice for My People" was published, in which he presented the legal claim of the Jews to Palestine.

In the course of this book, Frankenstein put forward a proposal for the resettlement of the Arabs of Palestine in the under-populated Arab countries, especially Iraq. He considered that, "The Jewish State should comprise the mandated territory of Palestine west and east of the Jordan."

With regard to the population of the Jewish State, Frankenstein said that any non-Jew "entitled to live in Palestine" would have not only protection but would enjoy the rights and privileges of every citizen. He immediately added that this would not be the case with non-Jews who immigrated to Palestine (including Transjordan) illegally. "Illegal immigrants will have to be gradually repatriated," wrote Frankenstein, "while those who do not want to become citizens of the new state should be given the opportunity of settling in another country." (3) One should mention here, that during the previous thirty years or so, there had been "a substantial illegal immigration of Arabs" into Palestine, (4) and therefore according to Frankenstein's plan, there would be a "substantial" number of Arabs "to be gradually repatriated" to the Arab countries. This was of course apart from those who would be given "the opportunity of settling in another country."

Frankenstein noted that most of the Arab countries especially Iraq were underpopulated and needed development of their resources. In a memorandum submitted to Mr. Krausz's Subcommittee of the Political Committee of the British Zionist Federation in December of the following year (1945), Frankenstein wrote briefly of the potentials of Iraq adding that the "country could be restored to its former wealth if the great irrigation system on which the fertility depends would be restored." In this memorandum, he referred to another memorandum (which has not been traced), which he had submitted seven years earlier to the Jewish Agency in which he had proposed "the outlines of an international scheme for the reconstruction of the Middle East, combined with the (voluntary) transfer of the Palestinian Arabs." (The parenthesis is Frankenstein's.)

About a fortnight before the 1945 memorandum, ex-President Herbert Hoover of the United States had published his plan for the transfer of the Arabs of Palestine to Iraq. Frankenstein mentioned this, adding that the "American Zionist Emergency Council had welcomed the plan" and that in his opinion it was "the only realistic solution of the different

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1 / Norman to Weizmann, 13 May 1942, (CZA Z5/1391)

2 / Norman to Weizmann, 14 May 1942, (CZA Z5/1391)

3 / Ernst Frankenstein, Justice for My People, (New York, 1944), pp.159-60.

4 / Moshe Aumann, Land Ownership in Palestine 1880 - 1948, (Jerusalem, [n.d.]), p.17.

problems." He felt that it had the advantage of being an "economic and social plan" rather than a political one. <sup>(1)</sup>

In his book, Frankenstein offered the world an opportunity to contribute practically to solving the Jewish problem and at the same time assist the Arab States in their work of reconstruction. "All those Arabic-speaking people who have to be repatriated and those who decline nationality should be given the chance of starting a better and happier life than they had led before, thus encouraging others to follow their example voluntarily."

Frankenstein felt that if every Arab craftsman and peasant in Palestine and Transjordan were to be given the opportunity of acquiring, without any expense on his part, his own house and land in an Arab country, many would gladly take such an opportunity. Similarly Jews living in Arab countries should be given every facility for settling in Palestine. "The ideal goal should be a kind of voluntary exchange of population as it has already been envisaged by clear-thinking non-Jews." [Proposals brought forward by many non-Jews are discussed later in this work.] Frankenstein considered that this Jewish-Arab population exchange "should be carried out as an international scheme under international control." <sup>(2)</sup>

## VICTOR GOLLANCZ

Victor Gollancz, English publisher and author was born in 1893. Throughout his life he sought to combat poverty and suffering through socialism, and, later pacifism. During Israel's War of Independence, Gollancz headed an organisation for relief work for Arabs and later for Arab refugees in the Gaza Strip.

In a booklet written in 1945, Gollancz considered the question of the Arabs residing in Palestine. He did not agree that the "Arabs of Palestine would find it intolerable, spiritually intolerable, to remain there if it became a Jewish Commonwealth." If however, this were to be the case, he would recommend a very simple solution based on population transfer.

Gollancz proposed that the United Nations say to the Arab statesmen, "We desire to establish, by the necessary stages, a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, for we believe a settlement of the Jewish question on lines such as these to be an indispensable part of the world settlement. We give our guarantee that every Arab in Palestine shall have complete civil equality and religious freedom. But if, in spite of this guarantee, any Arab should wish to leave Palestine and settle elsewhere we will make it easy for him to do so; we will see to it that the change takes place in the best conditions, and we will provide ample funds, in each case, for the secure establishment of a new home." He pointed out that even if hundreds of thousands of Arabs availed themselves of such an offer, the cost would be negligible in the budgets of Great Britain and the United Nations. "Would not the money be well spent?", asked Gollancz, "Is the tiny sacrifice it represents - were it ever necessary, as it never would be - too much to ask?"

He then suggested that the destination of such a transfer could be the Arab countries bordering on Palestine, especially Iraq, who were crying out for an increase in population. <sup>(3)</sup>

## ELIAHU BEN-HORIN

Eliahu Ben-Horin was an active worker in the Revisionist Party. He was also on the editorial board of the Palestine daily newspaper "Doar Hayom" and later Chief Editor of "Hayarden". In the years following 1943, Ben-Horin worked with Hoover to try and implement a transfer plan.

Ben-Horin's book entitled "The Middle East - Crossroads of History", contained a

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<sup>1</sup> / Ernst Frankenstein, Observations to draft report to sub-committee on "Palestine and the Arab States", 3 December 1945, pp.4-5, (CZA F13/570).

<sup>2</sup> / Frankenstein, Justice for My People, op. cit., pp.160-61.

<sup>3</sup> / Victor Gollancz, Nowhere to Lay Their Heads, (London, 1945), pp.28-29.

transfer proposal and was published in 1943. His suggestion was that "the bulk of the Arab population of Palestine and Transjordan be transferred to Iraq." He held that in such a transfer, the Arabs would "not be removed to a foreign land but to an Arab land" and would therefore find in Iraq their accustomed environment, language, religion, mode of life and climatic conditions. A well planned colonisation project would thus give better conditions than they could expect to obtain in Palestine, to both the Arab peasant and the city dweller. <sup>(1)</sup>

After the publication of this book, it was reviewed in "The New York Times" by Philip E. Hitti. <sup>(2)</sup> Hitti was born in Syria, graduated from the American University of Beirut and at that time was professor of Semitic Literature at Princeton University. Hitti could not be described as a friend of Zionism and his review was very critical of Ben-Horin's book.

With regard to Ben-Horin's transfer proposal, Hitti wrote, "that those Arabs may not be particularly anxious to be transferred, that some of them claim descent from the Canaanites of pre-Hebraic times, that the Moslems among them consider the Islamic conquest of Palestine in the seventh Christian century a gift from Allah that cannot be relinquished without compromising their faith - all these and other questions either never occurred to Mr. Ben-Horin or, if they did, were not deemed by him worthy of consideration." <sup>(3)</sup>

On seeing this book review, Ben-Horin contacted Benjamin Akzin and informed him of the agreement of Colonel John Henry Patterson (the man who had commanded the First Zionist Regiment) to answer Hitti's review, on condition that Patterson would be provided with a draft. Ben-Horin asked Akzin to prepare such a draft, which he accordingly did, and he sent it to Patterson. <sup>(4)</sup>

In fact when Patterson saw the Hitti book review "he got so mad that he sat down himself and wrote the letter." <sup>(5)</sup> A shortcoming of this letter was that it was too long, <sup>(6)</sup> but the Editor of that paper's "Book Reviews" agreed that Norton, the publisher of Ben-Horin's book, could send them a condensed version. <sup>(7)</sup>

In answer to Hitti's criticism of Ben-Horin's transfer plan, Patterson wrote that on this subject "Hitti's antagonism to the book becomes overtly open ... I could not refrain from smiling at Mr. Hitti's 'strongest' argument against this plan - namely that the Arabs got Palestine as 'a gift from Allah that cannot be relinquished without compromising their faith'. Is Hitti ignorant of the fact that the same Allah gave Palestine to the Jews over 2,500 years before the Moslem faith was revealed to the Arabs?" <sup>(8)</sup>

There is also an undated letter by Ben-Horin to "The New York Times Book Review", but it is not clear whether this letter was actually sent. In it, Ben-Horin wrote with regard to his transfer proposal, "Mr. Hitti does not condescend to an analysis of the project. He does not even attempt to refute the arguments of my book in favor of such a settlement, apt to greatly benefit the Palestinian Arabs, the State of Iraq and the Jewish people - and also to contribute to the consolidation of order and peace in the Middle East." Ben-Horin felt that he could not take seriously Hitti's comments that before writing his book he did not enquire what the reactions of the Arabs of Palestine would be to such a proposal. He felt that "if the United Nations are determined to have order and peace in the world, they will have to take many measures in disregard of the wishes of this or that uncooperative community. It is with the elimination of the causes for future friction and wars that we should be concerned, and with very little else.... Mr. Hitti has chosen the all too easy path of slighting ideas without analysing them." <sup>(9)</sup>

Another book review was published in February 1944 in the American Revisionist paper "Zionews". The reviewer mentioned Ben-Horin's transfer plan but without any editorial

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1 / Ben-Horin, *The Middle East*, op. cit., pp.230-31.

2 / "Bridge Between Two Worlds", *The New York Times Book Review*, 12 September 1943, p.15.

3 / *Ibid.*

4 / Akzin to Patterson, 20 September 1943, (CZA A300/37).

5 / Ben-Horin to Norton, 23 September 1943, (CZA A300/37).

6 / Ben-Horin to Patterson, 24 September 1943, (CZA A300/37).

7 / Ben-Horin(?) to Patterson, 28 September 1943, (CZA A300/37).

8 / Patterson, *Letters to the Editor*, *The New York Times Book Review*, 31 October 1943, p.38.

9 / Ben-Horin to Editor *The New York Times Book Review*, Addition to Letter, [n.d.], (CZA A300/37).

comment. <sup>(1)</sup>

### **ISRAEL BEN-SHEM**

Israel Ben-Shem was a leader of the Zionist Worker movement and also a Biblical scholar.

In April 1942, he addressed the Fifth Histadrut Convention and spoke in favour of transfer. During the course of his address, Ben-Shem said that one needs to think of the end result. The land will either go to the Jews or to the Arabs - a partnership was not possible. One had to bring to the attention of the world the suffering of millions of Jews during the course of thousands of years, and insist that all of Palestine be given to the Jews. "Our previous generation knew how to solve tragic problems and positively. I am referring to population transfer. I will tell Hashomer Hazair things which I said to them at one of the Council meetings of the Histadrut and I never received an answer from them: What is this thing? There was an Arab village in a place where now stands a Hashomer Hazair kibbutz. There was a second village, and a third, etc. etc." He then quoted an example of an Arab village whose inhabitants had been transferred and he suggested that such transfer could be carried out a thousandfold. <sup>(2)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Book Review, Zionews, (New York), vol.v, no.1, February 1944, p.22.

<sup>2</sup> / Stenographic Report, Fifth Histadrut Convention, April 1942, (Tel-Aviv, 1942), p.146.

## SECTION 2

### PROPOSALS BY INDIVIDUAL NON-JEWS

#### PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Franklin Delano Roosevelt was the thirty-second President of the United States and held this office for an unprecedented thirteen years until his death in 1945.

It would seem that Roosevelt's interest in transferring Arabs from Palestine began in October 1938. At that period, Justice Louis Brandeis had a meeting with Roosevelt. Brandeis reported on this meeting to Felix Frankfurter who in turn passed on the report to Stephen Wise and to presidential advisor and script-writer Ben Cohen.

In his report of this meeting Brandeis pointed out how Roosevelt appreciated the significance of Palestine, "the need of keeping it whole and of making it Jewish. He was tremendously interested - and wholly surprised - on learning of the great increase in Arab population since the War; and on learning of the plentitude of land for Arabs in Arab countries, about which he made specific inquiries." <sup>(1)</sup>

Two historians, Zaha Bustami <sup>(2)</sup> and Leo Kanawada <sup>(3)</sup> both make an error in stating that this meeting took place between Roosevelt and Frankfurter, instead of with Brandeis. Furthermore Bustami also comments, "it is difficult to tell who brought up this subject during the meeting, but the information on Arab demography was provided by Frankfurter." <sup>(4)</sup> But it is quite clear from Frankfurter's letter that this meeting was with Brandeis. However, a few days earlier a meeting did take place between the President and Frankfurter to discuss the Palestine situation, <sup>(5)</sup> although details of what the Roosevelt said at this meeting have not been traced.

On 25th of that month, Roosevelt had a meeting with the British Ambassador to the U.S., Sir Ronald Lindsay. Reporting on this meeting, Lindsay wrote that the President was "impressed by the fact that the Arab population [of Palestine] had increased by 400,000 since the establishment of the Mandate." He also considered that by a programme of well-digging across the Jordan, a large quantity of water could be made available for irrigation and the cultivable land thus created "should be set apart for Arabs from Palestine. They should be offered land free, and that ought to be enough to attract them; and failing the attraction, they should be compelled to emigrate to it. Palestine could thus be relieved of 200,000 Arabs". He added that it would also "be necessary to prescribe that no Arab should be allowed to

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<sup>1</sup> / Frankfurter to Wise, 18 October 1938, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Zaha B. Bustami, *American Foreign Policy and Question of Palestine 1856-1939*, (Georgetown University, Washington D.C., 1989), p.438.

<sup>3</sup> / Leo V. Kanawada, Jr, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's Diplomacy and American Catholics, Italians, and Jews*, (Ann Arbor, 1982), p.116.

<sup>4</sup> / Bustami, op. cit., fn.179.

<sup>5</sup> / Telegram, McIntyre to Wise, 12 October 1938, (American Jewish Historical Society, P-134 Stephen S. Wise papers, box 181, folder "Roosevelt F. D.").

immigrate into Palestine, and no Jew into the Arab lands." Roosevelt estimated that this programme would "cost from twenty to thirty million pounds 'but we ought to be able to find that money for the purpose'". Lindsay concluded "there was an implication that 'we' meant the Jewish community of America, but that is by no means certain." <sup>(1)</sup>

A report of this meeting is also given by Adolf Berle, the Assistant Secretary of State. It is possible that Roosevelt had reported to Berle on this meeting, since there is no evidence that Berle was present; (Bustami, however suggests that he was present <sup>(2)</sup>). Berle wrote, "The President was full of Palestine. He had suggested to Ronald Lindsay that they call a conference of Arab princes; that they lay down, say \$200,000,000 buying a farm for every Arab who wishes to leave Palestine, the money chiefly to be used in digging wells, which is perfectly possible in the Hedjaz." <sup>(3)</sup> Here, it is quite clear that Roosevelt intended the Arabs to pay for the transfer.

With Roosevelt's frame of mind on that question at that time, it was considered quite possible that he would bring up the question again. Lindsay therefore asked Lancelot Oliphant of the British Foreign Office to have someone prepare a "short answer to this scheme" to have in readiness, although he stressed that he would not take the initiative in sending a reply to the President. <sup>(4)</sup>

Lindsay's request was first dealt with by Lacy Baggalay of the Foreign Office. He first quoted experts who held that the possibilities of finding water in quantity by boring in Transjordan were "quite restricted". He then continued, "But even assuming that water could be found in large quantities, it is now out of the question that any Arabs should be 'compelled' to emigrate to the lands thus brought into cultivation. Whatever else may remain uncertain about the problem of Palestine, the impossibility of compulsion on this scale is now beyond dispute. Finally and in general, the President's suggestion, in which he has doubtless been coached by the Zionist leaders of America, is based on the old fallacy that the problem of Palestine, which has now become a political and sentimental issue of the first importance to the whole Arab and indeed the whole Moslem world, can be solved by economic sops and financial assistance." <sup>(5)</sup> We must remember that this was written just after the Woodhead Commission had published their report "repealing" the Peel Report which had recommended transfer by compulsion if necessary.

Someone else added a handwritten note, referring to the Woodhead Commission's conclusion that digging of wells in the area would not be effective. <sup>(6)</sup>

On the basis of this material, Oliphant sent a reply to Lindsay. After quoting in some detail the ineffectiveness of boring wells in the area, he went on say that the British government would not even contemplate such an idea, and it would be "thoroughly unjust" to compel the Arabs to transfer from Palestine "to make room for immigrants [Jews] of a totally different race who have had no connexion with it [Palestine] for at least 2,000 years." He also brought, in his words, the "fallacy" which Roosevelt was using to try and solve the Palestine problem. <sup>(7)</sup>

Who gave Roosevelt the idea that irrigation of the Transjordan desert would create a suitable location for the Arab transferees?. Kanawada suggests that the indications are that it came from the State Department where at that period Edward Norman was in contact with government officials to advance his own transfer plans. <sup>(8)</sup> Although Norman was at the time in contact with the State Department, his plans were in fact to irrigate Iraq by means of the dams it had recently constructed.

A suggestion by Bustami on this question is more plausible. He discounts Kanawada's

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<sup>1</sup> / Lindsay to Oliphant, 3 November 1938, (PRO FO 371/21883 E6606/10/31).

<sup>2</sup> / Bustami, *op. cit.*, p.439 fn.182.

<sup>3</sup> / Memorandum, Adolf Berle, Jr, 1 November 1938, (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library).

<sup>4</sup> / Lindsay to Oliphant, 3 November 1938, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes, Baggalay, Foreign Office London, 10 November 1938, (PRO FO 371/21883 E6606/10/31).

<sup>6</sup> / Handwritten note, 10 November 1938, (PRO FO 371/21883 E6606/10/31).

<sup>7</sup> / Oliphant to Lindsay, 11 November 1938, (PRO FO 371/21883 E6606/10/31).

<sup>8</sup> / Kanawada, *op. cit.* pp.117-18.

suggestion <sup>(1)</sup> and writes, "The genesis of Roosevelt's idea is difficult to determine. A forcible or voluntary eviction of Palestinian Arabs to Trans-Jordan or other neighboring lands was advocated seriously, though not publicly, in Zionist circles in the summer of 1938. The most probable, though perhaps not the only, channels were Brandeis and Frankfurter." <sup>(2)</sup>

Roosevelt summoned Lindsay for a further meeting, presumably during the first half of November. At this meeting, the President said that he thought that "the British should call in some of the Arab leaders from Palestine and some of the leaders from the adjoining Arab countries. The British should explain to them that they, the Arabs, had within their control large territories ample to sustain their people." He also pointed out that Jewish immigration to Palestine and Transjordan would not harm the Arabs since there was plenty of room for everyone. Roosevelt then went on to propose transfer of Arabs, "Some of the Arabs on poor land in Palestine could be given much better land in adjoining Arab countries."

Lindsay answered Roosevelt by saying that there was opposition in both the Arab and Moslem world but the President "belittled this opposition and thought it due largely to British indecision and conflicting policy." <sup>(3)</sup>

Roosevelt also had ideas for financing this transfer. He thought that "if a plan was devised for a settlement of 100,000 families costing \$3,000 a family or \$300,000,000, the funds might be raised" by the American Government, the British and French Governments, and private subscriptions - largely Jewish; each of these bodies would contribute \$100,000,000. <sup>(4)</sup>

Towards the end of December the British Charge d'Affaires in Washington met with Sumner Welles and handed him a memorandum on transfer received from the British Government, adding that Roosevelt would probably be interested in it. <sup>(5)</sup>

After pointing out that the latest available evidence did not bear out the belief that any considerable quantity of water could be obtained in Transjordan at shallow levels by boring wells, the memorandum continued, "Suggestions have also been made that if the free offer of cultivable land in Transjordan did not suffice to attract the Arabs from Palestine, they might be compelled to emigrate from it, with the object of vacating land in Palestine for settlement by Jews." The British Government saw great difficulties in such a compulsion. Not only would it be beyond their powers, but the morality of attempting such coercion would be questioned in Britain, India and the Moslem world. His Majesty's Government would be accused of "unjustly trying to force a long-established community to leave its country in order to make room for immigrants of a race which has, in great part, not lived in Palestine for many centuries." The British Government also felt that the problem of "redistribution of the Arab and Jewish communities in Palestine and across the Jordan" was not one of finance but rather of politics. <sup>(6)</sup>

A few days earlier, Louis D. Brandeis, an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court and a leading Jewish Zionist had sent a newscutting to Roosevelt regarding the transfer by agreement of an entire Bedouin tribe to Transjordan in order to make way for Jewish villages. <sup>(7)</sup>

In his reply to Brandeis, Roosevelt enclosed the memorandum which he had received from the British Embassy. Roosevelt felt that apart from Transjordan, "the British ought to explore for water to the south and to the north." He added that he had heard from the French that "the land in Arabia across the Red Sea from Djibouti and back of the coastal range of mountains, has all kinds of possibility for settlement - and also that the Iraq people are entirely willing to take a large Arab population for settlement on their newly irrigated lands." <sup>(8)</sup> Brandeis replied that "the British attitude is deplorable. But ultimately - if we

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<sup>1</sup> / Bustami, op. cit., p.440 fn.183.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., pp.440-41.

<sup>3</sup> / Cohen to Frankfurter, 21 November 1938, (Library of Congress, Frankfurter papers, box 45).

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> / Sumner Welles to Roosevelt, 22 December 1938, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs, vol.12, (New York, [n.d.]). (henceforth FDR), p.348.

<sup>6</sup> / British Memorandum, 20 December 1938, FDR, pp.349-50.

<sup>7</sup> / Brandeis to Roosevelt, 21 December 1938, & Press Release, 20 December 1938, FDR, pp.346-47.

<sup>8</sup> / Roosevelt to Brandeis, 27 December 1938, FDR, p.356.

insist - folly will yield to reason and the right." <sup>(1)</sup>

About that period, in a letter to Brandeis, Roosevelt put forward his own plan for the transfer of a large number of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq. In a meeting with Solomon Goldman and Stephen Wise, Roosevelt either mentioned his plan or showed them a copy of his letter to Brandeis.

On 13 March 1939, a meeting took place between Brandeis, Goldman, Frankfurter, Wise and Ben Cohen. At this meeting Brandeis showed them a letter he had received from Roosevelt. As far as Goldman recalls this letter, it "included the suggestion that certainly those of the 400,000 Arabs who have entered Palestine since the Balfour Declaration are not entitled to the same consideration as the Jews. Made the suggestion that perhaps a transfer of these Arabs to Iraq could be considered." <sup>(2)</sup> It is possible that this is the letter we have just referred to, or alternatively, in view of the further details contained in the letters sent by Goldman to Ben-Gurion and Weizmann during the subsequent months, it is likely that Roosevelt had sent Brandeis a second letter on this subject. <sup>(3)</sup>

The letter to Ben-Gurion from Goldman was written during the following month. It was a long letter which included a report on the meeting with Roosevelt. Goldman noted that in his letter to Brandeis, Roosevelt wrote like a complete and enthusiastic Zionist showing great sympathy and understanding. Goldman continued, "He writes about the transfer of several hundred thousand Arabs from Palestine to Iraq. In order to make possible this transfer, he suggests the establishment of a fund of three hundred million dollars. He thinks that it would be possible to collect one hundred million from the Jews, the British Government would loan one hundred (million) and the American Government would loan a third of the required sum." Goldman added that he gained the feeling that here was a true friend who wanted to do a lot to help but whose popularity was unfortunately on the wane. <sup>(4)</sup>

In June of that year, Goldman wrote a letter to Weizmann in which he also gave the contents of the letter from Roosevelt to Brandeis. Quoting from memory, Goldman wrote that Roosevelt had stated "that two to three hundred thousand Arabs can and must be moved from Palestine to Iraq." After explaining Roosevelt's ideas for the financing of this plan, Goldman added that Roosevelt "seemed to indicate that as soon as he was somewhat relieved from the pressure of other affairs, he might try to tackle the job." <sup>(5)</sup> One should note that unlike the report quoted above, Goldman in his letters to both Ben-Gurion and Weizmann reported that the British and American governments would only be loaning the money.

No trace of this letter sent by Roosevelt to Brandeis has been found, although, since Goldman wrote in his letters to both Ben-Gurion and Weizmann that he saw it, it certainly existed. However we do know that in a meeting which took place on Saturday, 19 November 1938 between "Isaiah" (nickname for Brandeis) and Roosevelt, the latter put forward such a transfer plan. This is reported in a letter sent by Ben Cohen to Frankfurter on 21 November 1938. <sup>(6)</sup>

The historian Peter Grose in his book "Israel in the Mind of America", reports that on two occasions, Roosevelt raised his plan with British representatives but he was "firmly told that no amount of financial inducement would move the Palestinian Arabs." Roosevelt however, was unconvinced by this British reply. <sup>(7)</sup> Whether Grose is referring to the meetings which took place towards the end of 1938, or to meetings at some later date is not known.

In February 1940, Weizmann had his first meeting with Roosevelt. At this meeting, Roosevelt put forward the idea of bribing the Arabs, asking Weizmann "What about the Arabs? Can't that be settled with a little baksheesh?" Weizmann replied that "it wasn't as

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<sup>1</sup> / Brandeis to Roosevelt, 28 December 1938, FDR, p.358.

<sup>2</sup> / Medoff, *Zionism and the Arabs*, op. cit., p.86.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> / Goldman to Ben-Gurion, 6 April 1939, pp.1-2, (BGA).

<sup>5</sup> / Goldman to Weizmann, 20 June 1939, p.1, (WA).

<sup>6</sup> / Cohen to Frankfurter, 21 November 1938, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> / Peter Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*, (New York, 1983), pp.138-39.



simple as all that. Of course they would compensate the Arabs in a reasonable way for anything they got, but there were other factors appertaining to a settlement." (1) Transfer is not directly mentioned here, although it is indicated in Weizmann's answer - "they would compensate the Arabs... for anything they got." Historians are divided on the meaning of Roosevelt's statement regarding "a little baksheesh". Grose (2) maintains that it refers to transferring the Arabs, whereas Selig Adler, Professor of American History at Suny Buffalo and an authority on Roosevelt, (3) understands it to mean bribing the Arabs to accept "large-scale Jewish settlement" in Palestine.

Two and a half years later, in December 1942, Roosevelt told Treasury Secretary, Henry Morgenthau, "I actually would put a barbed wire around Palestine, and I would begin to move the Arabs out of Palestine.... I would provide land for the Arabs in some other part of the Middle East.... Each time we move out an Arab we would bring in another Jewish family.... But I don't want to bring in more than they can economically support.... It would be an independent nation just like any other nation.... Naturally, if there are 90 per cent Jews, the Jews would dominate the government.... There are lots of places to which you could move the Arabs. All you have to do is drill a well because there is a large underground water supply, and we can move the Arabs to places where they can really live." (4) [The various "4 dots" during the course of this quote indicate questions put by Morgenthau to Roosevelt. For example, Morgenthau asks, "Would you have the Jews buy up the land?" and "Would you propose that the majority should be Jews in Palestine?" (5)]

In October 1943, the question of "barbed-wire" around Palestine came up again in a conversation between Roosevelt and Judge Samuel Rosenman, Justice of the New York Supreme Court and speechwriter and counsellor to Roosevelt. Roosevelt had spoken of the "possibility of settling the Palestine question by letting the Jews in to the limit that the country will support them - with a barbed-wire fence around the Holy Land." Rosenman thought that this would work "if the fence was a two-way one to keep the Jews in and the Arabs out." (6)

At the beginning of November 1944, Roosevelt was elected President for an unprecedented fourth term. A few days later, Roosevelt discussed the Palestine situation with the Under-Secretary of State, Edward Stettinius. After telling Roosevelt of their difficulties regarding Palestine, Stettinius wrote in his diary, that Roosevelt felt confident that he would be able to "iron out" the whole Arab-Jewish issue. "He thinks Palestine should be for the Jews and no Arabs should be in it", continued Stettinius, "and he has definite ideas on the subject. It should be exclusive Jewish territory." (7)

Roosevelt developed his ideas for the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine during the last six or seven years of his life. His views became more extreme as time progressed. Originally recommending the transfer of two hundred thousand Arabs, he eventually stated unequivocally that "Palestine should be for the Jews and no Arabs should be in it."

Almost all the statements on this subject are written not by Roosevelt himself, but by the various people he worked and met with. This however, is characteristic of Franklin D. Roosevelt. As Selig Adler wrote, "But FDR (Roosevelt) was a man who always had one eye cocked on historians who would someday assess his role in history. He tried to cover his historical tracks, using unrecorded telephone conversations and unrecorded private interviews. As a result, the Roosevelt papers, too, are not as rich as one would hope." (8)

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1 / Note of Conversation between Roosevelt and Weizmann, 8 February 1940, p.2, (WA).

2 / Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America*, op. cit., p.139.

3 / Selig Adler, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and Zionism - The Wartime Record", *Judaism*, (New York), Issue 83, vol.21, no.3, Summer 1972, p.269.

4 / Morgenthau Presidential Diary, 3 December 1942, (Franklin D. Roosevelt Library) ; John Morton Blum, *Roosevelt and Morgenthau. From the Morgenthau Diaries*, (Boston, 1970), pp.519-20.

5 / Morgenthau Presidential Diary, 3 December 1942, op. cit.

6 / William D. Hassett, *Off the Record with F.D.R. 1942 - 1945*, (New Jersey, 1958), p.209.

7 / *The Diaries of Edward R. Stettinius Jr. 1943 - 1946*, ed. Thomas M. Campbell and George C. Herring, (New York, 1975), p.170.

8 / Selig Adler et al., *America and the Holy Land, A colloquium*, (Jerusalem, 1972), p.12.

## EX-PRESIDENT HERBERT HOOVER

Herbert Clark Hoover, a Republican, was the thirty-first President of the United States. He held this post from 1929 to 1933. In his post-presidential years, he continued to take an active part in public service.

### Hoover's Initial Proposal for Transfer

In 1943, Hoover together with Hugh Gibson (a former U.S. ambassador to Belgium), published their book "The Problems of Lasting Peace". When discussing "Irredentas", the authors realised that the nations of Europe would be faced with problems of mixed populations on their borders and long bitter experience had shown that European irredentas were a constant source of war. Their solution to this problem was: "Consideration should be given even to the heroic remedy of transfer of populations." They added that the "hardship of moving is great, but it is less than the constant suffering of minorities and the constant recurrence of war." <sup>(1)</sup>

It was during that year that Hoover first put forward the idea of transfer for the Arabs of Palestine. In July 1943, an "Emergency Conference to Save the Jewish People of Europe" was held in New York. Hoover, who was at that time in San Francisco, addressed this conference by telephone. He pointed out that the long-term solution to this problem was divided into two phases - where to move the Jews so as to give them permanent security, and how to establish them in that place. He concluded that one such destination was Palestine, adding, "but after all Palestine would absorb only a part of the three or four millions whom this Conference has been discussing as needing relief. This could be accomplished only by moving the Arab population to some other quarter." He realised however that this was a problem which could not be settled during the war. <sup>(2)</sup>

Less than a fortnight later, Judge Louis Levinthal, one of the leaders of the Zionist Organization of America, had a long meeting with Hoover. <sup>(3)</sup> Levinthal reported that during this meeting Hoover told him: "1) That in his opinion Palestine cannot become a Jewish Commonwealth when the Arabs are evacuated to other countries in the Near East. [From the context there is obviously a typographical error and instead of "when", one must substitute "unless".] 2) That this evacuation cannot be voluntary, but must be compulsory, imposed by the British or the United Nations. 3) That the British are afraid to impose such compulsory evacuation because of the repercussion on the 'Arab world'." Later in that meeting, Hoover considered that rather than give Kenya and Tanganyika as a haven for refugees, Britain would "much prefer to make a real Jewish State of Palestine, and will even force the Arabs to evacuate to the Arab countries, investing the necessary funds to develop these undeveloped lands [Arab countries] so as to receive the Arabs from Palestine." <sup>(4)</sup>

### Hoover's Statement to "World-Telegram"

It seems that during the next two years, Hoover did nothing to advance his plan for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. Ben-Horin (who had been retained by the American Zionist Emergency Council as a full-time adviser on Middle East affairs) reports in his unpublished autobiography that in 1945 Abba Hillel Silver, a co-chairman of this Council, asked him whether he "could get a statement from Mr. Hoover in support of our position." Ben-Horin answered that he would try, and the opportunity arose on the following day (according to Hoover's calendar, this was 25 October 1945 <sup>(5)</sup>) when he met with Hoover. When he made his request, Hoover answered, "I am willing to issue a statement, but not the one you have in

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<sup>1</sup> / Herbert Hoover and Hugh Gibson, *The Problems of Lasting Peace*, (New York, 1943), pp.235-36.

<sup>2</sup> / Remarks over Columbia Broadcasting System to the Emergency Conference to Save the Jews of Europe, 25 July 1943, p.2, (HH PPS - Jews - Bible 2773) ; "President Pledges Aid to Save Jews", *The New York Times*, 26 July 1943, p.19.

<sup>3</sup> / Calendar, 6 August 1943, (HH Presidential Papers - Calendar [via internet]).

<sup>4</sup> / Levinthal to Arthur, 6 August 1943, (The Temple, Harold Manson papers).

<sup>5</sup> / Calendar, Search Results - Eliahu Ben-Horin, (HH Presidential Papers - Calendar [via internet]).

mind. I was impressed with the plan you outline in your book ... for a transfer of Palestine's fellahen to Iraq. What is more, it is a solution which would greatly benefit all concerned: the Jewish people, the Palestinian Arabs and the State of Iraq. I am willing to propose this solution in a statement to the press." Ben-Horin answered Hoover, "But you probably know that the Zionist Organization does not favor such a transfer." [This maybe true as far as official policy went, although as we can see this was certainly not the view of the various members of this organisation.] Hoover answered "with a twinkle in his eye: 'Fortunately, I am not a member of the Zionist Organization, and my statement would not be in their name.'" Hoover just wanted to know "whether such a statement by him would be welcome to the Zionist movement and would be considered a positive contribution to the solution of the Palestine problem. After consulting Dr. Silver, I gave him this assurance. Thus the 'Hoover Plan' was born." <sup>(1)</sup>

To assist Hoover prepare his statement, Ben-Horin sent him a booklet. When acknowledging receipt, Hoover wrote, "I have now gone over some fifteen books! I am trying to boil a statement down to 200 words." <sup>(2)</sup> On the same day, Hoover wrote in another letter to Ben-Horin, "I have purposely omitted any emotional phrase or appeal. The people to be reached by such statements as this are more convinced in this way." <sup>(3)</sup>

Hoover's first draft <sup>(4)</sup> is dated 14 November 1945. His final typewritten version, <sup>(5)</sup> which is dated the following day, is identical (except for a few insubstantial words here and there) to his statement which appeared in the "New York World-Telegram" of 19 November 1945.

The statement appeared under the main heading, "Hoover Urges Resettling Arabs to solve Palestine Problem", and this was followed by two subsidiary headings, "Says Irrigation could provide Good Iraqi Land", and "Believes Migration Would End Conflict over Jewish Refuge".

Hoover approached the problem as an engineer and considered that there was a sane and practical solution to the Palestine problem. As a result of his solution, the "emotional, racial and political aspects of the problem would be subordinated in a process by which both Jews and Arabs would benefit materially."

In reply to the question posed by the "World-Telegram" as to whether he believed any sound or practical basis existed for settlement of the highly inflammatory Jewish-Arab question, Hoover replied that "there is a possible plan of settling the Palestine question and providing ample Jewish refuge." He felt that it was worth serious investigation since it offered a "constructive humanitarian solution." [When Hoover wrote his first draft, he was far less sure of his plan's possible success since he wrote, "There is a possible - possibly remote - method of settling the Palestine question ..."]

Hoover went on to summarise the history of the irrigation system in Iraq. "In ancient times the irrigation of the Tigris and the Euphrates valleys supported probably 10 million people in the kingdoms of Babylon and Ninevah." This was the most densely populated area on earth and the granary of the world. Hoover said that the subsequent deterioration and destruction of these irrigation works by the Mongol invaders centuries later, were responsible for the shrinkage of the population to about three and a half million in modern Iraq. In 1909, Sir William Willcocks, an eminent British engineer and adviser to the Ottoman Ministry of Public Works put forward a proposal to restore the old irrigation system in Iraq. According to Hoover, Willcocks estimated that nearly three million acres of the most fertile land in the world could be recovered at a cost of under one hundred and fifty million dollars. However only part of Willcocks plan was executed by the British engineering firm of Sir John Jackson Ltd. between 1911 and 1913, since the lack of financial resources of the Iraqi Government and the delays of war greatly retarded this work.

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<sup>1</sup> / Eliahu Ben-Horin, A Brick for the Bridge, p.184, (CZA A300/1).

<sup>2</sup> / Hoover to Ben-Horin, 14 November 1945, (HH PPS - Jewish- Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>3</sup> / Hoover to Ben-Horin, 14 November 1945, (HH PPS - Jewish- Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>4</sup> / Unheaded statement by Hoover, 14 November 1945, (HH PPS - Jewish-Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>5</sup> / Unheaded statement by Hoover, 15 November 1945, (HH PPS - Jewish-Zionist, Clippings).

Hoover continued, "Some years ago it was proposed that this area should be developed for settlement by Jewish refugees. This did not however, satisfy the Jewish desire for a homeland." The plan referred to by Hoover was possibly that proposed about half a century earlier, when it had been suggested that twenty miles of each side of the Baghdad railway should be handed over to Jews from Russia and Poland.

Hoover then put forward his plan for transfer of the Arabs from Palestine. "My own suggestion is that Iraq might be financed to complete this great land development on the consideration that it be made the scene of resettlement of the Arabs from Palestine. This would clear the Palestine completely for a large Jewish emigration and colonization." <sup>(1)</sup> [The word "emigration" instead of "immigration" is used in both drafts and also in the "World-Telegram" - maybe Hoover's intention was that Jews would emigrate from the Diaspora countries to Palestine. In the daily news bulletin of the Palcor News Agency, quoting from this statement, the word "immigration" is in fact used instead of "emigration". <sup>(2)</sup>]

A suggestion for funding Hoover's plan was put forward by Elisha M. Friedman, at that time, a member of the American Economic Committee for Palestine, on the Board of the American Friends of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and on the Finance Committee of the Palestine Endowment Funds and the Hadassah Medical Organisation. In a letter to "The New York Times", Friedman recommended linking the cost of the scheme estimated at around one hundred million dollars to reparations for the property of the seven million Jews of Europe. This property destroyed by the Nazis, was conservatively estimated at eight billion dollars. "Are the survivors entitled to no reparation - not even 1 per cent?" asked Friedman. "The number of Jews killed is officially stated at six million... The nations of the world did not avert the murder of these millions of Jews. Let them save the Jewish remnant. An international reparation loan for the Jews by the United Nations Organization to irrigate Iraq should be issued to finance Mr. Hoover's proposal." <sup>(3)</sup>

Hoover's statement to the "World-Telegram" continued, "A suggestion of transfer of the Arab people of Palestine was made by the British Labour Party in December 1944 but no adequate plan was proposed as to where or how they were to go." <sup>(4)</sup> [Although the text of the resolution of the Labour Party did not mention where the Arabs were to go, the Acting Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Arthur Greenwood, had in June 1944 suggested Iraq as the destination of transfer.] One should note that the first draft did not mention the British Labour Party's transfer proposal. Maybe he was not aware of it when he wrote this draft.

"There is room for many more Arabs in such a development of Iraq than the total of Arabs in Palestine," continued Hoover, "The soil is more fertile. They would be among their own race, which is Arab speaking and Mohammedan." [This latter advantage had also been indicated eight years earlier, by the British Colonial Secretary when he appeared before the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations.]

Hoover pointed out that "the Arab population of Palestine would be the gainer from better lands in exchange for their present holdings. Iraq would be the gainer for it badly needs agricultural population." In his letter to "The New York Times", Friedman brought support for this opinion from a paper presented by the Prime Minister of Iraq, Jafar Pasha al-Askari to the Royal Asia Society in London in 1926. al-Askari said, "The size of the country is 150,000 square miles, about three times that of England and Wales, while the population is only three million... What Iraq wants above everything else is more population." Friedman then quoted from the book "Palestine, Land of Promise", by Walter Clay Lowdermilk, Chief of the Soil Conservation of the United States, "In the great alluvial plain of the Tigris and Euphrates Valley there is land enough for vast numbers of immigrants." <sup>(5)</sup>

Hoover had suggested his plan at a time when millions of people were being moved from

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<sup>1</sup> / "Hoover Urges Resettling Arabs to Solve Palestine Problem", World - Telegram, (New York), 19 November 1945, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> / "Ex-President Hoover on the Palestine Question", Palcor News Agency. Palestine telegraphic service, Bulletin, (London), vol.ix, no.16, 22 November 1945, p.2.

<sup>3</sup> / Elisha Friedman, Letters to the Editor, The New York Times, 16 December 1945, p.8E.

<sup>4</sup> / World - Telegram, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> / Friedman, New York Times, op. cit.

one land to another. Immediately after the Second World War (1945), some nine and a half million Germans were physically driven into Germany from the countries of Eastern Europe. The transfer from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary had been carried out with the prior approval of the three Great Powers participating in the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945. These transfers had been carried out in such a way that many hundreds of thousands, if not millions of refugees had died in the process. Their property had been confiscated and no one had even suggested paying them compensation.

In contrast to this, Hoover said of the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine to Iraq, "If the lands were organized and homes provided, this particular movement could be made the model migration of history. It would be a solution by engineering instead of by conflict." <sup>(1)</sup>

In his first draft, Hoover had based his whole plan on obtaining the consent of the Iraqi Government. The final paragraph of this draft thus read, "To determine the possibilities of this plan, it would be necessary to learn from the Iraq Government if they would approve such a plan and to enlist the support of various Jewish and Arab leaders to the idea and their co-operation in its consummation." <sup>(2)</sup>

However, under the influence of Ben-Horin, Hoover deleted this condition. Indeed, two months later, in a meeting between Hoover, Ben-Horin and Friedman, Hoover was to accept fully Ben-Horin's view that "we should not bother at all about the approval or support of the British or of the Iraqians until the plan is prepared in all its aspects and the report is published under the name of outstanding people and let the British and the Iraqians object to the plan then, thus taking upon themselves the odium of rejecting a sound and logical project proposed by men of standing." At this meeting, Hoover also made it absolutely clear that his primary interest did not lie in Iraq but in Palestine and in solving the Palestinian problem by means of handing over the land to the Jewish people. <sup>(3)</sup> He thus rewrote this paragraph to read, "I realize that the plan offers a challenge both to the statesmanship of the Great Powers as well as to the good-will of all parties concerned. However, I submit it and it does offer a method of settlement with both honor and wisdom." <sup>(4)</sup>

It seems that Hoover's statement was first released to the "New York World-Telegram" who published it on the first page of their paper on 19 November. The historian Rafael Medoff comments: "This was evidently by prior arrangement; the article began by falsely asserting that Hoover's plan was 'offered in response to an inquiry by the World-Telegram as to whether he believes any sound or practical basis exists for settlement of the highly inflammatory Jewish-Arab question.'" <sup>(5)</sup>

Distribution was certainly not limited to this paper. In fact the Associated Press sent Hoover's statement to more than 350 newspapers in the U.S., but to Hoover's annoyance only seven published it. <sup>(6)</sup> The Yiddish language newspapers of New York, however, gave it publicity. "Der Tog" published his entire statement translated into Yiddish. <sup>(7)</sup> A few days later, another Yiddish newspaper, "Der Morgen Journal" wrote a very favourable Editorial under the heading "Hoover Plan for Arabs". It described the plan as a "very practical solution to the Palestine problem" and considered it important that it was prepared by a non-Jew: "Should this plan have originated from Jewish sources, anti-Zionists would have surely made use of it to say that the Jews intend doing an injustice to Palestine's Arabs. However, if this plan originates with a non-Jew of Herbert Hoover's prominence, the reaction is bound to be entirely different." <sup>(8)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / World - Telegram, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Unheaded statement by Hoover, 14 November 1945, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> / Ben-Horin to Silver, 23 January 1946, p.3, (CZA A300/24).

<sup>4</sup> / Unheaded statement by Hoover, 15 November 1945, op. cit. ; World - Telegram, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> / Medoff, op. cit., p.460 fn.39.

<sup>6</sup> / Memorandum no.30, Epstein to Executive of Jewish Agency, 19 February 1946, (CZA Z6/2262) ; Eliahu Elath, The Struggle for the State, vol.1, (Tel-Aviv, 1979), pp.15-16.

<sup>7</sup> / Der Tog, (New York), 20 November 1945, pp.1,2.

<sup>8</sup> / Editorial, "Hoover Plan for Arabs", Der Morgen Journal, (New York), 21 November 1945 p.4 ; Medoff, op. cit. p.461 (English translation).

### American Zionists' Reaction to Hoover Plan

Two days after Hoover's statement appeared in the "World-Telegram", Ben-Horin wrote to Hoover informing him that "the Jewish press in New York has commented very favorably on your proposal." <sup>(1)</sup> He also enclosed a statement issued by the American Zionist Emergency Council in reaction to Hoover's proposal. <sup>(2)</sup>

This statement began by stating that the "Zionist Organization never advocated the transfer of Palestine's Arabs to Iraq or elsewhere" but had always maintained that Palestine had "room enough for its present population, Jew and Arab, and for several million more of Jewish settlers." It was also pointed out that Zionist enterprise in Palestine had "greatly benefitted" the local Arabs, improving their living standards and "increasing tremendously their numerical growth."

The statement continued, "All this we state for the record." The Council then welcomed the plan put forward by Hoover "as an expression of constructive statesmanship. When all the long accepted remedies seem to fail, it is time to consider new approaches. The Hoover Plan certainly represents a new approach, formulated by an unprejudiced mind well trained in statesmanship, relief and rehabilitation."

The statement then pointed out that the Zionists had always been willing to co-operate with the Arabs in solving the Palestine problem but it was the Arabs who had refused Zionist offers. "Whether their attitude will be different in the case of the Hoover Plan it is not for us to say. Should they respond to the idea, we shall be happy to cooperate with the great powers and the Arabs in bringing about the materialization of the Hoover Plan."

The statement concluded, "We highly appreciate the timing of Mr. Hoover's statement. Coming as it does at a time when Jewry seems to have been deserted by most of its friends, it will greatly encourage us in our belief that the great leaders of the Christian world stand ready to offer us justice, understanding and constructive assistance in the re-establishment of our statehood."

Extracts from this statement appeared in several Palestine newspapers <sup>(3)</sup> (as well as in a number of Jewish Diaspora newspapers. <sup>(4)</sup>) Hence the claim made by the historian Yoel Rafel that the reason that no reaction was made to this plan by the Jews of Palestine was that the newspaper censor of the Mandatory authorities forbade any mention of it in the Palestinian newspapers, <sup>(5)</sup> is difficult to understand.

At a meeting held between Hoover, Ben-Horin and Friedman, a couple of months later, Hoover said that he would like to know what Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Zionist Emergency Council thought about his plan. In a letter to Silver, Ben-Horin wrote that he had informed Hoover that "you were greatly impressed by Mr. Hoover's initiative" adding that for "obvious reasons neither the Zionist Movement nor you personally could take the commitment of an official endorsement of his plan." Ben-Horin went on to say that he had however, assured Hoover that "his plan enjoys the sympathy and interest of the Zionist leadership, and of you personally." <sup>(6)</sup> In reply to this letter, Silver, writing on official stationery of the American Zionist Emergency Council said that he was "pleased that progress is being made" in connection with this plan. <sup>(7)</sup> However, since some members of this Council objected to Hoover's plan altogether, the Council's discussions of the plan and deliberations on an appropriate resolution were shrouded in secrecy, so much so that when they adopted the Resolution, (presumably the Resolution quoted above), "some people insisted that it should not even be recorded." The only person

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<sup>1</sup> / Ben-Horin to Hoover, 21 November 1945, (HH PPS - Jewish- Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>2</sup> / Comment of American Zionist Emergency Council on Hoover Plan, [n.d.] (November 1945), (HH PPS - Jewish-Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>3</sup> / Palestine Post, (Jerusalem), 25 November 1945, p.1 ; Ha'aretz, (Tel-Aviv), 25 November 1945, p.1.

<sup>4</sup> / South African Jewish Chronicle, (Cape Town), vol.xxxiv, no.48, (New Series),30 November 1945, p.666 ; Palestine, (New York), vol.2, no.9,10, November-December 1945, p.16;

<sup>5</sup> / Yoel Rafel, "Transfer - the Version of President Herbert Hoover", Hadoar, (New York), vol.lxviii, no.1 (2912), 4 November 1988, p.11.

<sup>6</sup> / Ben-Horin to Silver, 23 January 1946, op. cit. p.2.

<sup>7</sup> / Silver to Ben-Horin, 25 January 1946, (CZA A300/24).

outside the Council office who was given full information on the plan was Elisha Friedman.<sup>(1)</sup>

Another Jewish organisation to give a positive reaction to this plan was the American Jewish Conference, which was a coalition of all major Jewish organisations (with the exception of the American Jewish Committee). On 28 November, their Radio Director, Allen Roberts, wrote to Hoover stating that "your suggestion would, if carried out, provide a real solution to the perplexing problem now confronting world statesmen." He went on to say that the "American Jewish Conference would appreciate it if you could find time to broadcast your views over a national network."<sup>(2)</sup> In reply Hoover wrote, "I am sorry that I am just not able to undertake the suggestion you make at the present time. I am so overwhelmed with obligations and commitments that I cannot take on any additional."<sup>(3)</sup> For a person doing his best to promote a plan, the refusal to utilise an opportunity to broadcast such a plan over the national radio seems strange. However, Hoover's biographers have pointed out that "throughout his career, Hoover felt uncomfortable delivering radio addresses."<sup>(4)</sup>

We can also see from a telegram sent by Hoover to the "National Committee for Labor Palestine" on 24 November 1945, that their National Chairman had made a "kind reference" to this plan. Hoover replied, "I was glad to have your kind reference to the plan I proposed for amelioration of the Palestine situation so as to give larger refuge to the Jews in distress. I am hopeful it might contribute to a solution of so grievous a problem by an approach that must be beneficial to all sides."<sup>(5)</sup>

A further Zionist reaction came from Eliahu Epstein of the Jewish Agency, who, on 28 November 1945, had a meeting with Hoover<sup>(6)</sup> to discuss his transfer plan. Hoover described his plan in great detail, obviously hoping for a Zionist endorsement of it. Epstein, however, explained to Hoover "the political inadvisability of our becoming sponsors for such a plan which might, despite all its good intentions for Jews and Arabs alike, lead to all kinds of dangerous conclusions regarding our aims in Palestine."<sup>(7)</sup> It is likely Epstein's approach was tactical since he himself had been in the past a strong supporter of transfer of Arabs and had even been active in a Population Transfer Committee of the Jewish Agency.

About two months later, on 4 January 1946<sup>(8)</sup>, Meir Grossman, leader of the Jewish State Party, met with Hoover to discuss this plan and a "second-hand" report was given by Ben-Horin. Grossman told Hoover how highly he thought of his plan and went on to say that "he and his people would like to arrange a dinner in Hoover's honor, with him as the main speaker, at which time a group would be organized to sponsor the Hoover plan." Ben-Horin related that Hoover was noncommittal, asked for a memorandum on these suggestions and hinted that he would like his (Ben-Horin's) opinion on Grossman's proposal.<sup>(9)</sup>

Zionist reaction can be summarised in a letter written by Hoover a few weeks after setting out his plan. He wrote that he had "received very favorable responses from several of the Zionist leaders" although, "for some years, the Jewish leaders were apparently not interested at all in this solution as they were insistent on simply opening up Palestine and doing it quickly."<sup>(10)</sup>

### **Iraqi Reactions**

As to be expected, Iraqi reactions to Hoover's transfer plan were extremely hostile.

The American Secretary of State was informed of the Iraqi reactions in a telegram which was sent to him from Baghdad by Moose. In this telegram, Moose said Hoover's

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<sup>1</sup> / Ben-Horin to Friedman, 28 January 1946, (CZA A300/24).

<sup>2</sup> / Roberts to Hoover, 28 November 1945, (HH PPS - American Jewish Congress).

<sup>3</sup> / Hoover to Roberts, 30 November 1945, (HH PPS - American Jewish Congress).

<sup>4</sup> / Medoff, op. cit., p.462 fn.46.

<sup>5</sup> / Western Union Telegram, Hoover to Joseph Schlossberg, 24 November 1945, (HH PPS - Palestine).

<sup>6</sup> / Calendar, 28 November 1945, (HH Presidential Papers - Calendar).

<sup>7</sup> / Memorandum, Epstein to Executive of Jewish Agency, 19 February 1946, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> / Calendar, 4 January 1946, (HH Presidential Papers - Calendar [via internet]).

<sup>9</sup> / Ben-Horin to Friedman, 4 February 1946, (CZA A300/24).

<sup>10</sup> / Hoover to McDonald, 11 December 1945, op. cit.

proposal made the front page in Baghdad's papers of 22 November, under such headings as "Fiendish American proposal - Iraq after Palestine", "From the insides of Truman's bomb comes a new Zionist proposal", "No sir! Ex-President Hoover proposes transferring Arabs of Palestine to Iraq so that Palestine may absorb the Jews", "Weird proposal for solving Palestine problem".

The telegram also said that on the following day the leftist newspaper "Al Rai Al Am" in its main Editorial under the heading "Hoover's hateful statement" pointed out that "such statements show that both unofficial and official opinions America are wholly on side of Zionist; that there is a competition between American imperialists and capitalists to achieve Zionist aims; and that it is questionable that there remains any American conscience to be moved in defense of wronged Arabs."

In addition, the nationalist newspaper "Al Nida" asserted that the Arabs would never agree to the creation of a Zionist state which would threaten the political and economic interests of the Arabs. <sup>(1)</sup>

Further comments on the reactions of the Iraqi press came from a despatch of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency from Cairo on 23 November. This read: "A boycott of American goods was urged today by Bagdad papers in reply to a suggestion by former President Herbert Hoover that the United States grant a large loan to Iraq to finance the resettlement there of Arabs from Palestine, according to a Reuters dispatch. Under such headings as 'Devilish American Plan' and 'New Zionist Scheme,' the papers sharply attack Hoover's suggestion for large-scale irrigation of arid land in Iraq and the transfer of Palestinian Arabs as a means of solving the Palestine problem." <sup>(2)</sup>

All this is in complete contrast to the response of King Feisal of Iraq in 1927, when a Moslem journalist asked him why Iraq did not make use of its large territorial area to raise cotton. Feisal replied that the poor labour force available inhibited capital investments. Bedouin were liable to disappear overnight, even in times of most pressing seasonal work, should they hear a rumour of rain in the desert several hundred miles away. "I would welcome with great pleasure", said Feisal, "an immigration of Mohammedan Arab fellahin from Syria and Palestine." <sup>(3)</sup>

#### **Correspondence in "The New York Times"**

On 25 November 1945, Hoover wrote to Elisha Friedman pointing out the merits of his plan. In his letter, he complained that "the New York Times ... have not deigned to notice it [his plan]", and he suggested that Friedman write them a "strong letter". He offered to meet with Friedman, <sup>(4)</sup> and from Hoover's "Calendar" we can see that a meeting between them took place three days later. <sup>(5)</sup>

Likewise, Bernice Miller - a member of Hoover's secretarial staff - in a letter, commented that "the New York Times has completely ignored, in every sense of the word, the Chief's [Hoover] proposal - not even having mentioned it, although they could have had it through the United Press." <sup>(6)</sup>

Friedman accordingly wrote a letter to "The New York Times", which as we shall see evoked a chain of letters, so that ironically "The New York Times" which "deigned not to notice Hoover's plan" ended up by giving it more publicity than probably any other newspaper!

Friedman's first letter appeared on 16 December under the heading "Hoover Plan Approved, An Irrigated Iraq Regarded as Best Home for Arabs" and began, "Herbert Hoover made a constructive practical and humanitarian proposal to solve the problem of Palestine. It becomes even more significant upon the appointment of the Anglo-American Committee of

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<sup>1</sup> / Telegram, Moose to Secretary of State Washington, 25 November 1945, (NA 867N.01/11-2545).

<sup>2</sup> / Ben-Horin to Hoover, 27 November 1945, (HH PPS - Jewish- Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>3</sup> / Ben-Horin, *The Middle East*, op. cit., p.224.

<sup>4</sup> / Hoover to Friedman, 25 November 1945, (HH PPS - Jewish- Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>5</sup> / Calendar, 28 November 1945, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> / Miller to Strauss, 26 November 1945, (HH PPS - Jewish- Zionist, Clippings).



### Immigration of Jews into Palestine."

[A few months earlier, the British Labour Party had come into power in a landslide victory at the General Election. They very soon reversed their pre-election platform and resolutions on Palestine, and Jewish immigration into Palestine continued to be very restricted. As a result, the Jewish Resistance Movement (the Hagana, the Irgun and the Stern Group (Lehi)), took coordinated action in Palestine against the British Mandatory rule. In order to withstand American pressure to solve the Jewish refugee question, the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, decided to set up an Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry whose recommendations Bevin solemnly promised to follow.] Friedman wrote that Hoover's proposal deserved "the earnest study of the new Anglo-American Commission." <sup>(1)</sup>

James G. McDonald had just been appointed to sit on this Committee and three weeks after publication of his transfer proposal Hoover wrote to him, "I have made this proposal from time to time over a long period, and it does seem to me worthy of consideration." He felt that if the Heads of the Arab States could be made to realise that this proposal was a real way out, then the Jews could have no objection. <sup>(2)</sup> In reply to Hoover's letter, McDonald wrote that he had read Hoover's statement about Iraq and was sure that the Anglo-American Committee would want to study the proposal carefully. He planned to write to Hoover concerning this proposal in the near future. <sup>(3)</sup> A month later, possibly at the request of Hoover, Friedman contacted McDonald on this question. McDonald however pointed out that "the terms of reference of the Committee and the heavy schedule of appearances would make it unlikely that the Committee could consider the question of population transfer." <sup>(4)</sup> [It did in fact briefly come up twice during the hearings - in the evidence of Reinhold Niebuhr and Emanuel Neumann.]

In a similar vein, in a memorandum of 3 December 1945, Frankenstein suggested to a Sub-Committee of the Political Committee of the British Zionist Federation, that they should "urge the Jewish Agency to set up at once, a committee of experts of standing, both Jews and non-Jews possibly in consultation with Mr. Hoover and other important personalities, for elaborating a concrete plan (for transfer)." <sup>(5)</sup>

After summarising the details and advantages of Hoover's plan, Friedman wrote that "the previous proposals to irrigate Iraq were intended to develop it economically and to benefit its masses. But no one before Mr. Hoover made this proposal as a means of solving the Palestine question." Friedman further claimed that, "If the Arab countries are regarded as a unit, as the Pan-Arab League assumes, the movement of the Arabs from Palestine to Iraq would have an analogue in American history." Friedman pointed out how hundreds of thousands of farmers from the New England States abandoned their poor soil and went west to Ohio, Iowa and Oregon where they acquired fertile lands. "Mr. Hoover's proposal shows a large conception in social engineering." <sup>(6)</sup>

A similar idea had been put forward in an Editorial written in 1943 in the journal "Great Britain and the East". The writer referred to a statement made by King Ibn Saud at some earlier date to an American correspondent and later published in a Saudi Arabian newspaper. The King had said that he hoped that after the war, the Arabs would become a single State with the help of the Allies.

The "Great Britain and the East" Editorial pointed out that a major grievance among the Arabs had been that after the First World War, the Allies had arbitrarily divided the Middle East into separate states, whereas left to themselves, the Arabs would have formed one people, one State. There was no longer any outside influence preventing a union of all the Arab States. "As soon as that union is achieved", said the Editorial writer, "the effect will be that an Arab moving from Syria to Saudi Arabia, or from Palestine to Iraq, will no longer be

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<sup>1</sup> / Friedman, New York Times, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Hoover to McDonald, 11 December 1945, (HH PPI - McDonald James G).

<sup>3</sup> / McDonald to Hoover, 12 December 1945, (HH PPI - McDonald James G).

<sup>4</sup> / Friedman to Hoover, 15 January 1946, (HH PPS - Jewish- Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>5</sup> / Frankenstein, Observations to draft report, op. cit., p.5.

<sup>6</sup> / Friedman, New York Times, op. cit.

migrating from one country to another; he will merely be changing his position from one part of the same country to another part." The Editorial writer pointed out that Saudi Arabia was underpopulated and that "in Palestine he (Ibn Saud) could find as many ready-made Arab settlers as he had suitable accommodation for." Those Arabs who did not wish to go to Saudi Arabia "could find a warm welcome elsewhere in the peninsula." (1)

Eight days after the appearance of Friedman's letter in "The New York Times", a reply by Khalil Totah, Executive Director of the Institute of Arab-American Affairs was published under the headings "Hoover Iraq Plan Opposed", "Suggested Transfer of Arabs to that Country is Disapproved".

As was to be expected, Totah was very critical of Hoover and Friedman. "In his letter, Mr. Friedman never alluded to the crux of the matter - whether the Palestine Arabs wish to be transferred to Iraq or not. Is it not high time for those who volunteer to solve the Palestine question to consider the wishes of two-thirds of its inhabitants? Palestine is home to the Arabs. It has been home to them for only thirteen centuries. Millions of their babies were born on Palestine's holy soil and millions of their dead lie buried there."

Totah continued on the theme of religion and the holy places of Christians and Moslems in Palestine. "It is not a question of financing and of engineering; it is a human, moral and religious matter which cannot be viewed from mere technical considerations. Matters affecting religion and traditions in the Middle East are exceedingly explosive and must be handled with care." [It is true that Moslem leaders had utilised religion and the holy places to unite the masses against Zionism. In the late 1920s, the Mufti had called for a holy war and had conducted an unceasing campaign alleging an imminent Jewish threat to Moslem holy places. In the summer of 1929, Moslems attending Friday prayers on the Temple Mount heard sermons concerning the Zionist enemy who supposedly intended to burn the Al-Aksa Mosque and rebuild the Temple in its place. In the days that followed, Jews were massacred in Motza, Safed and especially Hebron.]

In answer to Friedman's contention that the Arab countries should be regarded as a unit, Totah replied, "This is no excuse for packing a million Arabs from Palestine to Iraq in order to make room for further Zionist immigration." In concluding his letter, he reiterated that the problem "is one of ethics and justice and not one of finance and engineering." (2)

Some days later, Friedman replied to Totah's letter stating, "Mr. Totah seems to have misunderstood the Hoover proposal. There will be no need to 'pack a million Arabs from Palestine to Iraq'. They would go willingly, if for every acre of stony semi-arid land in Palestine they would receive two or three acres of fertile, irrigated soil in Iraq. Iraq has about fourteen times the area and only about twice the population of western Palestine."

In answer to Totah's contentions regarding religion and the holy places, Friedman pointed out that the "holy places in Palestine are only holy because the Jews lived there" but "the Jews would gladly yield the tombs of their ancestors... for the right to live and toil on the land."

In defence of Hoover, Friedman wrote, "Mr. Hoover's suggestion is opposed by Mr. Totah, because the transfer of population is 'not a question of financing and engineering; it is a human, moral and religious matter'. Why set off engineering against humanitarianism? Was there ever a finer synthesis of the great engineer and the great humanitarian than Herbert Hoover?" He then pointed out that the Hoover Dam, a monumental work of engineering initiated by Hoover was a contribution to the economic and social welfare of the United States. (3)

One could note that immediately before the publication of both his letters in "The New York Times," Friedman had meetings with Hoover, for the first letter, one day before publication (15 December) (4) and for the second one, two days before (4 January). (5) It is quite

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1 / Editorial, "King Ibn Saud on Palestine", Great Britain and the East, (London), vol.lx, no.1675, 3 July 1943, pp.11-2.

2 / Khalil Totah, Letters to the Editor, The New York Times, 24 December 1945, p.14.

3 / Elisha Friedman, Letters to the Editor, The New York Times, 6 January 1946, p.8E.

4 / Calendar, Search Results - Elisha Friedman, (HH Presidential Papers - Calendar [via internet]).

5 / Calendar, 4 January 1946, (HH Presidential Papers - Calendar [via internet]).

possible that there was a connection and Friedman wanted to show Hoover the letters before they were published. The second meeting also took place on the same day as Meir Grossman's meeting with Hoover to discuss the transfer of Arabs, although, as we have already seen, Friedman was not present, but he was briefed on what transpired. This, of course, could also have been the reason for their meeting that day.

A week after the publication of Friedman's second letter, a letter written by Samir Shamma of the Arab Office in Washington D.C. was published. It began with the claim that the Arabs had been "uninterruptedly living in that country at least for the last thirteen centuries. A great number of the peasants who form 70 per cent of the Arab population of Palestine are descendants of those who worked the land centuries before the Jewish migration from Egypt in Biblical times."

Shamma said that to compel these Arabs, even with compensation, to leave their land to make room for Jews from Europe would be treatment that "used to be inflicted on a conquered enemy in old times, but it would be hard to justify these days on any legal or moral grounds." (1) Shamma seemed to be unaware of the Greco-Turkish population exchange, which had been proposed by the Nobel Peace prize-winner Dr. Nansen, sanctioned by the League of Nations and carried out under the guidance of a mixed commission, not "in old times", but only just over twenty years earlier. In justification of such an Arab transfer, Friedman had quoted a statement, made in 1940, by Alfred Duff Cooper, former First Lord of the British Admiralty in Washington, "In 1914 there was hardly any territory which the Arabs could call their own. Since 1914 they have acquired vast tracts of territory where they are independent; the whole of Arabia; Trans-Jordan, which was taken away from the original conception of Palestine; Syria, where again they exercise semi-independent rights. No nation in the world has so little ground for complaining as the Arab race. They have vast spaces in which to expand. They have been among the greatest beneficiaries of the World War, and now they are subject to no particular evils." (2)

The next point made by Shamma was that the Hoover plan was "obviously incompatible with the terms of the Mandate." He obviously had in mind the section which stated that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. In fact a similar question had been asked by a member of the Permanent Mandates Commission after the publication of the Peel Report. To this, the British Colonial Secretary, Ormsby-Gore, had answered in terms of "natural rights", but he had in no way suggested that the transfer of the Arab population contravened the terms of the Mandate.

In concluding his letter, Shamma wrote, "Mr. Friedman knows well that, according to the findings of the Commissions of Investigation, it was the Arabs' fear this would happen that was one of the principal causes of the serious disturbances in 1929 and 1936 - 1939." (3) [These "serious disturbances" of 1929 and 1936-39 consisted of pogroms, massacres and acts of terror by Arabs against unarmed Jewish men, women and children in all parts of Palestine.] Here Shamma was referring to the Report of the British appointed Shaw Commission of 1930 which claimed that the riots were a natural reaction against Zionism - a report received by the Arabs with jubilation but by the Jews with outrage!

### **Meetings and Proposals on the Hoover Plan**

At a meeting of the American Zionist Emergency Council held on 14 January 1946, Eliahu Ben-Horin was officially confirmed as a permanent member of the staff of the Council. The minutes state that at this meeting Ben-Horin "reported on an interview with Mr. Hoover which evoked a lengthy and detailed discussion." (4)

A report of this interview and the subsequent discussion can be found in an "addendum"

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1 / Samir Shamma, Letters to the Editor, The New York Times, 13 January 1946, p.8E.

2 / Friedman, New York Times, 6 January 1946, op. cit.

3 / Shamma, New York Times, op. cit.

4 / American Zionist Emergency Council, Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee, 14 January 1946, pp.1, 4, (CZA F39/385).

to these minutes, although the actual date of this interview is not stated. According to Hoover's calendar, the latest meeting between them had been nearly three months earlier, on 25 October 1945. <sup>(1)</sup> From the contents of the report of his interview, he is almost certainly referring to this meeting on 25 October.

Ben-Horin had met with Hoover "on behalf of the American Zionist Emergency Council." He reported that "Hoover is very interested in the irrigation plan of Iraq and the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine." Hoover, however "felt that if the Zionists were not in favor of the transfer proposal that was their business." He had asked Ben-Horin "whether his statement [published in the newspapers] was received favorably by the Zionists of America." Ben-Horin<sup>[?]</sup> had replied that "several individuals lauded and praised him and told him that they were in accord with his proposal - some Jewish, non-Jewish and several Zionist quarters. In view of the present Zionist relations it would be very harmful if the Zionists were to launch a program of transfer. The Zionist movement cannot and will not commit itself officially with the transfer proposal. Furthermore, it is very good for Zionism to be in a position to say no to any question regarding transfer."

In the subsequent discussion at that American Zionist Emergency Council executive committee meeting, Ben-Horin "suggested that, with the approval of this body, the initiative should be taken to organize an independent group, headed by Mr. Hoover, and from the moment this group is organized no Zionist group should appear in the picture." Ben-Horin commented that "it would be very harmful for Zionism if it later appeared that we were financing Mr. Hoover's group."

Different views were then expressed in connection with the attitude to be taken by the Zionists to Hoover's transfer proposal. None of those opposing Zionist support for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine did so on moral grounds - the opposition was entirely for tactical reasons. Rose Halprin "felt that the entire question was dynamite, and that we should do nothing on this question without first consulting with the Jewish Agency representative." Gedalia Bublick "felt it would be dangerous for our cause to suggest the transfer of the Arabs." He considered that the public would then say that the Jews cannot live together with the Arabs in Palestine.

Although Abba Hillel Silver stated that "it is quite clear that our movement will not be associated with this idea," as we have already seen, he himself was pleased that progress was being made with Hoover's transfer plan!

An additional point was made by Dr. I. B. Berkson and "agreed fully" to by Pinchas Cruso. Berkson considered that whilst for the Zionists to suggest the transfer of Arabs "would be a calamity for the Zionist movement ... if we should adopt the plan it should be made public. It would be a complete disaster to denounce something publicly and privately support it."

There were also members of this Committee who came out in favour of the Zionists publicly supporting Hoovers' transfer plan. These included David Wertheim and Louis Lipsky. Wertheim "did not see any danger ... Here is a plan brought up by non-Zionists which will mean that we will have a majority sooner than in any other manner. We should facilitate the sponsoring of such a group." Lipsky said that "the projection of this idea would be valuable to us." Max Kirshblum was also "favorably inclined" towards this plan but added that "it must be done tactfully." <sup>(2)</sup>

On the following day, Elisha Friedman wrote a letter to Hoover pointing out that the Zionist Organization "officially takes the position" that there is sufficient room in Palestine for everybody. "If they advocated population transfer, it would furnish an argument for anti-Zionists."

Realising that one had to overcome this stumbling block, Friedman went on to propose a scheme to move the plan forward: "If we can get a responsible group of scientists, technical men, and distinguished citizens to undertake this proposal quite independently of any existing

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<sup>1</sup> / Calendar, Search Results - Eliahu Ben-Horin, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., Addendum, Report of Mr. Ben-Horin's Interview with Mr. Hoover, (CZA F38/482).

organization, I shall take the liberty of writing you." <sup>(1)</sup>

Ben-Horin was therefore especially insistent in excluding Meir Grossman, (the leader of a splinter group who had broken away from the Revisionist Party), who was an enthusiastic supporter of this plan, from this group. "He will want to be in the foreground of this affair, whereas the [American Zionist] Emergency Council is vitally interested in keeping any Jews, especially Zionists who may be active in the Hoover Plan, as far in the background as possible." The last thing Ben-Horin wanted was for this group to degenerate into a "predominantly Jewish group which would agitate for transfer, and possibly do more harm than good." <sup>(2)</sup>

A week later, a meeting took place between Hoover and Friedman and Ben-Horin, <sup>(3)</sup> and a confidential comprehensive report of this meeting was made by Ben-Horin in a letter to Abba Hillel Silver on the following day. Two weeks prior to this meeting, Ben-Horin had suggested to Hoover that his plan be shaped along the lines of exchange of populations, rather than transfer, in which seven hundred thousand Jews living in Arab countries would be transferred to Palestine in exchange for the Arabs of Palestine who would move to Iraq. <sup>(4)</sup> At this meeting, Hoover took up Ben-Horin's suggestion saying that it was a "great improvement on his (Hoover's) original idea." <sup>(5)</sup> Silver, however, disagreed with the removal of Jews from Arab lands, since the Jewish public was not yet prepared for it and many Jews from North Africa, especially Egypt would "raise furious objection". He went on to concede that this idea might come about as a by-product of Hoover's plan but that there was no point in being involved at that stage in a "bitter controversy with our own people." <sup>(6)</sup>

A crucial point in the implementation of Hoover's plan was finding the necessary finance. At the meeting <sup>(7)</sup> between Hoover, Ben-Horin and Friedman, Ben-Horin told Hoover in "very careful language" that he could reliably count on a certain source providing the "first leg money for the promotion of his plan." Friedman pressed Ben-Horin to state definitely that the first twenty-five thousand dollars could be placed at Hoover's disposal, but Ben-Horin refused to give a definite commitment. Ben-Horin suggested that an independent group be set up, with Hoover at its head, "in order to produce an authoritative report of the Plan."

Hoover agreed to undertake to try and interest Bernard Baruch. Baruch was a self-made millionaire who had sat on American Government Committees and a few years earlier had been made adviser to the War Mobilisation Director.

Hoover also suggested the names of people outstanding in the field of engineering, irrigation and agriculture, and a public relations man, whose services he could enlist, and he undertook to talk to these people himself in order to ascertain whether or not they were interested. <sup>(8)</sup>

On the following day, Hoover had a meeting with Bernard Baruch and also with Baruch's wife, <sup>(9)</sup> although what was discussed has not been traced.

On 25 January, Friedman wrote to a certain Julius Fohs who replied with details about assembling technical data and a technical committee and raising the first twenty-five thousand dollars for the project. <sup>(10)</sup>

A further meeting took place on the afternoon of 4 February between Hoover, Ben-Horin and Friedman <sup>(11)</sup> but we do not have a report on its deliberations.

That same evening a meeting took place at the house of William Fondiller, Vice-President of the Bell Research Laboratories, at which, according to Friedman "considerable

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<sup>1</sup> / Friedman to Hoover, 15 January 1946, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Medoff, *Zionism and the Arabs*, op. cit., p.145.

<sup>3</sup> / Calendar, 22 January 1946, (HH Presidential Papers - Calendar).

<sup>4</sup> / Ben-Horin to Silver, 23 January 1946, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>6</sup> / Silver to Ben-Horin, 25 January 1946, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> / Calendar, 22 January 1946, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> / Ben-Horin to Silver, 23 January 1946, op. cit., pp.1-2.

<sup>9</sup> / Calendar, 23 January 1946, (HH Presidential Papers - Calendar [via internet]).

<sup>10</sup> / Fohs to Friedman, 30 January 1946, (CZA A300/24).

<sup>11</sup> / Ben-Horin to Fohs, 4 February 1946, (CZA A300/24).

progress" was made. Friedman informed Hoover that Fondiller was "greatly interested" and planned to call in the very near future a meeting of a group of engineers and "after this group meets and perfects the details of organization, we hope you will permit us to call on you to carry your project forward." It was also hoped that they might get funds from the Refugee Economic Corporation. <sup>(1)</sup>

A month later, a meeting of seven prominent engineers took place at the New York University Faculty Club in order to discuss the Hoover Plan.

. At this meeting, Ben-Horin was called upon "to outline briefly the genesis of the project". The engineers then had a heated discussion on the engineering aspects of the problem and they soon arrived at the conclusion that the data before them was insufficient.

Professor Boris Bakhmeteff of Columbia University, and former Russian ambassador to the U.S.A. "declared that the solution of the matter of making Palestine a Jewish Home was a serious international one, and he was strongly in favor of Mr. Hoover's proposal" and that it was "probably the best solution for the Jewish-Palestinian problem".

In answer to a question regarding the attitude of the Arab leaders, Ben-Horin indicated "that under present conditions their attitude would not be co-operative."

Another member of the committee, Eugene Halmos, a non-Jewish irrigation engineer said that his interest in the project "was purely from an engineering standpoint, and that his firm would be prepared to undertake these studies on a commercial basis as might be required" and that "no engineer of repute would lend his name to such a project unless all the necessary research and planning is done to prove that the quantity of water required is available, etc., etc."

After a long discussion, the engineers all agreed that the first thing to be done was to assemble all the data available on the subject and prepare a summary. They also decided to have an early meeting with Hoover in order that they might "learn what information he had gathered together in his own investigation." <sup>(2)</sup>

Two days later, Fondiller wrote to Hoover enclosing minutes of this meeting and the decision to have an early meeting with him "to fortify itself with such data as you have, bearing on the feasibility of the engineering phases of the project and its estimated cost." <sup>(3)</sup> However such a meeting never took place, since Hoover became interested in other causes and his interest in his Iraq plan faded. <sup>(4)</sup>

After this date, there seems to be no more information on this proposal for the years 1946 and 1947 in either the Hoover Library or the Central Zionist Archives. However, from about August 1948, which was soon after the establishment of the State of Israel, considerable efforts were made by both Ben-Horin and Friedman to revive the Hoover Plan and use it as a means of resettling the Arab refugees in Iraq and thus prevent their returning to Israel. Hoover gave these efforts his blessing, but he himself (possibly due to his advancing age) did little to further them. <sup>(5)</sup>

In August 1954, Hoover reached the age of 80 and Ben-Horin wrote to him a congratulatory letter, including a reference to the Hoover transfer plan. In a letter of thanks, Hoover added a post-script in his own handwriting, "We were on the only sane track!" <sup>(6)</sup> We can thus see that even after nearly nine years' reflection, Hoover still believed his plan was correct.

When Hoover died ten years later, in a tribute issued by the Zionist Organization of America, its President, Dr. Max Nussbaum, devoted almost his entire tribute to giving a detailed account of Hoover's transfer plan. <sup>(7)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Friedman to Hoover, 5 February 1946, (HH PPS - Jewish- Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes of Meeting at N.Y. Faculty Club, 4 March 1946, (HH PPS - Jewish-Zionist, Clippings) ; Ben-Horin to Silver, 5 March 1946, (CZA A300/24).

<sup>3</sup> / Fondiller to Hoover, 6 March 1946, (HH PPS - Jewish- Zionist, Clippings).

<sup>4</sup> / Medoff, op. cit., p.468

<sup>5</sup> / Details may be found in: CZA A300/24 ; ISA FM 2402/15, 2402/16, 3037/11, 364/3 ; HH PPI - Friedman, Elisha ; Medoff, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> / Ben-Horin, A Brick for the Bridge, pp.185-86, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> / Press Release, "President Hoover's Support for a Jewish Homeland ...", 22 October 1964, (Zionist Archives, New

## **PRESIDENT EDUARD BENES**

Dr. Eduard Benes was President of Czechoslovakia from 1935--38. In 1938 the Germans occupied the country, and in 1940 he organised a government-in-exile in London. After Czechoslovakia was liberated in 1945, he returned to the presidency. Soon after the termination of the Second World War, the Sudeten Germans living in Czechoslovakia were transferred to Germany.

In August 1946, Benes had a meeting with Eliahu Ben-Horin and the latter reported on this meeting in his unpublished autobiography. According to Ben-Horin, "President Benes said that there was something he could not understand about Zionist policies. He felt that the transfer of the Palestinian Arabs to Iraq or some other underpopulated Arab country could have provided the soundest solution for the Palestine problem. 'Indeed,' Dr. Benes went on, 'I spoke about it several times to Dr. Weizmann ... in London, but he had not been receptive at all to this idea. We are now transferring the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia to Germany, and their number is twice the number of the Arabs you have in Palestine.'" We should add that this transfer of Sudeten Germans was a compulsory transfer approved by the Great Powers.

Ben-Horin answered Benes that he did "not have to sell me on the transfer idea, because I have advocated this solution for several years." He then pointed out that whereas President Hoover "also favors the transfer idea", Weizmann and other Zionist leaders "may not be far-sighted enough in this respect". He also felt that one could not bring a parallel with the Sudeten Germans, since whereas Benes and his government were masters of Czechoslovakia, this was not the case with the Jews of Palestine. <sup>(1)</sup>

## **MOJLI AMIN, an Arab**

In 1939, Mojli Amin, a member of the Arab Defense Committee for Palestine put forward a proposal for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. This proposal was published in Damascus and distributed amongst the Arab leaders. <sup>(2)</sup>

Amin began by blaming the suffering of the Arabs in Palestine, the "lovers of peace", on the Jews to whom the British had promised "an Arab land on the basis of prehistoric fables which state that Palestine is the designated land for Israel and Judea." He added that there was no democratic country who would protest to Britain on the evil they were doing to the Arabs.

He then went on to put forward a solution which would satisfy the hopes of the Jews and put an end to the killing of the Arabs.

Amin's proposal was that all of Palestine be given to the Jews - its dwelling places, its fields, its mosques, its graveyards, etc. "Furthermore, I hereby propose that all the Arabs of Palestine will leave and be divided up amongst the neighbouring Arab countries. In exchange for this, all the Jews living in Arab countries will leave and come to Palestine." He added that Palestine would be isolated from the Arab countries by means of "dams", so that the Jews would not see the Arabs and vice-versa. "We the Arabs are prepared to accept upon ourselves this great sacrifice for the sake of your welfare and the gathering in of your exiles and because of the generations of suffering which you underwent in Spain, Russia and other places."

Amin proposed that this exchange of population should be carried out in the same way as the Greco-Turkish population exchange, and that special committees should be established to deal with the liquidation of Jewish and Arab property. He realised that at first there would be great difficulties, but he hoped they would be finally solved.

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<sup>1</sup> / Ben-Horin, *A Brick for the Bridge*, p.162, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial*, (New York, 1984), p.25.

Amin feared that "the Arabs will not agree to this extortionate solution." However, he undertook the task of persuading them to accept this plan. The Jews would just need to hint on their agreement and then he would open publicity offices in all the Arab countries in order to obtain Arab agreement to the plan and to its implementation. With regards to Britain, Amin held that there was no need for its involvement. <sup>(1)</sup>

#### **AMBASSADOR WILLIAM BULLITT**

William Christian Bullitt began his career in government service during the first world war. He was the first U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union and was afterwards the ambassador to France where he was popularly known as the "Champagne Ambassador". Ben-Gurion would refer to Bullitt by the nickname "Kedouri".

In 1942, Bullitt, prior to a visit to Palestine, told Ben-Gurion of his plans for Arab transfer. Ben-Gurion reported on this conversation in a letter which he wrote to Shertok, in February of that year. He wrote that Bullitt had told him that "what we had to do in Palestine is simple: to expel all the Arabs from both banks of the Jordan and give the Jewish people a complete and empty country." Ben-Gurion reported that when he tried to explain to him that it was not so simple and in any case unnecessary, his (Ben-Gurion's) "Zionism was reduced in his eyes." <sup>(2)</sup> We in fact find on several occasions in the 1940s that Ben-Gurion would make a point of publicly decrying as unnecessary the transfer of Arabs, when speaking to non-Jews!

Two years later, in April 1944, the twentieth Anniversary dinner of the American-British Convention on Palestine took place. Amongst the many addresses was one by William Bullitt and it was built around the views of Aaron Aaronsohn.

In his lecture at this anniversary dinner, Bullitt quoted the plan of Aaronsohn's for Arab transfer, adding that under the circumstances of 1944, "I wonder if it may not be wise to consider now, seriously, the proposals which Aaron Aaronsohn made in 1919... [they] may come into the realm of practical politics. I do not say that they will but that they may." <sup>(3)</sup>

Towards the end of his address, under the heading of "Population Exchange" Bullitt asked "Why should we despair of such a solution?" He felt that "constructive statesmanship" was necessary and pointed out that twenty years earlier two great statesman had settled the "ancient blood-feud" between Greece and Turkey by means of a population transfer. Bullitt said that "after Aaron Aaronsohn's death ... I felt often that I was in a minority of one. I may still be. But I continue to have faith in his proposals." <sup>(4)</sup>

#### **HIGH COMMISSIONER SIR ARTHUR WAUCHOPE**

In 1936 the Arab rebellion in Palestine began and the High Commissioner Wauchope utilised this opportunity to "repatriate" Arabs to their countries of origin.

In a handwritten note written by Wauchope on 2 May 1936, regarding the Hauranis, he wrote, "They are a turbulent lot. The sooner they go the better on their own request. Next week they may not want to go ... As long as they go voluntarily I feel no Arab comments." <sup>(5)</sup>

A memorandum of the same date speaks of a number of Syrians who "had applied urgently and pleadingly to be sent back to their homes for the reasons that there was no work for them to do at Jaffa." <sup>(6)</sup> Wauchope realised that as soon as Jaffa port would be reopened

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<sup>1</sup> / Proposal, 21 May 1939, (CZA S25/5630).

<sup>2</sup> / Ben-Gurion to Shertok, 8 February 1942, p.6, (BGA).

<sup>3</sup> / William Bullitt, "A Constructive Solution", The American-British Convention on Palestine, (New York, July 1944), pp.25-28.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., pp.29-30.

<sup>5</sup> / Wauchope to Hall, 2 May 1936, (ISA M223/1/578/36).

<sup>6</sup> / Memorandum, 2 May 1936, (ISA M223/1/578/36).



they would rescind their request. He therefore accordingly wrote a note, "Every encouragement should be given to countrymen to return to their own country without compulsion. When the port is re-opened fully probably none will want to go without compulsion." He considered that written statements that they were leaving voluntarily to be "absolutely needless". (1) Hathorn Hall, the Chief Secretary immediately passed on Wauchope's instructions to the District Commissioner of the Southern District adding that a special train was being arranged to transfer these Arabs to Syria. (2)

A few weeks later, Wauchope telegraphed the Commissioner of Somaliland that he was "repatriating some twenty Somalis by first available steamer. It is urgently necessary in present circumstances that they should leave Palestine on general grounds and in their own interests." (3) Likewise for the same reasons, ten Sudanese (4) and ten Nigerians (5) were repatriated. The meaning of "general grounds and in their own interests" can be found in several letters by Wauchope to the Acting Governor General of Sudan. In these letters he wrote that their "presence in Palestine in present circumstances is considered undesirable." (6)

There are also written statements by Sudanese desiring to be repatriated. These statements are signed with the "left hand thumbprint of applicant". (7) They could obviously not read and one might therefore ask if they in fact knew what they were "thumbprinting"?!

## LEOPOLD AMERY

Leopold Amery was a British statesman who as Assistant Secretary to the War Cabinet drafted one of the formulas which eventually became the Balfour Declaration. For five years from 1924, he was British Colonial Secretary and between 1940-5 he was the Secretary of State for India. It was in this last office that he tried in early 1941, to assist Montague Bell to bring to fruition the plan for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq.

On 4 October 1941, Amery wrote a letter to the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, in which he put forward his views on solving the Palestine question, which included transferring the Arabs. He considered that "the ideal policy might well be to give the Jews the whole of Palestine and find the money for the transference of the existing Palestinian population to Transjordan and Syria and its resettlement there." Amery did not specifically state whether he intended such a transfer of Arabs to be voluntary or compulsory, but from a continuation of his letter it would seem that the latter was intended. He wrote of the Greco-Turkish population exchange which was compulsory, and of the population exchange of a compulsory nature which would very probably be required after the termination of the Second World War. However, making a pragmatic assessment of the situation, he admitted that the British would not be able themselves to "undertake so extreme a policy in view of our many Moslem interests." He added that this plan could possibly be implemented if the Mandate were to be handed over to Roosevelt with the suggestion that he "get on with it!" Possibly Amery had heard that nearly three years earlier, Roosevelt had first put forward a plan to transfer Arabs from Palestine to Iraq.

Amery suggested that if this plan could not be implemented, then it would be a feasible policy to give the Jews a part of Palestine such as had been recommended by the Peel Commission. He felt this would be easier if the Jewish State were to be part of a wider Federation and believed that this was the right solution which might well appeal to both Jews and Arabs were it to be boldly presented to them. He concluded that failing such acceptance he could see "no alternative except the partition of Palestine with a compulsory

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1 / Note, Wauchope, 2 May 1936, (ISA M223/I/578/36).

2 / Hall to District Commissioner Southern District, 2 May 1936, (ISA M223/I/578/36).

3 / Wauchope to Commissioner of Somaliland, 26 May 1936, (ISA M223/I/578/36).

4 / Wauchope to Governor General of Sudan, 5 June 1936, (ISA M223/I/578/36).

5 / Wauchope to Governor of Nigeria, 2 July 1936, (ISA M223/I/578/36).

6 / Wauchope to Acting Governor General of Sudan, 18 July 1936, 5 September 1936, 24 October 1936, (ISA M223/I/578/36).

7 / e.g. Mohammed Issa to Government of Palestine, 19 June 1936, (ISA M223/I/578/36).

re-settlement." (1)

Churchill did not react to the ideas of Amery. (2) In fact the debate on the political future of Palestine disappeared from the agenda of the British Cabinet for over a year and a half.

### **SIR NORMAN ANGELL**

Sir Norman Angell, the Nobel Peace Prizewinner, was born in 1874. He was an English author and publicist and acted as general manager of the "Paris Daily Mail" for a decade. Between 1929-31 he was a Labour Member of Parliament and in 1931 was knighted.

In November 1941, Angell advocated moving the Arabs of Palestine into other Arab territory. "A plan must be initiated to help in the development of other Arab territories so that Arabs in Palestine might immigrate to purely Arab lands where their establishment would be encouraged." (3)

In mid-1943, in an article in the "Jewish Frontier", Angell set out "The Conditions for Zionist Success". By this he meant "that Palestine should become a self-governing Jewish state, a true homeland of the Jews, master of its own immigration policy, open to development, without the restrictions and complications imposed by the presence of an Arab population nearly twice as great as the Jewish population."

Angell said that the obstacle to the realisation of Zionist aims was "the presence of a major Arab population in Palestine itself" which could be a major defense threat to a Jewish State. He added that there were other obstacles such as bureaucratic incompetence and a tendency to solve problems by postponing them or even evading them, "but the major concrete difficulty is the Arab position."

He felt that if the problem of defence for a Jewish Palestine could be summounted, it would be possible to tackle the Arab problem in Palestine along more constructive lines than those persued in the past. Angell's solution to this problem was the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine, but he began by discounting "any enforced removal of the Arab population" describing it as "wrong and suicidal". His plan was that the vast undeveloped areas of the Arab world would be developed and offered to the Arabs of Palestine on conditions "so attractive that you might secure a voluntary Arab emigration in large numbers on to land developed for the specific purpose of inducing them to go there." He considered that side by side with Jewish immigration into Palestine, there would be an Arab emigration until the population of the country would be predominantly Jewish. He concluded by emphasizing that this had to be a purely voluntary migration. (4)

We can see that Angell's final aims for Palestine are quite clear and given the authority to implement them, he might have succeeded in inducing the Arabs to migrate in large numbers to the vast areas of the Arab kingdoms.

### **EDWYN BEVAN**

Edwyn Bevan, the historian and philosopher, was a university lecturer at King's College, London. One of the first, if not the first, proposals made publicly by a non-Jew, to transfer Arabs from Palestine to Iraq, was made by him, in the form of a letter written to "The Times" of London in September 1936.

Bevan wrote that one could not look upon Palestine as a country belonging to the Arabs in

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<sup>1</sup> / Amery to Churchill, 4 October 1941, Reprinted by Natanel Katzberg, *The Palestine Problem in British Policy 1940 - 1945*, (Jerusalem, 1977), p.18.

<sup>2</sup> / Gavriel Cohen, *Churchill and Palestine 1939 - 1942*, (Jerusalem, 1976), p.47 (Hebrew numerals).

<sup>3</sup> / quoted by Joseph Schechtman, *Population Transfers in Asia*, (New York, 1949), pp.117-18.

<sup>4</sup> /Norman Angell, "The Conditions for Zionist Success", *Jewish Frontier*, (New York), vol.x, no.6 (101), June 1943, pp.12-14.

the same way as England belongs to the English or France to the French. "The Palestinian Arabs are only part of the great Arab people, and that people has, outside Palestine, wide lands for habitation." At that period Jews were being persecuted in various European countries, and Bevan pointed out that these Jews had no home to go to other than Palestine.

He then proposed his solution to this dilemma. After talking about Iraq's history of greatness, he urged that it would be pointless to restore Iraq's irrigation system so long as the country was underpopulated. Any addition of population would have to be Arab. "Thus we see today the teasing anomaly: in Palestine an Arab population of some 820,000, who stand in the way of the Jews' need to re-enter their ancient home, and just on the other side of the desert, 500 miles to the east, a land of immense possibilities crying out for an additional Arab population of 4,000,000 or 5,000,000."

Bevan immediately added that any Arabs emigrating from Palestine to Iraq "would have to do so quite voluntarily." However, the Arabs would be provided with great inducements to move, the Iraqi Government offering "any Palestinian Arab a holding in Iraq larger and richer than his present holding in Palestine." Bevan said that he was sure that "many Palestinian Arabs would like to close with the bargain." He considered that it was reasonable for the Jewish community to provide most of the money for Iraq to use for this purpose.

If under this scheme the bulk of the Palestinian Arabs were to transfer to Iraq, Bevan felt that everyone "would have reason to feel pleased" - Iraq would have added to its population as a step towards a return to its former greatness, the individual Arabs would have gained better lands, and the Jews would have found "space for their home in the promised land." However, concluding on a pessimistic note, he was sceptical whether such a plan would ever be put into effect.

Bevan also added that the Peel Commission which had recently been set up could not be expected to suggest this idea since Iraq was an independent State outside the British Empire. Any initiative would have to be taken by the Iraqi Government. <sup>(1)</sup>

## **ELY CULBERTSON**

Ely Culbertson, the American writer and lecturer was born in 1891. He was Chairman of the Board of the Citizens' Committee for the United Nations Reform, and President of "World Federation Inc." He was also author of numerous publications propagating his ideas for World Peace, and a plan for a World Federation. Included in the latter was the establishment of a Jewish State.

According to Culbertson's system there would be eleven Regional Federations and around each would revolve a number of States which would be held in their orbits by psycho-social and economic forces. These eleven Regional Foundations would revolve around the World Federation and the whole system would be held together by the constitution of the World Federation. One of these Regional Federations would be the Middle Eastern Federation and one of the States revolving around it would be the Jewish State. <sup>(2)</sup>

Culbertson felt that there were two solutions to the Jewish problem in Palestine and that it would be the duty of the World Federation Government to decide which of them to adopt. In the first solution, which involved transfer of Arabs, Culbertson suggested that Palestine should become a Jewish State in the following way. "A large part of the Mohammedan and Christian populations of Palestine shall be transferred to another territory in the Middle East, where equivalent or better land and living conditions shall be provided, together with a reasonable bonus. This transfer shall be effected only with the consent of the groups concerned. The expenses of this transfer shall be borne, half by the Jewish State and half by the World Federation."

Culbertson then commented that despite the Arabs' attachment to Palestine "it is

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<sup>1</sup> / Edwyn Bevan, Letters to the Editor, The Times, (London), 11 September 1936, p.10.

<sup>2</sup> / Ely Culbertson, Summary of the World Federation Plan, (New York, 1943), p.23.

reasonable to assume that a large number of both Arabs and Christians will consent to emigrate if sufficient inducement is offered." He envisaged settling hundreds of thousands of homeless Jews from Europe in the lands vacated by the Arabs. In this way the Jews would become a majority in Palestine and thus form a sovereign Jewish State.

His alternative solution to be considered in the event of an insufficient number of Arabs agreeing to emigrate to permit of the establishment of a Jewish majority in Palestine, was for the country to become a ward of the World Federation. This would continue, until as a result of intensified Jewish immigration Palestine would acquire a Jewish majority, and, upon a plebiscite, its separate sovereignty would be established. <sup>(1)</sup>

Following the publication of his World Federation plan, Culbertson published in an expanded form in "The New Palestine", the phase of his plan dealing with Palestine. <sup>(2)</sup> This was later published together with other articles in a booklet brought out by the Zionist Organization of America. <sup>(3)</sup>

## JOHN GUNTHER

John Gunther was an American author and journalist, who was born in Chicago in 1901. He wrote a number of informal histories which included "Inside Europe", "Inside Asia", "Inside Africa", "Inside U.S.A.", "Inside Russia Today".

In his diary, Ben-Gurion reported that on the evening of 5 December 1937, he met with Gunther and his wife in the house of Moshe Shertok. At the time, Gunther was researching for his proposed book "Inside Asia" and intended continuing on to Egypt and thence to India, China and Japan. <sup>(4)</sup> Two years later his book was published.

In a chapter on Palestine, Gunther devoted several pages to the Arab-Jewish conflict and then concluded, "Perhaps amelioration will come some day... in the form of an exchange of populations. This is not practical politics yet; it could become practical politics any time the British believed in it. The Arabs might conceivably go to Transjordan or Iraq, where there is plenty of room; Jews from Europe could come then to Palestine. The idea may seem fantastic, but it worked when imposed by a strong hand on the Greeks and Turks. Something drastic must be done." <sup>(5)</sup>

In view of the fact that Gunther refers to the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey which was compulsory and states that "something drastic must be done" in connection with a proposed population exchange involving Palestine, we might infer that Gunther intended a compulsory population exchange in Palestine.

## WALTER CLAY LOWDERMILK

Walter Clay Lowdermilk who was at one time the Chief of the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, in the years 1938-9 made an extensive study of the Near and Middle East.

In his book "Palestine, Land of Promise", published in 1944, Lowdermilk put forward his plans for the development of Palestine. Regarding the Arab population, he asked, "What of the million and a third Arabs in Palestine and Trans-Jordan?" He believed that they would benefit from this Jewish development since an increase in Jewish immigration would provide them with new opportunities for investment and labour and enlarge the market for their produce. However, "If individual Arabs found that they disliked living in an industrialised

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.21-22.

<sup>2</sup> / Ely Culbertson, "No Solution Without a Plan", The New Palestine, (New York), vol.xxxiii, no.9, 5 March 1943, p.6.

<sup>3</sup> / Ely Culbertson, "No Solution Without a Plan", Palestine - A Jewish Commonwealth in Our Time, (Washington D.C., 1943), pp.26-29.

<sup>4</sup> / Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol.4, op. cit., p.462.

<sup>5</sup> / John Gunther, Inside Asia, (New York, 1939), p.589.

land, they could easily settle in the great alluvial plain of the Tigris and Euphrates Valley where there is land enough for vast numbers of immigrants." He pointed out that there was a large potential in Iraq and that it had an urgent need for increased population. <sup>(1)</sup>

The initiative for Lowdermilk's book came from Emanuel Neumann, who in his own book "In the Arena" wrote that he had suggested to Lowdermilk's wife that her husband write "a book about Palestine which would cast a new and fresh light on its possibilities." Lowdermilk took up this suggestion and his book became a "best-seller" and was well-reviewed in the press. <sup>(2)</sup>

Amongst the papers which reviewed this book was "Zionews" which was published by the New Zionist Organization of America. In the course of this review, the transfer proposal was described in great detail, the reviewer adding that "Lowdermilk approaches this problem with his usual spiritual courage and broadmindedness." <sup>(3)</sup>

Although the staff of the American Zionist Emergency Council handled Lowdermilk's manuscript prior to its publication, there is no indication that any of them objected to the passage regarding Arab transfer. <sup>(4)</sup>

A year prior to the publication of Lowdermilk's book, a Christian from Palestine, Francis Kettaneh, submitted a memorandum to the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden. In the course of this memorandum, Kettaneh referred to the fact that Lowdermilk had been sent to Asia (including Palestine) to "survey post war reconstruction possibilities in these countries." According to Kettaneh, in his subsequent report, Lowdermilk urged that "a canal be cut from the Mediterranean to the Jordan Valley," thus virtually making Palestine into an island which "could be more easily defended against Arab inroads." Kettaneh said that Lowdermilk "therefore advocates the forcible expropriation and expulsion of Arabs from Palestine, transforming the country into an independent Jewish State, capable of absorbing between four and six million Jews." <sup>(5)</sup> Kettaneh did not however identify this report of Lowdermilk's and in its absence Kettaneh's objectivity remains in doubt.

## COLONEL RICHARD MEINERTZHAGEN

Throughout his life, Richard Meinertzhagen was a supporter of Zionism. He served on the staff of General Allenby's army which conquered Palestine from the Turks and then was for several years the military adviser to the Middle Eastern Department of the Colonial Office.

In 1919, when he was Chief Political Officer in Palestine and Syria in the post-war military administration, he sent a despatch to the British Foreign Office accusing the British military administration of hostility to the principles of the Balfour Declaration. In the same vein, nearly two decades later, in July 1938, Meinertzhagen wrote in his diary, "What colossal humbug the Balfour Declaration now sounds," adding that all constructive effort had to come from the Jews, who had to fight a constant uphill battle against British officialdom. He went on to suggest a "way out of this ghastly mess" for the British Government, but he despaired of success since they were "such a jelly-bellied lot of kittens."

He felt that the French who "just at the moment" would support the British "in anything" should be asked to hand over the Mufti, and then the British and the French should together approach the Arabs "and insist on Jewish sovereignty in Palestine". Meinertzhagen said, "If any Arabs have doubts about it, let them go to the large Arab territories bordering Palestine after full compensation." He believed that two or three million pounds would be sufficient to buy out all the Arabs. He obviously felt strongly about

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<sup>1</sup> / Walter Clay Lowdermilk, Palestine, Land of Promise, (New York, 1944), p.178.

<sup>2</sup> / Emanuel Neumann, In the Arena, (New York, 1976), p.176.

<sup>3</sup> / Book Review, Zionews, (New York), vol.v, no.2, July 1944, pp.22-23.

<sup>4</sup> / Medoff, thesis, p.290.

<sup>5</sup> / Memorandum, Francis A. Kettaneh to Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, April 1943, pp.2-3, (PRO FO 371/35034 E2686/87/31).

his plan since he himself was prepared to help financially. "And how willingly, I would buy out an Arab family if I knew the land went for ever to Zionism." He felt that "thousands of Englishmen" would do likewise in order to settle the Jewish question and he did not fear any repercussions elsewhere provided the situation were to be handled properly. But he was very pessimistic about the British Government's implementing any plan to solve the Palestine question. (1)

Again six years later, Meinertzhagen put forward his proposal which might involve the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. He felt that the only solution of the problem was "the gift of Palestine to Jewry" and this needed to be implemented immediately. "Those Arabs who dislike the solution can be compensated and moved elsewhere," wrote Meinertzhagen in his diary, adding that it had been claimed that such a transfer would be a "great injustice to the Arabs." He himself considered that the "arguments for and against this contention are manifold and interminable." He commented that one hears "little about injustice to the Jews" and that a settlement of the Jewish Question which would affect World Jewry would cause only a slight injustice to a handful of Arabs who already had "a country many hundred times greater than Palestine." (2)

### REV. DR. JAMES PARKES

James Parkes, the English theologian and historian was born in 1896. He wrote a number of articles on anti-Semitism in which he demonstrated a strong sympathy with the Jewish people and an appreciation of Judaism as a religious system.

In 1945, Parkes looked at the problem of Palestine pragmatically and decided that a bi-national state in Palestine would be unworkable. He therefore concluded that there were two alternatives. The first was to tell the Jews that a Jewish National Home in Palestine was not possible and that they should either come to an arrangement with the Arabs or leave for elsewhere. The second was to tell the Arabs that the Jews needed Palestine more than they and that it would therefore become a Jewish Commonwealth. Thence to say to the Arabs, "If you do not wish to stay in it, you will receive compensation and be settled elsewhere." Parkes considered that the proposed frontiers of the past partition plan were unsatisfactory and that the Jewish Commonwealth needed to be larger. He felt that "so far as rights are concerned, both Jews and Arabs have unchallengable cases" and therefore one would have to give way to the other. He concluded that "from the standpoint of need it seems to me clear that the decision lies in favour of the Jews" - the Arabs having "lands stretching from the Atlantic to Iran." (3)

Parkes' paper was followed by a comment by Sir John Hope Simpson. [Fifteen years earlier, a Commission headed by Simpson had gone to Palestine to study the economic conditions there. His report had declared that there was no margin of land in Palestine available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants. The statistical basis of this report was subsequently challenged by the Jewish Agency Executive in London.]

Simpson was highly critical of Parkes' conclusions. In the course of his argument, he wrote, "That there is any Jewish right whatsoever (to Palestine), save the right conferred by the Mandate, is pure assumption, unsupported by fact," and that Jewish rights to Palestine "based on an occupation of two thousand years ago, can hardly be seriously considered." (4)

With regard to Parkes' proposal on resettling the Arabs, Simpson wrote, "It is... perfectly clear that action taken to hand over Palestine to the Jews, and to invite the Arabs to evacuate their country for that purpose, would be diametrically opposed" to certain articles

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1 / Richard Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary 1917 - 1956*, (London, 1959), pp.171-72.

2 / *Ibid.*, p.191.

3 / James Parkes, "The Jewish World since 1939", *International Affairs*, (London), vol.21, 1945, pp.97-98.

4 / Sir John Hope Simpson, "The Jewish World since 1939 - A comment on Dr. James Parkes' Paper", *International Affairs*, (London), vol.21, 1945, p.101.

of the League of Nations Covenant and the Mandate. <sup>(1)</sup>

In answer to Simpson's last statement, a certain Carl J. Friedrich retorted, "All that responsible people say is that those Arabs who do not like a policy of free immigration... will, if they do not wish to stay in Palestine, receive compensation and be settled elsewhere. There is nothing novel in this suggestion except the idea of compensation." <sup>(2)</sup>

## REINHOLD NIEBUHR

Reinhold Niebuhr was a member of the Executive Committee of the Christian Council on Palestine. By 1941, he had begun publicly to advocate a Jewish homeland.

On 14 January 1946, Niebuhr gave evidence in Washington D.C. before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine. He in fact arrived uninvited in order to read a statement on behalf of the Christian Council on Palestine, and at the private urging of Stephen Wise. After waiting all day he was finally allowed to speak when an invited anti-Zionist witness failed to show up. <sup>(3)</sup>

In the course of his evidence he said that there was "no perfectly just solution of any political problem." In the case of the Arab-Jewish conflict, he stated that "the Arabs have a vast hinterland in the Middle East, and the fact that the Jews have nowhere to go, establish the relative justice of their claims and of their cause."

As a solution to this problem, Niebuhr put forward a transfer proposal. "Perhaps ex-President Hoover's idea that there should be a large scheme of resettlement in Iraq for the Arabs might be a way out." <sup>(4)</sup>

After he finished his statement, he was cross-examined by the Committee. One of the committee members referred to a study which had been made on population problems in Palestine and then said, "The upshot ... is that it is practically impossible to get a Jewish majority in Palestine and keep it until you move out some of the Arabs. The Arabs increase twice as fast as the Jews." He then asked Niebuhr, "You would be inclined to take Herbert Hoover's solution that we move some of the Arabs across the Jordan, would you?" Niebuhr answered: "Yes. Not necessarily forcible removal." <sup>(5)</sup>

From his answer we can see that Niebuhr was leaving open whether the transfer should be "forcible removal" or voluntary transfer. In fact his biographer Richard Fox, shows that Niebuhr inclined towards "forcible transfer". He wrote, "As Niebuhr bluntly put it in his new syndicated column distributed by Religious News Service, the Arabs had a 'pathetic pastoral economy.' They might not immediately perceive the justice of the quid pro quo - a secure Jewish homeland (including forced relocation of some Arab Palestinians) in exchange for greater prosperity - but they would in the long run." <sup>(6)</sup> (emphasis added)

## SENATOR CLAUDE PEPPER

Following his graduation from the law department of Harvard University, Claude Pepper practiced law. In 1936 he was elected as a Democratic senator from Florida, where he served until 1951.

In October 1945, Mousa Al-Alami, a prominent lawyer from Palestine, and head of the Arab Propaganda Bureau, had a meeting with the American Charge d'Affaires at the U.S.A. legation in Baghdad. During the course of this meeting, Al-Alami reported on a long

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.103-04.

<sup>2</sup> / Carl J. Friedrich, "British Policy in Palestine", *The Menorah Journal*, (New York), vol.xxxiii, no.2, October - December 1945, p.249.

<sup>3</sup> / Richard Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr, a Biography*, (New York, 1985), p.226.

<sup>4</sup> / Stenographic Report, Hearing before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, Washington D.C., 14 January 1946, pp.141-42, (CZA gimmel 9960 b viii).

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.147.

<sup>6</sup> / Fox, *op. cit.*, p.226.

discussion that he had had with Senator Claude Pepper.

According to Al-Alami, Senator Pepper had told him "that he had worked out a plan to settle the Zionist question which he believed would be satisfactory to both Arabs and Jews. Senator Pepper's idea was to effect a shift of population, that is, sending all the Jews in Arab countries to Palestine and all the Arabs in Palestine to various Arab countries."

In reply Al-Alami had said "that this suggestion had been offered before and had been ruled out as impractical by both sides for several reasons." It is interesting to note that the first of the reasons brought by Al-Alami to refute Pepper was that it was the Jews who would not want to leave the Arab countries! <sup>(1)</sup>

## **BERTRAND RUSSELL**

Bertrand Russell was an English philosopher and mathematician. In his later years, Russell was actively engaged in the campaign for nuclear disarmament. For his numerous writings, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

In 1943, Bertrand Russell wrote about his views regarding a future Jewish State. With regard to the Arab question, he distinguished between the theoretical solution and the practical realities.

For the theoretical solution, he put forward the idea of transfer. He wrote that "it should be possible to offer adequate compensation for any disturbance, and to cause the Arabs voluntarily to surrender inconvenient rights in return for perhaps more valuable concessions elsewhere."

However, in practical terms, he concluded that the problem was much more complex. This was not because he felt transfer was unethical or wrong, but because "the question is inflamed by the very general rise of Asiatic self-consciousness, and a determination to assert the rights of Asia as against the white man." Even in the eyes of the most enlightened Indian inhabitants, Russell considered that Zionism appeared as an ally of British imperialism. He did not feel that there was "the faintist justification for this view"; however since it was widely held, it was politically important. <sup>(2)</sup>

## **HARRY ST. JOHN PHILBY**

Harry St John Philby (father of the spy Kim Philby), was a British soldier and archaeologist, who during the First World War served in the Arab Information Office in Cairo. For a long period, he acted as representative for various British companies in Saudi Arabia and was also an advisor and confidant of King Ibn Saud.

### **The Plan and Initial Contacts**

In May 1939, the British Government brought out its White Paper, which among other things severely curtailed Jewish immigration into Palestine. Jews and many non-Jews criticised and rejected the contents of this White Paper. Philby, however, considered that the British could not, or would not go back on the National Home aspect of their Palestine policy and that it was therefore essential to devise a formula "for spreading the contingent benefits of a suitable settlement of the Palestine issue over every section of the Arab world" and to find an intermediary who was willing and competent to secure general acceptance of such a formula. He felt that the only candidate for this role was Ibn Saud, the ruler of Saudi Arabia.

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<sup>1</sup> / Memorandum of Conversation with Mousa Al-Alami, 6 October 1945, p.1, (NA 867N.01/10-945).

<sup>2</sup> / Bertrand Russell, "Zionism and the Peace Settlement", *The New Palestine*, (New York), vol.xxxiii, no.15, 11 June 1943, p.5; Bertrand Russell, "Zionism and the Peace Settlement", *Palestine - A Jewish Commonwealth in Our Time*, op.cit., pp.19-20; Dina Porat, "Bertrand Russell on the Jewish State: 1943", *Zionism*, (Tel-Aviv), vol.3, Spring 1981, p.128.



(1)

Philby's plan, which included a considerable transfer of Arabs from Palestine contained three stages. "The whole of Palestine should be left to the Jews. All Arabs displaced therefrom should be resettled elsewhere at the expense of the Jews, who would place a sum of 20 million pounds sterling at the disposal of King Ibn Saud for this purpose. All other Asiatic Arab countries, with the sole exception of Aden, should be formally recognised as completely independent in the proper sense of the term." These arrangements were to be proposed by Britain and America to Ibn Saud, as the principal Arab ruler and guaranteed jointly by both countries. (2) Throughout the course of Philby's efforts, he attached great importance to the part to be played by Britain and America.

The expression "all Arabs displaced therefrom" which was contained in his plan, was spelt out more clearly by Philby in a meeting with various Zionist leaders at the beginning of October. On this, Namier wrote, "Philby's idea was that Western Palestine should be handed over completely to the Jews, clear of Arab population except for a 'Vatican City' in the old city of Jerusalem." (3)

[Lewis Namier was an English historian and Zionist who had served as political secretary to the Zionist Executive between the years 1927-31. In 1930, he had been an intermediary in obtaining the MacDonald Letter which in effect cancelled the Passfield White Paper.]

From this plan, one might suppose Philby to be an ardent non-Jewish Zionist. In fact, the opposite was the case. After setting out the details of his plan, he wrote, "I have always held and still hold that the Jews have not a shadow of legal or historical right to go to Palestine." He added that he had not failed to realise that both Britain and America had "from the beginning been firmly minded to ride roughshod over all considerations of right and justice in favour of Zionism." (4) Why, therefore, should such a rabid anti-Zionist put forward such a plan. Philby had looked at the situation in a pragmatic way and considered that his plan would be in the Arabs' best interests.

In contrast, however, to this assessment, Nur Masalha in his book entitled "Expulsion of the Palestinians" considers that "Namier's assertion that Philby made the initial proposal of Arab transfer and suggested the sum to be paid to Ibn Saud must be examined critically." He also feels that "the idea of a complete transfer save for a 'Vatican City' in the old city of Jerusalem seems less likely to have come from Philby, a convert to Islam, than from Namier." (5) We should however bear in mind that reading through Masalha's book, we see that his thesis is to show that any proposal for Arab transfer put forward by non-Jews was in fact a result of Zionist lobbying!

Philby worked strenuously on his plan and on 24 September 1939, he had a chance meeting with Namier at the Athenaeum Club in London. Philby there explained that since the war would "interfere with Moslem pilgrimages to Mecca" thus reducing Ibn Saud's income, he would "need more money from outside for armaments." Philby then asked Namier whether since five hundred million pounds was to be raised for Jewish settlement, it would not be possible to use 20 million pounds of it "to buy Palestine." (6)

Philby feared that the difficulty would be "to persuade England and France to grant complete independence to the Arabs and that France should withdraw from Syria." At that time, Syria was under a French Mandate and Philby did not know how to force France to withdraw. Namier, however, had a solution. As a result of the war, the Jewish refugee question would become more acute and greater pressure could be brought to bear on the Western countries to facilitate a solution. The only solution was Palestine, and it could only be given to

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1 / Harry St John B. Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, (London, 1952), p.212.

2 / *Ibid.*, pp.212-13.

3 / Notes on Meeting between Weizmann, Shertok, Namier and Philby, 6 October 1939, p.1, (WA).

4 / Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, *op. cit.*, p.219.

5 / Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, (Washington D.C., 1992), p.156.

6 / Note of Meeting between Namier and Philby, 24 September 1939, p.1, (CZA Z4/14615).

the Jews on condition that there was a union between Syria and the other Arab countries. <sup>(1)</sup>

In his book, Philby writes of a meeting with Weizmann and Namier on 28 September, 1939. At this meeting Philby discussed the general tenor of his plan with them and their reactions were "positive and favourable." <sup>(2)</sup> No other evidence of such a meeting taking place on this date can be found and it is quite possible that Philby confused it with the meeting which took place on 24 September. Weizmann was definitely not present on the 24 September, since at this meeting, Namier had suggested that Philby meet with Weizmann. Philby accepted this proposal and asked that Namier arrange a date for such a meeting. <sup>(3)</sup>

After his meeting with Namier, Philby met with Arnold Lawrence, brother of T. E. Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia") and Arthur Lourie, the Political Secretary of the Jewish Agency in London, in order to explain his plan. Lawrence felt that to request the whole Western Palestine for the Jews, including the wholly Arab areas was "a bit too much", but Philby disagreed with Lawrence on this. <sup>(4)</sup>

A meeting between Weizmann, Shertok, Namier and Philby took place on 6 October at the Athenaeum Club. Originally it had been planned for the previous day, but had been postponed to enable Shertok (who arrived in London on 6 October) to attend. On the way to this meeting Namier put Shertok in the picture, and informed him of the contents of his meeting with Philby nearly two weeks earlier. <sup>(5)</sup>

At the meeting of 6 October, Philby's plan was discussed in greater detail. In the first stage, Philby envisaged "the handing over to Saudi Arabia of Syria and various small states on the Red Sea." He did not, however, define what the future relationship should be if Ibn Saud to Transjordan and Iraq, but he suggested that of all the Arab states were to be granted full independence, a proper settlement would be reached. <sup>(6)</sup>

With regard to the financial side, Philby pointed out that in order to go to Ibn Saud, he must have something concrete. Weizmann replied that "if we receive all of Western Palestine it will be possible to talk about 10 to 20 million pounds." Philby naturally took the higher figure. Weizmann explained that if, while in the United States, he received word that Ibn Saud was prepared to consider such an agreement, he would turn to the President with the suggestion that the American Government assist in financing the scheme which would help solve the refugee problem "by means of the establishment of a Jewish State and the transfer of the Arab population." Philby was enthusiastic over this idea. <sup>(7)</sup> However, linking the United States with the financing of this scheme was to lead to some embarrassment and unpleasantness.

Namier was less confident than Weizmann of the possibility of obtaining such an amount in cash. He therefore emphasised that such sums would have to be paid in goods. If, for example, Ibn Saud wanted arms, they could be supplied over a period of time from Jewish armament works in Palestine. Shertok suggested that part at least of this twenty million pounds should be used "for development in connection with the transfer of the Palestine Arabs to other Arab countries." <sup>(8)</sup>

After Shertok and Weizmann had left, Philby asked Namier, whether the Zionists "would be prepared to give bribes to the Mufti and some people in Ibn Saud's entourage so as to prevent a campaign against this proposed settlement." Namier replied that, if necessary, the Zionists would supply the money, provided they were sure that the recipients would do what they promised. <sup>(9)</sup>

In his book, Philby concluded that at this meeting, his plan received the "cordial

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<sup>1</sup> / Moshe Shertok, Handwritten Diary entry 6 October 1939, p.17, (CZA S25/198/3) ; Diaries of Sharett, vol.iv, op. cit., p.374.

<sup>2</sup> / Philby, Arabian Jubilee, op. cit., p.213.

<sup>3</sup> / Note of Meeting between Namier and Philby, op. cit., p.3.

<sup>4</sup> / Shertok, Handwritten Diary entry 6 October 1939, op. cit., p.18 ; Diaries of Sharett, vol.iv, op. cit., pp.374-75.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.17 ; Ibid., p.374.

<sup>6</sup> / Notes on Meeting between Weizmann, Shertok, Namier and Philby, op. cit., p.1.

<sup>7</sup> / Shertok, Handwritten Diary entry 6 October 1939, op. cit., p.20 ; Diaries of Sharett, vol.iv, op. cit., p.376.

<sup>8</sup> / Notes on Meeting between Weizmann, Shertok, Namier and Philby, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>9</sup> / Ibid.

approval" of both Weizmann and Shertok, who agreed to use all their influence with the British and American Governments to persuade them to accept and implement the plan. <sup>(1)</sup>

Shertok commented in his diary that the entire plan seemed to him "unrealistic in the extreme." He added, however, that it contained one important political point, namely the appearance of Philby before Ibn Saud "with the suggestion to deliver all of Western Palestine to the Zionists and to remove the Arabs from it." In order to implement this, Shertok felt that Philby should be allowed to proceed without having obstacles put in his way. <sup>(2)</sup>

In her biography of Philby, Elizabeth Monroe wrote that during the course of the London Conference held towards the beginning of 1939, Philby "evolved a fresh 'Philby plan' for solving Britain's Palestine problem", which he then put to Ben-Gurion and Weizmann at a secret lunch party. <sup>(3)</sup> Norman Rose, the biographer of Namier understood this to mean that Philby had already put forward his transfer plan in February 1939. <sup>(4)</sup> This explanation is, however, open to grave doubt since Philby himself said that Weizmann had had knowledge of his transfer plan since September 1939. <sup>(5)</sup> According to Professor Yehoshua Porath, the "plan" of February 1939, referred to by Monroe, was for the Arabs to agree to the immigration of 50,000 Jews into Palestine in the course of the subsequent five years in exchange for Jewish recognition of Ibn Saud's son Feisal as King of Palestine. <sup>(6)</sup>

### Zionist Efforts

In a report given by Ben-Gurion to the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem in November 1939, Ben-Gurion commented that they had obviously heard about Philby's plan. After summarising the details he informed them that Philby had travelled to Saudi Arabia with his plan. "Our office in London," continued Ben-Gurion, "is now occupied with the preparation of explanatory material with regard to the transfer of population." Ben-Gurion then said that he "did not believe in compulsory transfer, but believed that it was also possible to transfer part of the Arabs from Palestine by agreement." <sup>(7)</sup> This would seem to be a complete volte-face, since a year and-a-half earlier, Ben-Gurion had stated to the same Executive, "I favour compulsory transfer." However, Porath understood Ben-Gurion's statement of November 1939 to mean that "he did not believe in the possibility of compelling the Arabs of Palestine to leave the country, but he did hold that some of them would agree to do this voluntarily." <sup>(8)</sup> Thus, Ben-Gurion, according to Porath, was assessing the situation from a practical point of view and was not giving his personal views on transfer. Support for Porath's interpretation of Ben-Gurion's statement comes from an entry made by Ben-Gurion in his diary, a few days earlier. Ben-Gurion felt that compulsory transfer was not possible for the simple reason that the British Government would not implement it. "I don't believe in a compulsory transfer," wrote Ben-Gurion, "not because it could not take place, but because the English will not do it." <sup>(9)</sup>

Ben-Gurion then pointed out that there was also a group of Englishmen headed by Arnold Lawrence, who opposed Philby's plan. They wanted a federation of Palestine with Syria and Transjordan. The Jewish State under this plan would comprise the area designated under the Peel plan plus the Negev and the el-Jezireh area across the Jordan. Ben-Gurion and Namier had met with this group on 17 November and had explained that they would forgo the el-Jezireh area. In view of the fact that the British would not implement a compulsory transfer, Ben-Gurion felt that it was possible to establish "a Jewish State in the whole of Western Palestine even without transfer - a voluntary transfer would suffice." <sup>(10)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, op. cit., p.213.

<sup>2</sup> / Shertok, *Handwritten Diary entry 6 October 1939*, op. cit., p.20 ; *Diaries of Sharett*, vol.iv, op. cit., p.376.

<sup>3</sup> / Elizabeth Monroe, *Philby of Arabia*, (London, 1973), p.219.

<sup>4</sup> / Norman Rose, *Lewis Namier and Zionism*, (Oxford, 1980), p.95.

<sup>5</sup> / Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, op. cit., p.211.

<sup>6</sup> / Yehoshua Porath, "The Philby Episode", *Hazonut*, vol.ix, (Tel-Aviv), 1984, p.227.

<sup>7</sup> / *Minutes J. A. Exec.*, vol.31/1, no.18, 26 November 1939, p.6. (CZA).

<sup>8</sup> / Porath, *Hazonut*, op. cit., p.230.

<sup>9</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, *Diary entry 17 November 1939*, (BGA).

<sup>10</sup> / *Minutes, J. A. Exec.*, 26 November 1939, op. cit.; Ben-Gurion, *Diary entry 17 November 1939*, op. cit.

A report on the progress of the Philby plan was also given to the Political Committee of Mapai in November 1939. Berl Locker who had returned from London gave details of the plan to this forum. He then reported that in answer to Philby's question whether the Zionists would be able to raise 20 million pounds, Shertok had said "that it would not be easy since 20 million pounds was a vast sum." Weizmann had said that if Philby would get the agreement of Ibn Saud, he would go to Roosevelt and tell him that if you want to solve the Jewish refugee problem in Europe, help us raise a loan for this purpose. Locker also reported on Philby's condition that France give up Syria, and on Arnold Lawrence's opinion that "this programme, and in particular the removal of the Arabs from Palestine to be impossible". Lawrence however, would not interfere but he would also not assist. <sup>(1)</sup> We thus see that Locker's assessment of Lawrence's negative reaction towards the Philby plan was less severe than the assessment by Ben-Gurion.

Philby's plan was again mentioned in the same forum a few weeks later in a report given by Ben-Gurion on his visit to London. He said that Weizmann's thoughts on a Jewish State in Western Palestine rely mainly on Philby's plan which is just a "curiosity". Ben-Gurion felt it was good that Philby should speak to Ibn Saud, but it could not be considered sound political theory. <sup>(2)</sup>

As stated earlier, Weizmann and Shertok had promised Philby that they would use their influence with the British and American Governments to gain acceptance and implementation of the plan. Weizmann first turned to Churchill, who at the beginning of the war had been appointed "First Lord of the Admiralty." Weizmann gained access to Churchill via the Conservative member of Parliament, Brendon-Bracken, who was a personal friend and strong supporter of Churchill. Brendon-Bracken reported to Churchill on Weizmann's meeting with Philby in which Weizmann stressed that Palestine could bloom as a Jewish State and that for twenty million pounds, Ibn Saud would offer the Arabs a far better home than they had ever had in Palestine. <sup>(3)</sup>

On 17 December 1939, Weizmann met with Churchill. From the notes of the interview, <sup>(4)</sup> we see that Philby's plan was not discussed at this meeting. However, in his book, Philby writes that Weizmann discussed his plan "in general terms" with Churchill at this meeting, <sup>(5)</sup> but Philby does not give the source of this information.

### **Philby in Saudi Arabia**

At the beginning of January 1940, Philby returned to Saudi Arabia and on the 8th of the month communicated his plan to King Ibn Saud. Philby said that although there had been nothing whatsoever to prevent Ibn Saud from telling him "there and then that it was an impossible and unacceptable proposition", the King had agreed that "some arrangement might be possible in appropriate future circumstances" and had said that he would give him a definite answer at the appropriate time. He warned Philby meanwhile "not (to) breathe a word about the matter to anyone" especially any Arab. <sup>(6)</sup>

At his meeting with Philby in the previous October, Weizmann had asked that in the event of Ibn Saud's giving his assent and support for the plan, Philby should send word to Namier. Namier in turn would contact Weizmann who by then would be in America. <sup>(7)</sup> On 6 February 1940, Weizmann in New York sent a one-sentence letter to Philby, "Am interested to know whether you are proceeding further with proposal we discussed." <sup>(8)</sup> A week later Philby replied by telegram, "Progressing slowly." <sup>(9)</sup> Philby also wrote to his wife who was in London and she in turn wrote to Namier informing him that her husband's plan had "been

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes of Meeting of Political Committee of Mapai, 8 November 1939, p.10, (Mapai, file 23/39).

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes of Meeting of Political Committee of Mapai, 27 November 1939, p.8, (Mapai, file 23/39).

<sup>3</sup> / Porath, *Hazionut*, op. cit., p.231.

<sup>4</sup> / Short Note of Weizmann's Interview with Winston Churchill, 17 December 1939, (WA).

<sup>5</sup> / Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, op. cit., p.211.

<sup>6</sup> / Philby's Note on Interview with Hoskins, 17 November 1943, (henceforth Philby's Memo), p.5, (WA).

<sup>7</sup> / Notes on Meeting between Weizmann, Shertok, Namier and Philby, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>8</sup> / Telegram, Weizmann to Philby, 6 February 1940, (WA) ; Weizmann Letters, vol.xix, op. cit., no.206, p.224.

<sup>9</sup> / Telegram, Philby to Weizmann, 13 February 1940, (WA).

accepted in principle and he will think out how it can be worked." She also stressed that it had to be "treated as absolutely confidential" and should anything be leaked out Ibn Saud would "have no hesitation in denying the whole thing." (1)

On 6 February 1940, Weizmann had a meeting at the U.S. State Department with the Secretary of State and Walter Murray. During the course of this meeting, Weizmann reported that he had recently met with Philby in London and the latter had informed him "that he would like to take back with him to Saudi Arabia some basis of settlement which the King might be willing to support." Weizmann had answered Philby "that the only thing the Jews had to offer was money" and if "the price of the King's support of a scheme whereby the Arabs of Palestine would be voluntarily transferred to Trans-Jordan and Iraq" was three to four million pounds, Weizmann would be prepared to raise such a sum. Philby had promised Weizmann that he would convey this offer to the King, but Weizmann "had no means of knowing whether anything would come of it." Weizmann concluded by saying that at that time he was waiting for information from Philby "as to Ibn Saud's reactions to the discussions." (2) It is not clear whether the letter he sent Philby on the day of this meeting was sent before the meeting or as a result of the meeting.

Two days later, Weizmann met with President Roosevelt, but the notes of their conversation show that they did not specifically discuss the Philby plan. (3) Despite this, however, Philby wrote in his book that the two had discussed the plan at their meeting. (4)

On 3 April, Dora Philby wrote to Weizmann pointing out that her husband had written to her stating that "he hadn't had much opportunity to see the king alone to discuss your proposition again." (5)

Two weeks later, Philby wrote a message to his wife to be passed on to Weizmann. Philby pointed out that Ibn Saud "still won't say yes and won't say no. The truth is that he himself is quite favourably inclined towards the proposal and is just thinking out how it can be worked without producing a howl of anger among certain Arab elements." He said that the Saudis were afraid that the Jews would not be able to "perform their part of the contract," but he had assured Ibn Saud that they would be able "to work that through their influence in America" and that Weizmann could "work up the American side of the scheme." Philby apologised that his plan was moving so slowly. (6) In reply Weizmann wrote that since the plan was so important and complex, it was not surprising that it was moving so slowly. He agreed with the suggestion that "some indication should come from America as to the feasibility of the proposal" and said that on his next trip to the States he would try to do something to satisfy Philby on this point. (7)

About this time, Philby reminded the King that the latter had not given him a definite reply to his proposition. Philby reported Ibn Saud as saying that whilst "he was convinced of my genuine desire to help him, he found it very difficult to help me to help him to achieve his ends!" (8) Despite this answer, Philby did not drop his plan, but sounded out some of the King's principal advisers. The first one was Yusuf Yasin, who was hostile to the plan but respected Philby's confidence. Later, he spoke to Bashir Sa'dawi, whose ideas he found "unexpectedly favourable." However, within an hour, Sa'dawi had informed the King of his conversation with Philby and that same afternoon the King rebuked Philby. (9) Years later, Philby was still referring to his conversation on this matter with Sa'dawi as an error on his part. (10)

In May of that year, Philby again pressed the King, but was again kept waiting for an

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1 / Dora Philby to Namier, 21 February 1940, (WA).

2 / Memorandum of Conversation, State Department U.S.A. Division of Near Eastern Affairs, 6 February 1940, p.8, (NA 867N.01/1689).

3 / Note of Conversation between Roosevelt and Weizmann, 8 February 1940, (WA).

4 / Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, op. cit., p.211.

5 / Dora Philby to Weizmann, 3 April 1940, (WA).

6 / Dora Philby to Weizmann, 16 April 1940, (WA).

7 / Weizmann to Dora Philby, 24 April 1940, (CZA Z4/14615).

8 / Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, op. cit., pp.213-14.

9 / Philby's Memo, p.6.

answer. <sup>(1)</sup> At that time, Weizmann sent a message to Philby asking him for news of progress and assuring him of full confidence in his ability to secure acceptance of the plan. Philby replied that "positive results might still be expected in the event of the materialisation of the initiative envisaged in our original arrangements." <sup>(2)</sup>

From the summer of 1940 until the spring of 1941, Philby was detained by the British under the defence regulations. <sup>(3)</sup> The reasons for his detention were not divulged. However, "The New York Times" suggested that the reason for his internment may have been the British Government's desire to prevent Philby "from exposing its present Arab policy, which he says led to the trouble in Iraq, which never would have arisen if his suggestions had been followed." <sup>(4)</sup> After his release in the spring of 1941, Philby was in frequent touch with Namier and they invariably discussed his plan which Namier and his friends "had by no means given up as hopeless." <sup>(5)</sup>

### Discussions with British Officials

Immediately on his return to Britain from the United States in July 1941, Weizmann had two consecutive meetings with Lord Moyne, who a few months earlier, following the death of Lord Lloyd, had been appointed as Colonial Secretary. At their second meeting, Weizmann told Moyne of Philby's talks with Ibn Saud and with himself. Weizmann said that he "believed that the Jews would be willing to advance between fifteen and twenty million pounds to Ibn Saud for development purposes." Moyne replied that "some Arabs would have to be transferred, and wondered whether this could be done without bloodshed." Weizmann answered "that it could be done if Britain and America talked frankly to the Arabs." Moyne then remarked "that if transfer were to take place, he would like it to be done without friction." <sup>(6)</sup>

A week later Moyne wrote to Sir Harold MacMichael, the High Commissioner of Palestine, about this meeting. He reported that Weizmann hoped that in return for this development loan to Saudi Arabia, "Ibn Saud would persuade his fellow Arabs to accept a Jewish enclave (more than a mere token state) in Palestine, displaced Arabs being resettled with Jewish money in Iraq or elsewhere." Moyne continued that he believed that Weizmann "got some sort of vague encouragement for his ideas from the Prime Minister (Churchill) some months ago." <sup>(7)</sup>

MacMichael replied that he did not see Ibn Saud "taking a 'loan' of fifteen or twenty million pounds as an inducement to further Jewish designs in Palestine." He then referred indirectly to the element in Philby's plan regarding the transfer of Arabs and said that this scheme "for resettling displaced Arabs in Iraq is no doubt closely related to that prepared ... by Edward Norman." <sup>(8)</sup>

At the beginning of November 1941, at the request of Weizmann, John Martin, the Prime Minister's Private Secretary agreed to meet Philby. The information and analysis which Philby presented to Martin at this meeting was very similar to that contained in the reports of Weizmann on his meetings with Philby at the beginning of the war, although in this meeting Philby was more decisive on the attitude of Ibn Saud. According to Martin, Philby said that Ibn Saud "was ready to agree to give Palestine to the Jews on condition that as quid pro quo he received control over all the remaining Arab countries." After presenting the details of his plan to Martin, Philby "suggested that the transfer would be substantially reduced if the Jews could be persuaded to accept the excision of part of northern Palestine (containing some quarter of a million Arabs), which would naturally go with Syria: they

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes J. A. Exec., vol.37/1, no.39, 27 April 1943, p.8, (CZA).

<sup>2</sup> / Philby's Memo, p.6.

<sup>3</sup> / Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, op. cit., p.214.

<sup>4</sup> / "Philby says Britain rejected his Arab plan that would have averted trouble in Iraq", *The New York Times*, 9 May 1941, p.5.

<sup>5</sup> / Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, op. cit., p.215.

<sup>6</sup> / Note of Interview with Lord Moyne, 28 July 1941, (WA).

<sup>7</sup> / Moyne to MacMichael, 6 August 1941, (PRO CO 733/444 75872/115).

<sup>8</sup> / MacMichael to Moyne, 1 September 1941, p.2, (PRO CO 733/444 75872/115).

might be compensated if the Egyptians would agree to give up Sinai." Martin had "gained the impression" from Weizmann that Philby had more up-to-date news from Saudi Arabia, but in the course of his conversation with Philby, it became clear to him that Philby had not been in contact with Saudi Arabia since the beginning of 1940. However, Philby told Martin that he was convinced that the stand of Ibn Saud had not changed since then. <sup>(1)</sup>

In his diary, Oliver Harvey, private secretary to Anthony Eden, after referring to this meeting wrote that he knew that Churchill "is much attracted by such a plan." It had been referred to many Middle Eastern capitals for a report, but the British representatives had said that they did not think it was feasible due to the "jealousies and mutual mistrust of the Arabs." <sup>(2)</sup>

Incidentally, Oliver Harvey was himself a strong proponent of transfer of Arabs. A few months earlier he had written "I am still firmly convinced that Palestine should be a Jewish State as part of an Arab Federation of States if necessary and the Palestine Arabs should be paid to go away." <sup>(3)</sup> Again towards the end of 1942, he put forward this idea. "The only solution is a Jewish Palestine, which should be a British Palestine, the Arab inhabitants being transferred across the frontier and re-established there. There is plenty of room in Syria, Transjordan, Iraq and Arabia for the Palestine Arabs." <sup>(4)</sup>

In his autobiography, Weizmann writes about a meeting which he had with Philby towards the end of 1941. At this meeting they had spoken about Palestine and Arab relations and Philby had made a statement which Weizmann had noted down "but which had seemed incomprehensible to me (Weizmann) coming from him (Philby)." Philby had stated that two requirements were necessary to solve the Zionist problems. These were firstly, that Churchill and Roosevelt should tell Ibn Saud that they wished to see the Zionist programme carried through; secondly, that they should support his overlordship of the Arab countries and raise a loan to enable him to develop his territories. <sup>(5)</sup> It is very difficult to understand Weizmann's comment that this statement seemed "incomprehensible" to him coming from Philby. Surely Weizmann could not have forgotten his earlier meeting with Philby which had been followed by contact with Brenden-Bracken and correspondence with Philby and his wife?! Again, two years later, something of a similar nature happened. At the beginning of December 1943, Weizmann reported to the Jewish Agency Executive in London that the Prime Minister had propounded the Philby scheme to him "and it had come as a complete surprise." <sup>(6)</sup> Yet less than two weeks later the same Weizmann was to write, "When Mr. Philby first discussed this scheme with me in the autumn of 1939." <sup>(7)</sup> For some "reason" (which is not difficult to guess!), Weizmann was reluctant to admit that he had already known about and discussed Philby's plan as early as the autumn of 1939.

Meetings between Weizmann, Namier and Philby were reported by the last-named to have taken place on 9 March and 17 March, 1942. <sup>(8)</sup> Philby did not state what was discussed at these meetings, but presumably his plan featured in the conversations. Incidentally, in his autobiography, Weizmann wrote that he had left for America on 11 March. <sup>(9)</sup> However, in view of his meeting with Philby on 17 March, and a meeting with the new Colonial Secretary, Viscount Cranborne on 18 March, Weizmann's quoted date of 11 March is obviously an error.

At this meeting between Weizmann and Viscount Cranborne, Weizmann pointed out that he had been "immensely attracted" by the Philby plan. He added that if the British Government "showed willingness to adopt such a solution", world Jewry would certainly make available the suggested sum of 20 million pounds. He himself proposed to say nothing about

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<sup>1</sup> / Martin to Prime Minister, 3 November 1941, (PRO PREM 4/52/5).

<sup>2</sup> / The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey, ed. John Harvey, (London, 1978), p.59.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., p.28.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.194.

<sup>5</sup> / Chaim Weizmann, Trial and Error, (London, 1949), p.526.

<sup>6</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 2 December 1943, p.2, (CZA Z4/302/28i).

<sup>7</sup> / Weizmann Letters, vol.xxi, op. cit., no.106, p.108.

<sup>8</sup> / Philby, Arabian Jubilee, op. cit., p.215.

<sup>9</sup> / Weizmann, Trial and Error, op. cit., p.525.

this plan for "directly he mentioned such a proposal publicly, it would become part of the propaganda of the Zionist Movement and would as a result become anathema to the Arabs."<sup>(1)</sup>

#### **Discussions by the Jewish Agency Executive**

The section of Philby's plan dealing with transfer of the Arabs from Palestine was discussed at a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive in London in November 1942. The minutes report Namier as saying that "on the problem of transfer he agreed with Mr. Philby: it was necessary to have transfer in order to avoid friction", adding that Philby thought he could get Ibn Saud to agree to transfer, provided the Arabs were to be given independence elsewhere. Both Lord Melchett and Berl Locker, two members of the Executive were opposed "to putting forward compulsory transfer." Locker explained that by doing so "they would get the odium of having put it forward," but he thought that "with the agreement of Iraq, fairly large numbers of Arabs could be transferred." Namier asked whether, if they obtained the memorandum from Philby dealing with compulsory transfer, "they would be able to put it forward without in any way committing themselves." Melchett was more cautious and felt that "they should see the memorandum first." Simon Marks, another member of the Executive, and Chairman of the Board of the multiple chain store of Marks and Spencer, felt that they should ask for the establishment of a Jewish State within the British Empire and the "voluntary transfer of Arabs, with financial assistance, to neighbouring Arab States, particularly to Iraq." In reply, Namier commented that the conservatism of the peasants should not be underrated, but on the other hand, "there would be so much compulsory transfer of populations in Europe itself that it was bound to affect their problem." The Executive agreed that Namier should ask Philby to prepare a memorandum on this subject.<sup>(2)</sup>

Earlier at this same meeting, Harry Sacher, a lawyer and a British Zionist leader, had asked whether the Executive were "in favour of transfer of the Arabs either by compulsion or persuasion." Melchett commented that instead of "sucking people from the desert into Palestine" the stream should be diverted in the opposite direction. He felt that for this purpose ten million pounds would be required so that "Palestinian Arabs could be settled in the Euphrates areas, Iraq etc. and by emigration and transfer, the minority status of the Jews would rapidly change." Namier, however, doubted "whether it would be possible to get the consent of the Palestinian Arabs." Agreement by the Great Powers would be easier to obtain. Sacher answered that the problem of minorities was not limited to Palestine, but it was a European problem. He stated that "he was prepared to proceed on the basis of compulsory transfer of - say - half a million people." Locker was worried that talking about compulsory transfer might lead to Arab disturbances. He felt that a partial transfer might be possible by agreement with the various Arab States, "but if they had to wait for the consent of the Palestine Arabs he was afraid they would never achieve anything at all."<sup>(3)</sup>

At a meeting of the same Executive, held at the beginning of 1943, Namier asked whether now that the Arabs were "losing their nuisance value" the Executive should not press for a statement by Churchill and Roosevelt on the lines of the Philby scheme.<sup>(4)</sup> In a similar vein, at a meeting held two days later, Shertok said that Philby wanted Weizmann to take up the question with Roosevelt.<sup>(5)</sup>

About a week later, Weizmann, who had been in the United States since the previous March, had a meeting with the Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles. During the course of this meeting Weizmann informed Welles that he would like to travel to Saudi Arabia to put his solution of the Palestine problem to Ibn Saud. Although Weizmann did not refer to Philby, he detailed a plan which closely resembled Philby's. After observing that Arabs who desired to remain in Palestine would receive the same rights and privileges as the Jews,

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<sup>1</sup> / Cypher Telegram, Cranborne to MacMichael, 23 March 1942, pp.1-2, (PRO CO 733/444 E 75871/115).

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes J. A. Exec., London, 23 November 1942, p.4, (CZA Z4/302/26).

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., pp.2-3.

<sup>4</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 16 January 1943, (CZA Z4/302/26).

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 18 January 1943, p.1, (CZA Z4/302/26).



he said that "he also envisaged the possibility of granting compensation to such Arabs as desired voluntarily to leave Palestine so that they might resettle in other parts of the Arabian world." (1) As we saw earlier, Philby's plan involved the removal of almost all the Arabs from Palestine, whereas Weizmann spoke of "such Arabs as desired voluntarily to leave Palestine." Possibly Weizmann's ideas on this subject in 1943 were different from those of Philby's. Perhaps, however, it was a matter of pragmatism. The financial situation of Saudi Arabia was considerably better in 1943 than it had been in 1939, and as a consequence Ibn Saud was in far less need of the twenty million pounds. The bargaining power of the Zionists was thus considerably reduced, hence Weizmann had to moderate the proposals on transfer. In fact, just a few months later, Ibn Saud was to send a strongly worded letter to Roosevelt, against Zionism and the Jews, in which he condemned any proposal to transfer Arabs from Palestine. "What a calamitous and infamous miscarriage of justice," wrote Ibn Saud, "would ... result from the world struggle if the Allies should, at the end of their struggle, crown their victory by evicting the Arabs from their home in Palestine, substituting in their place vagrant Jews, who have no ties with this country, except an imaginary claim." (2)

### **Colonel Hoskins' Visit to Saudi Arabia**

At a meeting held in June 1943 between Weizmann, President Roosevelt and Sumner Welles, the last-named asked the President whether he would like to send someone to Ibn Saud in order to prepare the ground for a possible conference. Welles then suggested that Hoskins might serve the United States well in this capacity. (3)

About a week and-a-half later, a meeting was held between the American Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles and Stephen Wise and Nahum Goldmann. At this meeting Goldmann complained about a memorandum written by Hoskins after his visit to the Middle East a year earlier. He described this memorandum as "subjective, one-sided and definitely hostile." He felt that Hoskins was unsuitable for such a mission since he was "prejudiced against the Zionist program" and in any case was not the right person to be sent to speak with Ibn Saud. Goldmann also complained that Hoskins had been propagandising Senators and Congressmen with his personal views; to this Welles answered that Hoskins had no right to speak to Senators on this matter. (4)

Harold Hoskins was born in Beirut and reached the United States as a teenager. A textile executive by profession, he later became chairman of the Board of the American University of Beirut. During the Second World War, Hoskins undertook diplomatic missions in the Middle East on behalf of the United States Government.

At the beginning of July 1943, the Secretary of State, Cordell Hull gave Hoskins a directive from Roosevelt ordering him to proceed to Saudi Arabia to ascertain whether Ibn Saud "would enter into discussions with Dr. Chaim Weizmann or other representatives selected by the Jewish Agency for the purpose of seeking a solution of basic problems affecting Palestine acceptable to both Arabs and Jews?" (5) In August, Hoskins arrived in Saudi Arabia and entered into daily conversation with Ibn Saud. At the end of a week the King gave Hoskins "clear and categorical refusals" to meet with either Weizmann or a Jewish Agency representative. He went on to explain that during the first year of the war "Weizmann had impugned his character and motives by an attempted bribe of 20 million pounds sterling" using Philby as the intermediary. (6) According to another version, the sum was only 100,000 pounds sterling! (7) [Incidentally, stories of this nature die hard and several months later, the story

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1 / Memorandum of Conversation between Weizmann and Welles, 26 January 1943, pp.1-2, (WA).

2 / Ibn Saud to Roosevelt, 30 April 1943, FRUS, p.773.

3 / Meeting between Weizmann, Roosevelt and Welles, 12 June 1943, p.3, (CZA Z5/1378).

4 / Minute of Conversation with Hon. Sumner Welles - Under Secretary of State, 21 June 1943, Washington D.C., (CZA Z6/2262).

5 / Cordell Hull to Hoskins, 7 July 1943, FRUS, p.796.

6 / Memorandum by Harold Hoskins, 31 August 1943, FRUS, pp.807-09` Minutes of Conversation with Colonel Harold Hoskins, Washington D.C., 28 December 1943, (CZA Z5/666).

7 / Memorandum of Conversation with H.M., re Ibn Saud, Washington D.C., 11 November 1943, (CZA Z5/666).

that Weizmann had tried to bribe Ibn Saud was still making the rounds in England. (1)] Ibn Saud also told Hoskins that he had been informed that this twenty million pounds was being guaranteed by President Roosevelt and this "incensed" him. (2) When, on his return to the United States, Hoskins reported to the President on his meetings with Ibn Saud, Roosevelt "expressed surprise and irritation that his own name as guarantor of payment" had been mentioned. The only thing that "even bordered on this subject" said Roosevelt was "in a talk that he had had with Dr. Wise several years ago in which he had suggested that if the Jews wished to get more land in Palestine they might well think of buying arable land outside of Palestine and assisting Arabs financially to move from Palestine to such areas." (3) Roosevelt had obviously "forgotten" the various proposals he had made over the past few years on this subject; had forgotten also his letters to Brandeis and his meeting with Morgenthau!

In a report to a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive in London, Namier explained that Philby had been under a misconception when he attached the President's name to his plan as guarantor of payment. (4) Weizmann echoed this in a letter to the (recently resigned) Under-Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, (5) also pointing out that when Philby had first discussed his plan with him and with Namier, they had replied that "Jewry, however impoverished, will be able to meet the financial burden." (6)

Hoskins later came to London and on 7 November met with Weizmann. (7) In the course of his report to Weizmann, Hoskins stated that as a result of this attempted bribe "Ibn Saud, had driven out Mr. Philby, and would never let him into Saudi Arabia again." (8) Four days later Weizmann and Namier met with Philby who told them "the story was nonsense. He had never been driven out; on the contrary when he wanted to leave Saudi Arabia, Ibn Saud had tried to keep him, saying he might come to grief if he left." (9) A few days later, (probably 13 November), Hoskins had a further conversation on this subject with Weizmann and Namier in which "he appears to have modified to some extent his earlier remarks to Dr. Weizmann." (10) After this meeting Namier reported on its contents to Philby. (11) On 15 November, Philby met with Hoskins on the grounds "that it was only fair" that Philby should "be given an opportunity of hearing disparaging criticisms" of himself which were being made "under the cover of official privilege." (12) During the one and-a-half hour discussion between them, Philby pressed Hoskins to recollect as exactly as he could what the King had said about Philby. Had he, for example, said that he "had sent him away" or that he "would on no account ever allow him to return to Arabia"? Hoskins admitted that the King had not used any of these phrases, but from his comments to the proposals put to him by Philby, he gained the impression that Philby would be a persona non grata in Saudi Arabia. (13)

Why did Hoskins' mission to Saudi Arabia, fail? The first reason could have been his unsuitability for this task. As Weizmann pointed out in a letter to Sumner Welles, he had been from the outset against the choice of Hoskins as an emissary to Ibn Saud as Hoskins was "in general out of sympathy with our cause." (14) The second reason for Hoskins' failure was that he knew nothing whatsoever about the plan that Philby had put to Ibn Saud in 1940. Hoskins first heard about Philby's plan from the King himself! (15) It is true that Hoskins'

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1 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 20 December 1943, (CZA Z4/302/28i).

2 / Memorandum by Harold Hoskins, 31 August 1943, FRUS, p.809.

3 / Memorandum on Meeting between Hoskins and Roosevelt, 27 September 1943, FRUS, p.812.

4 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 15 November 1943, p.2, (CZA Z4/302/28i).

5 / Weizmann to Welles, 7 December 1943, p.2, (CZA Z4/15463) ; Weizmann Letters, vol.xxi, op. cit., no.106, p.109.

6 / Ibid., p.1 ; Ibid., p.108.

7 / Philby's Memo, op. cit., p.1.

8 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 11 November 1943, p.1, (CZA Z4/302/28i).

9 / Ibid.

10 / Philby's Memo, op. cit., p.2.

11 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 15 November 1943, op. cit., p.2 ; Philby's Memo, op. cit., p.2.

12 / Philby's Memo, op. cit., p.2.

13 / Ibid., pp.4-5.

14 / Weizmann to Welles, 7 December 1943, p.1, op. cit. ; Weizmann Letters, vol. xxi, op. cit., no.106, p.109.

15 / Philby's Memo, op. cit., pp.3-4.

mission to Saudi Arabia was not directly connected with the "Philby Plan". Nevertheless, it is essential to brief an emissary fully if one is hoping for success.

#### **Further Discussions by the Jewish Agency Executive**

Following the Hoskins debacle, Namier informed the Jewish Agency Executive in London, that "he knew all the difficulties of the Philby scheme but if they were going for the whole of western Palestine... they should press for the Philby scheme." Weizmann then asked if Philby would be "prepared to go to Ibn Saud without having anything definite to offer in order to neutralise Colonel Hoskins' visit." Namier answered this in the negative. <sup>(1)</sup>

Nearly two months later, a full discussion on the subject was held by the same Executive. Namier said that "they could still use the Philby Scheme with advantage. The proposal that Palestine should be reserved for the Jews and the Arabs transferred to Transjordan could be utilised as a counter-proposal to partition." An attempt should be made to verify whether Ibn Saud was still prepared to discuss the Philby plan. Namier considered that "the scheme had never been sufficiently pressed" and that Ibn Saud might be in favour of it since only half of Arabia was under his influence. It might be worth his while to forgo Palestine in order to gain the rest of Arabia. Namier was "in favour of pressing the scheme without making it dependent on Ibn Saud." Weizmann agreed that they should not put Ibn Saud in the forefront "but rather foster the idea of transfer to Transjordan." It had been suggested that if this were to be done in an orderly manner by the organisation of homesteads, for example, eighty per cent of the Arabs would agree.

Namier observed that if Philby who was one of the greatest experts on Arab affairs could propose such a scheme, it was bound to make "a deep impression on British public opinion." Namier recommended that they "put the proposal forward again and again." Dr. Goldman asked "whether they really meant to make transfer an essential point of their scheme" since he considered that this "would mean a departure from the line taken hitherto." Weizmann then disingenuously suggested that "they might perhaps begin by saying that a piece of land should be bought in Transjordan and developed into homesteads, so as to attract the Arabs there." Namier pointed out that although the "idea of transfer might be unpopular now, it would work in the post-war period in other parts of the world, and would thus become more acceptable." Goldman disagreed. <sup>(2)</sup>

It was during this period that civil servants at the British Foreign Office came out strongly against Philby's plan. As one civil servant wrote, "It has of course always been Mr. Philby's idea that we should give up our position in the Middle East as part of the bribe to Ibn Saud... It is evidence of Mr. Philby's pig-headedness that he should attribute Ibn Saud's rejection of the plan namely to the fact that it was presented in a bungling manner." Another civil servant wrote, "Anyone who thinks that Ibn Saud will look at this hair-brained scheme after what he has said about it, must be quite cracked." <sup>(3)</sup>

Following these comments, Sir Maurice Peterson of the Foreign Office, in a communication to Sir Ronald Campbell, the British Ambassador to the United States, wrote, "Weizmann is still trying to press Philby's fantastic plan for Palestine." Peterson felt that "nothing but harm" to British interests could come from further efforts to press this plan on Ibn Saud, and instructed Campbell to take every opportunity to discourage such efforts. <sup>(4)</sup>

According to the minutes of the Jewish Agency Executive in London, at this point, "Professor Namier said that Mr. Philby was depressed because he felt that his scheme was petering out." At their last meeting, Philby had told Namier that their friends were letting them down and that he had thought that the Jews had a "much greater influence in America." <sup>(5)</sup> Weizmann offered to meet with Philby and at the beginning of February 1944, a meeting took place. Apart from the fact that Philby handed Weizmann a letter in Arabic

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 2 December 1943, p.1, (CZA Z4/302/28i).

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 25 January 1944, pp.1-3, (CZA Z4/302/28i).

<sup>3</sup> / Comments by Civil Servants, 13 January 1944, (PRO FO 371/40139 E 206/206/31).

<sup>4</sup> / Peterson to Campbell, 25 January 1944, (PRO FO 371/40139 E 206/206/31).

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 7 January 1944, (CZA Z4/302/28i).

from Ibn Saud, no further details of the meeting or even of the contents of this letter are recorded. <sup>(1)</sup>

In a letter written by Weizmann to Jan Christiaan Smuts on 12 June 1944, Weizmann observed "Mr. Philby, as I told you, still regards the scheme as feasible." <sup>(2)</sup> We thus see that in June 1944 Philby was still concerning himself with his transfer plan. After that date however, there seems to be no record of attempts to advance Philby's plan.

### **Real Attitude of Ibn Saud towards the "Philby Plan"**

What was the real attitude of Ibn Saud to the "Philby Plan", a plan which included the removal of almost all the Arabs from Palestine? Did his attitude towards this plan change between 1940 and 1943? When Philby first put his plan to Ibn Saud, the King did not turn it down but said that he would give him a definite answer at the appropriate time. Three years later in a letter to Roosevelt, Ibn Saud wrote about an "infamous miscarriage of justice" that would arise from the eviction of the "Arabs from their home in Palestine, substituting in their place vagrant Jews." A few months after that he was to describe the twenty million pounds for the transfer of the Arabs as an "attempted bribe" and to give Hoskins the distinct impression that Philby was a *persona non grata* in Arabia.

How can we explain this apparent deterioration in Ibn Saud's attitude towards Philby and his plan? Two different answers to this question seem to emerge.

The first, brought by both Hoskins <sup>(3)</sup> and Elizabeth Monroe <sup>(4)</sup> suggests that Philby misinterpreted Ibn Saud's silence as consent when the plan was first put before him in January 1940. [The term "silence" is used by both Hoskins and Monroe in the sense of no definite answer.] Hoskins was convinced that "there never was any possibility of acceptance and there is none today (August 1943)." According to this view, there was no change in Ibn Saud's attitude towards the plan. He was always against Philby's plan, but was unwilling to express his disagreement until 1943.

On the other hand, Namier held that Ibn Saud had in fact changed his mind once. He therefore recommended that the proposal be put before the King repeatedly in the hope that Ibn Saud would change his mind again. <sup>(5)</sup> It has been suggested that Saudi Arabia's changed financial position played a major role in the King's changed attitude to Philby's plan. One of the effects of the Second World War was to interfere with the Moslem pilgrimages to Mecca, hence causing a reduction in Ibn Saud's income from that source. He therefore required new sources of income. <sup>(6)</sup> By 1943, however, his financial situation had improved, since oil was playing an important role in his country's revenues. In fact, Weizmann who also held that Ibn Saud had changed his mind, attributed this change in attitude "to the intervention of certain representatives of the oil companies which hold important concessions in Saudi Arabia, and which must provide Ibn Saud with a considerable income." In Weizmann's experience, the activities of such companies in the Middle East were usually anti-Jewish. <sup>(7)</sup> On this basis, Ibn Saud's change of mind in 1943 becomes quite clear. Weizmann still felt, however, "in spite of Colonel Hoskins' adverse report, that properly managed, Mr. Philby's scheme offers an approach which should not be abandoned without further exploration." <sup>(8)</sup>

Philby explained the reactions of Ibn Saud differently. In January 1940, Philby first put his plan to the King and for the subsequent six and-a-half months remained as a guest of the King. Ibn Saud then made him a gift of a newly-built house and when Philby wanted to leave the country, begged him to stay. <sup>(9)</sup> It goes without saying that all this is inconsistent with a display of royal displeasure.

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 7 February 1944, (CZA Z4/302/28i).

<sup>2</sup> / Weizmann to Smuts, 12 June 1944, p.3, (WA) ; Weizmann, Letters, vol.xxi, op. cit., no.169, p.191.

<sup>3</sup> / Memorandum by Harold Hoskins, 31 August 1943, FRUS, pp.809-10.

<sup>4</sup> / Monroe, Philby of Arabia, op. cit., p.222.

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 25 January 1944, op. cit., p.2.

<sup>6</sup> / Note of Meeting between Namier and Philby, op. cit., p.1.

<sup>7</sup> / Weizmann to Rosenman, 4 January 1944, p.2, (CZA Z4/15463) ; Weizmann Letters, vol.xxi, op. cit., no.118, p.118.

<sup>8</sup> / Weizmann to Welles, 7 December 1943, p.3, op. cit. ; Ibid., vol.xxi, no.106, p.110.

<sup>9</sup> / Philby's Memo, op. cit., pp.6-7.

When in the summer of 1943, Ibn Saud heard that he was being visited officially by an emissary of the United States Government, he naturally assumed that the official was coming to make him a firm offer on the basis of the "Philby Plan". However, at their meeting, the emissary made no such offer, so the King "fully accustomed to the tortuous ways of diplomacy" remained silent. Since at a subsequent meeting, held a few days later, Hoskins still made no mention of the plan, the King realised that it had "not won acceptance" by the American and British Governments and in a fit of temper made derogatory comments about Weizmann and Philby. <sup>(1)</sup> Philby was still of the opinion that should the British and American Governments make a firm offer on the basis of his plan, Ibn Saud would accept. <sup>(2)</sup>

These conflicting interpretations of Ibn Saud's behaviour reflect more on the attitude towards Zionism of those proffering these interpretations, than on the King's behaviour. Those who were hostile to Zionism held that Ibn Saud was consistently against the Philby Plan, whilst those who were pro-Zionist felt that he had had a change of heart. The exception to this was, of course Philby, who for other obvious reasons was highly subjective in his interpretations of Ibn Saud's actions.

### **The Namier - Baffy Plan**

Soon after his meetings with Philby in the autumn of 1939, Namier and Blanche Dugdale (Baffy) put forward their own plan for Palestine which very closely resembled Philby's plan.

They discussed the problems that would, at the end of the war, confront millions of East and Central European Jews who had been uprooted from their homes. [At the time of this plan, the Holocaust was still a thing of the future.] Only Palestine could offer a satisfactory solution for these Jews. They felt that from the Jewish point of view "the most desirable solution would be to obtain the whole of Palestine west of the Jordan with a transfer of the Arab population for re-settlement in other Arab countries." They considered that for this, World Jewry could provide the finance and that the transfer would result in a great improvement in the economic conditions of both the transferees and the host countries. It would seem that like Philby, they intended the transfer of almost all of the Arabs from Palestine.

Namier and Baffy said that should all this prove impossible, the next best thing would be a Jewish Palestine within the frontiers suggested by the Peel Commission plus the Negev and considerable Jewish settlement in the el-Jezireh region (north Syria). "This would imply much smaller transfers of Arab population", they wrote.

As compensation for providing a solution to the Jewish problem in Europe and satisfying Jewish historic claims and aspirations, they suggested that the Arabs be given the most extensive help with a view to establishing their political unity and independence.

In conclusion, they considered that should a Arab-Jewish programme be worked out on these lines it would gain overwhelming support from both British and American public opinion, with the added advantage that British strategic interests could be fully safeguarded within the Jewish State in western Palestine. <sup>(3)</sup>

There is no indication as to whom this plan was submitted and what reactions there were to it.

About two years later, in September 1941, an article written by Baffy appeared in the "Congress Weekly", a newspaper published by the American Jewish Congress. In this article she discussed the Mandates question and its effect on the political future of Palestine. She felt that the Mandates system would come to an end although it had not broken down. However she considered that the machinery for protecting minorities had broken down. In order to prevent the problem of minorities from becoming a threat to world peace, she said that it was necessary to reduce it "physically as far as possible". Baffy's solution was "exchange of

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.8-9.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.10.

<sup>3</sup> / Plan by Namier and Blanche Dugdale, (no heading on plan), 13 November 1939, (CZA A312/27).

populations... provided always that it is carried out carefully, gradually, and humanely" <sup>(1)</sup>. One should note that she was discussing this question generally and did not specifically mention Palestine in this connection.

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<sup>1</sup> / Mrs. Edgar Dugdale ["Baffy"], "Notes from London", Congress Weekly, (New York), vol.8, no.30, 5 September 1941.

## SECTION 3

### THE PEEL COMMISSION REPORT

#### **The Report**

Following the campaign of Arab terrorism in Palestine in 1936, the British Government decided to send out a Royal Commission which would "without bringing into question the fundamental terms of the Mandate, investigate the causes of unrest and any alleged grievances either of Arabs or of Jews." On 29 July, the appointment of this Royal Commission was announced. It was to be chaired by Lord Peel, a former Secretary of State for India. The five other members were Sir Horace Rumbold, one of the ablest men in the Diplomatic Service with wide experience as Minister and Ambassador in many countries of the world; Sir Laurie Hammond, a distinguished Indian Civil Servant; Sir William Morris Carter, an ex-Colonial Chief Justice, better known for his searching analysis of the problems of native lands and interests confronted with an immigrant community, both in Rhodesia and Kenya; Sir Harold Morris, the universally acclaimed Chairman of the Industrial Court in Britain; and Professor Reginald Coupland, Professor of Colonial History at Oxford, whose knowledge and study of Colonial administration in the then British Colonial Empire and in other colonial spheres was well known to students throughout the world.

This Commission (popularly known as the "Peel Commission") arrived in Palestine in mid-November 1936 and during the course of the next two months took evidence from over one hundred witnesses. On their return to England, the members of the Commission worked for another six months on their Report and at the end of June 1937 presented it to the British Government. The Report was unanimous and consisted of over four hundred pages. It included a comprehensive and analytical survey of the Palestine problem, an examination of the operations of the Mandate, and proposals for "the possibility of a lasting settlement"

Chapter xxii of the Report dealt with a plan of partition. Under this plan, the Mandate would terminate and Palestine would be divided into three areas: a Jewish State including the whole of the Galilee, the whole of the Jezreel Valley, the greater part of the Beisan and all of the coastal plain from Ras el-Nakura (Rosh Hanikra) in the north to Beer-Tuvia in the South; an Arab State containing the rest of Palestine west of the Jordan together with Transjordan; a British enclave remaining under Mandate, containing Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth on a permanent basis and as a temporary measure the towns of Haifa, Acre, Tiberias and Safed, which would ultimately become part of the Jewish State.

There were nearly a quarter of a million Arabs within the boundaries of the proposed Jewish State and about one and a half thousand Jews within the boundaries of the proposed Arab State. This was seen by the members of the Peel Commission as a serious problem and section 10 of chapter xxii of the Report dealt with this issue under the heading "Exchange of Land and Population." "If Partition is to be effective in promoting a final settlement it must

mean more than drawing a frontier and establishing two States. Sooner or later there should be a transfer of land, and as far as possible, an exchange of population." (1)

A later paragraph stated that the existence of Jews in the Arab State and Arabs in the Jewish State would clearly constitute "the most serious hindrance to the smooth and successful operation of Partition." The "Minority Problem" had become only too familiar in recent years whether in Europe or in Asia and was one of the most troublesome and intractable products of post-war nationalism. The Report noted that nationalism was at least as intense a force in Palestine as it was anywhere else in the world. (2)

Similarly, under the entry "Refugees and the Exchange of Populations", the Encyclopaedia Britannica stated, "The mixture of populations had led to so much political trouble in modern times that this unmixing process must be regarded as a very considerable advantage." (3)

The Peel Commission believed that the partition of Palestine between the Arabs and Jews might "ultimately moderate and appease it as nothing else could." However, the members of the Commission were sufficiently experienced to realise that Partition could not absolutely eliminate friction, incidents and recriminations. The paragraph thus concluded, "If then the settlement is to be clean and final, this question of the minorities must be boldly faced and firmly dealt with. It calls for the highest statesmanship on the part of all concerned." (4)

The next paragraph of the Report quoted the precedent of a compulsory exchange of population between Greece and Turkey following the Greco-Turkish War of 1922, on the basis of a proposal by Dr. Fridtjof Nansen. (5)

Nansen, who was born in Norway in 1861, was a scientist, polar explorer and statesman. In 1921, he directed relief work for famine-stricken Russia. As the League of Nations' first High Commissioner for refugees, he was responsible for the protection and settlement of Russian, Armenian and Greek refugees. In 1922, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Following the war of 1921-2 between Turkey and Greece, Nansen put forward a proposal to solve the minorities problem existing between these two countries, in which there would be a compulsory exchange of population between Greece and Turkey. At the beginning of 1923, a convention was signed in Lausanne between Greece and Turkey providing for the compulsory transfer to Greece of Greek nationals of the Orthodox faith living in Turkey and the compulsory transfer to Turkey of Turkish nationals of the Moslem faith living in Greece, although some of the transferees' families had lived for over a century in the host country. A Mixed Commission and a group of sub-commissions, with members from the Greek and Turkish Governments and from the League of Nations, was set up. These commissions supervised or actually carried out the transportation of the persons transferred from one country to the other, valued their property, kept an exact record of it and established their claim for this value against the government of the country to which they were moved. A refugee settlement loan was floated under the auspices of the League of Nations, to enable Greece to absorb her refugees into productive employment. As a result of this loan, the refugees were absorbed very quickly into the economic system of the country. No such loan was made to Turkey. As a result the integration of the refugees in Turkey was more difficult. The number of people transferred was high - no less than some 1,300,000 Greeks and some 400,000 Turks. However, within eighteen months, the whole exchange was completed. Naturally, with an exchange of population involving nearly two million people there were difficulties, particularly, in the liquidation of the ensuing property disputes, but following the settlement of all these problems, in 1930, a treaty of friendship was concluded between these two countries.

The Peel report noted that "Dr. Nansen was sharply criticized at the time for the

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<sup>1</sup> / Palestine Royal Commission Report, Cmd 5479, London, July 1937, Chapter xxii, (henceforth Peel Report), para.36, p.389.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., para.39, p.390.

<sup>3</sup> / "Refugees and the Exchange of Populations", Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol.19, (Chicago, 1955), p.56.

<sup>4</sup> / Peel Report, para.39, p.390.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., para. 40, p.390.



inhumanity of his proposal, and the operation manifestly imposed the gravest hardships on multitudes of people. But the courage of the Greek and Turkish statesmen concerned has been justified by the result. Before the operation the Greek and Turkish minorities had been a constant irritant. Now the ulcer had been clean cut out, and Greco-Turkish relations, we understand are friendlier than they have ever been before." (1)

Admittedly the analogy between the Greco-Turkish situation and the Palestine situation broke down at one essential point. In Northern Greece a surplus of cultivated land was available, or could be made available for the Greeks who were transferred from Turkey. However, in Palestine, no such surplus existed at that time. There would be no problem finding land for Jews transferred from the Arab State. The problem would arise for the far greater number of Arabs transferred from the Jewish State. The Report stated that "while some of them could be resettled on the land vacated by the Jews, far more land would be required for the resettlement of all of them." It was to be hoped that the execution of large-scale plans for irrigation, water-shortage and development in Transjordan, Beersheba and the Jordan Valley would solve this problem. (2) It was suggested that an immediate survey and authoritative estimate be made of the practical possibilities of irrigation and development in these areas. "If, as a result, it is clear that a substantial amount of land could be made available for the re-settlement of Arabs living in the Jewish area, the most strenuous efforts should be made to obtain an agreement for the exchange of land and population." Thus the availability of additional land would bring the situation in Palestine closer to the Greco-Turkish situation of 1923. Furthermore, the numbers to be transferred would be far smaller. Since transfer would reduce the antagonism existing between Jew and Arab and remove the potential for future Arab-Jewish friction, the members of the Commission hoped "that the Arab and the Jewish leaders might show the same high statesmanship as that of the Turks and the Greeks and make the same bold decision for the sake of peace." In conclusion, "If an agreement on the question were secured, provisions should be inserted in or added to the Treaties for the transfer under the supervision and control of the Mandatory Government, of land and population to the extent to which new land is, or may within a reasonable period become, available for re-settlement." (3)

As stated earlier, the Peel proposals allotted the Galilee, whose population was almost entirely Arab, and the Plains where the population was mixed, to the Jewish State. Paragraph 43 of chapter xxii made a distinction between these two areas with respect to the proposal for the exchange of land and population. In the case of North Galilee the Report stated that "it might not be necessary to effect a greater exchange of land and population than could be effected on a voluntary basis." The use of compulsion was not, however, excluded for the remaining areas. "But as regards the Plains, including Beisan, and as regards all such Jewish colonies as remained in the Arab State when the Treaties come into force, it should be part of the agreement that in the last resort the exchange would be compulsory." (4)

Who was to pay for the irrigation and development of the areas to which the Arabs would be moved from the Jewish State? The members of the Commission considered that the cost was heavier than the Arab States could be expected to bear, and suggested that the British people would be willing to help in order to bring about a settlement. The Commission recommended that "if an arrangement could be made for the transfer, voluntary or otherwise, of land and population, Parliament should be asked to make a grant to meet the cost of the aforesaid scheme." (5) It can be seen that once again, the Peel Report spoke of the possibility of a compulsory transfer, or as they said "the transfer, voluntary or otherwise."

The mechanics of such a transfer would be protracted. First, the area would have to be surveyed and if found to be favourable, would be irrigated and developed. Only then could the transfer be put into operation. The members of the Commission considered that in all

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1 / Ibid.

2 / Ibid., para.41, pp.390-91.

3 / Ibid., para.42, p.391.

4 / Ibid., para.43, p.391.

5 / Ibid., para.44, pp.391-92.

probability the proposed Treaty System would come into operation before all these things were completed. Therefore it should be laid down in the Treaties "that the full control of this work, as also of any such operations for the exchange of land and population as may be agreed on, should continue to be exercised by the Mandatory Government until its completion." (1)

The final word in the Report on this exchange of land and population was that the irrigation and development should be carried out with the least possible delay and that a new Partition Department be established in Jerusalem to deal with this work and such exchange operations as might follow. (2)

Before publication of the Peel Report, several of the members of the Commission wrote memoranda, as a basis for internal discussion. One of these memoranda was written by Reginald Coupland who said that he had "drafted this Note after full discussion with Sir Laurie Hammond and I think it represents our joint suggestions on the main points." (3)

In this paper he dealt at length with transfer of Arabs under the heading "The Exchange of Land and Population". While stating that this was by "far the most difficult part of the whole scheme", he admitted that there was "the encouraging precedent of the compulsory shifting" of nearly two million Greeks and Turks. (4)

After discussing details regarding demographic distribution, availability of land, surveying and funding, Coupland continued that "the ideal would be the evacuation of all Arabs and Jews from the Jew [sic] and Arab States respectively. This ideal was actually achieved in the Greco-Turkish exchange by a system of rigorous compulsion, the hardships of which have been compensated by the creation of peace and amity." He pointed out that this work had been made easier by virtue of the fact that both the Greek and Turkish governments had agreed and co-operated and because land had been available "it could all be done in one continuous vigorous 'push'." It was, said Coupland, rather different in Palestine where there was not a lot of land available and thus "it is for consideration whether it might not be wise to leave the exchange of land and people during the Transition period on a voluntary basis." However, at the end of this five year transition period "the process would become compulsory ... Arab land-owners in the Jewish State and Jewish land-owners in the Arab State (if any are left there), would be compelled to sell their land at a fixed price provided that the Department had land available in the other State for the re-settlement of the owners, tenants or labourers. The evacuation and re-settlement of these latter would also be compulsory. This compulsory process might be repeated after an interval in which more land might have become available for re-settlement." (5)

Coupland then asked if at the end "a substantial number of Arabs are left on Jewish land for whom there is no land for re-settlement, what then?" His answer was that "it would be up to the Jews to bribe the residue of Arabs out." (6)

He felt that the use of compulsion was necessary because "only so will the maximum of exchange be achieved." (7)

Another problem raised by Coupland to which he did not provide a solution was the fate of the urban Arabs, who were mostly labourers. "Shall we ignore them? Or shall we recommend that Government, under the Re-settlement Scheme, persuades (or compels) them to settle on the new land made available?" (8)

Coupland concluded by asking what would happen if the Arabs refused to agree to the partition of Palestine? He believed that in such a case "the Jews should nevertheless be empowered to purchase Arab land in the Jewish State at a fixed price". With regards to compulsory transfer he was less certain. "It seems doubtful if they should also have the power to evacuate, although without that power they might be confronted with a problem of

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1 / Ibid., para.45, p.392.

2 / Ibid., para.46, p.392.

3 / Reginald Coupland, Note for Discussion on Partition, undated (8 June 1937 ?), p.1, (PRO CO 733/346/75550/41).

4 / Ibid., p.12.

5 / Ibid., pp.18-22.

6 / Ibid., p.22.

7 / Ibid., p.23.

8 / Ibid., pp.23-24.

'landless Arabs' in the Jewish State." He hoped a solution to this problem would appear "when the time comes".<sup>(1)</sup>

One might mention that nearly a year later, after the British Government had completely changed its views and came out strongly against compulsory transfer, Coupland wrote a confidential letter to Weizmann and asked him to consider: "Failing a full-scale transfer (such as we recommended) can a plan be made for as much organised transfer as may be possible from the J. [Jewish] to the A. [Arab] area?"<sup>(2)</sup>. We can thus see that even though the British Government was now opposing compulsory transfer, Coupland was still trying to salvage what he could from the Peel Commission's transfer proposal.

Another memorandum was written by Laurie Hammond on 23 May 1937 and was entitled "Note on 'Clean Cut'". In it, Hammond briefly entered into the question of transfer. He wrote as regarding Arabs left in the Jewish State or Jews left in the Arab State "we are, I gather, unanimous in agreeing" on a number of principles. One of these principles was that any such Arab or Jew "can claim to be bought out and given compensation ...". With regards to compulsory transfer he wrote "that there will be no compulsory transfer of population, except by voluntary agreement between the two States." In other words, the Jewish and Arab States could come to an agreement to compulsorily transfer population from their respective states and thus the individual transferees would have to move accordingly, whether they liked it or not! Hammond added the provision that "such transfer can only be effected when it has been proved that land suitable for the transferred population is actually available."<sup>(3)</sup>

Schechtman, in 1949, presenting his study of "The Case for Arab-Jewish Exchange of Population" held that there were three fundamental weaknesses in the Peel Commission's transfer proposal "which finally doomed the scheme in its entirety."

The first was that the Commission was in fact proposing a "one-way transfer of Arabs" since one could not balance 1,250 prospective Jewish transferees for the Arab State against 225,000 Arabs to be transferred from the Jewish state. "The ratio of almost 1:200 was conducive to the idea that there was not only inequality in numbers, but inequality in the very approach to, and treatment of the two ethnic groups involved." Actually, Schechtman is not mathematically accurate here. The Peel Report did not envisage the transfer of all the Arabs from the Jewish State. Paragraph 43 of Chapter xxii of the Report specifically stated that the transfer of the Arabs of North Galilee, as distinct from the remainder of the country, would be on a voluntary basis. In all probability, many North Galilean Arabs would choose not to transfer. The ratio would therefore be much lower than 1:200. However, it would still be high, hence the psychological argument brought by Schechtman is still valid.

The second weakness in the Peel Commission's proposal was that it "provided for the transfer of Arabs from the prospective Jewish State to the prospective Arab State only, without envisaging their resettlement in other, already existing, large Arab States with insufficient population."<sup>(4)</sup> In the Parliamentary debates following the Peel Commission's Report, several members had suggested that the Arab emigrants from the Jewish State be in part resettled in various existing Arab countries, rather than entirely within the borders of the original Mandatory Palestine.

Ten years later in 1947, following the decision of the United Nations to create separate Jewish and Arab States in Palestine, Anthony Eden, who had been Foreign Secretary at the time of the Peel Report, reminded the House in a two-day debate on Palestine, that the Peel Commission had recommended a population transfer, but the difficulty had been that "they were dealing only with Palestine." Eden then said, "I should have thought that the question which now arises is whether, with the co-operation of the adjoining Arab states, room might not be found to absorb some part of the Arab minority which will be left in the Jewish State. I should have thought that this was a question worth pursuing."<sup>(5)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.27-28.

<sup>2</sup> / Coupland to Weizmann, 17 April 1938, p.1, (CZA S25/10058).

<sup>3</sup> / Laurie Hammond, Note on 'Clean Cut', 23 May 1937, p.3, (PRO CO 733/346/75550/41).

<sup>4</sup> / Schechtman, Population Transfers in Asia, op. cit., p.89.

<sup>5</sup> / Parliamentary Debates, Commons, vol.445, 12 December 1947, c.1385.

The third weakness Schechtman noted was that "the lack of clarity about the voluntary or compulsory character of the transfer, jeopardised the workability of the entire partition solution." (1) It is difficult to understand Schechtman here. As far as the Report is concerned, paragraph 43 of chapter xxii clearly designated which areas were to have, if necessary, a compulsory transfer of population, and in which areas transfer was to be voluntary.

### **Jewish Agency Discusses Transfer**

In the autumn of 1936, whilst the Peel Commission was collecting evidence, the executive of the Jewish Agency held two meetings in which the subject of transfer of Arabs was discussed.

The first of these meetings took place on 21 October. (2) At it, the Chairman David Ben-Gurion said: "Mr. Ussishkin spoke on population transfer, but the example which he mentioned was a population exchange between two countries Turkey and Greece who came to a mutual agreement on this. To our sorrow we are not yet a state and England will not do this for us and will not remove the Arabs from Palestine." Later in his speech, Ben-Gurion argued that if the Jews were to tell the Peel Commission that the Arabs should be transferred to Iraq or Iran, this would only strengthen the hands of the anti-Zionists. The members of the Commission would return to England believing that the Jews wanted to expel the Arabs from Palestine, and thus, this approval by Ussishkin would be a catastrophe for the Jews.

To this Ussishkin retorted, "Is it our politics to expel the Arabs from Palestine?"

Ben-Gurion then answered Ussishkin, "But that is what you said", adding, that if he would repeat it before an Englishman he would only cause damage.

From this exchange, it seems that Ben-Gurion was not opposed to transfer, but felt it was bad tactics and thus harmful to bring it up before the Peel Commission. We can in fact see Ben-Gurion's approval of transfer from a further meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive held just a few weeks later on 1 November. Needless to say these meetings were closed and the minutes clearly marked "Confidential"!

At this November meeting, (3) Ben-Gurion asked, "Why can't we purchase land there [Transjordan] for Arabs who want to settle in Transjordan? If it is permitted to transfer an Arab from the Galilee to Judea, why is it forbidden to transfer an Arab from the Hebron area to Transjordan, which is far closer?" Ben-Gurion said that he could see no difference between the west bank and the east bank of the Jordan.

Rabbi Yehudah Leib Fishman (later Maimon) was worried that by transferring Arabs only to Transjordan, the Jews would be giving up their rights to this area. Ben-Gurion categorically discounted this saying that by transferring Arabs to Transjordan the Jews would be solving an overcrowding problem west of the Jordan. Rabbi Fishman then asked Ben-Gurion, "Why not transfer them also to Iraq?"

Ben-Gurion replied that Iraq was not within the area of the Palestine Mandate. However if King Ghazi of Iraq would agree, Ben-Gurion said that he would not object, adding however that the Iraqi authorities at that period were not prepared to agree to such a transfer. He then argued, "If for some reason we are not able to settle there [Transjordan] we will resettle there the Arabs whom we will transfer from Palestine. Even the High Commissioner [Sir Arthur Wauchop] has agreed to this on condition we provide the transferees with land and money ... and we agreed to this."

After Ben-Gurion had summarised his remarks, Maurice Hexter and David Senator, two non-Zionist members of the Executive of the Jewish Agency, objected to the proposal to transfer Arabs to Transjordan. [However, just a year later, after the Peel Commission had proposed transfer, Senator was to tell the same Jewish Agency Executive, "We should strive for maximum transfer", and Hexter was to attend meetings of the Population Transfer Committee of the Jewish Agency (- not for the purpose of opposing transfer!).]

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1 / Schechtman, Population Transfers in Asia, op. cit., p.89.

2 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., 21 October 1936, pp.9-11, (CZA).

3 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., 1 November 1936, pp.8-9, (CZA).

During the following months, proposals for Arab transfer were submitted to the Peel Commission by Jewish organisations. Masalha goes as far as to suggest that transfer "was at the very center of Zionist lobbying efforts." <sup>(1)</sup> However as we have already seen, the assessments by Masalha in this matter must be treated with great caution.

One such proposal was submitted to the Peel Commission by the Jewish Agency Executive in February 1937. This memorandum contained a plan which dealt with the question of land and settlement in various areas of Palestine. The first stage would be to present the British Government with a plan for "crowding together existing Arab settlement, concentrating it in one location or several specific locations and evacuating an area for Jewish settlement." In the first instance, the Jews would try and get the agreement of the Arabs to give them part of their land in exchange for certain advantages, but should the Arabs fail to agree, then the plan required the British Government to "force the [Arab] people to exchange land or to move from one place to another." <sup>(2)</sup>

In the following month, Namier met with Weizmann and informed him in the greatest of secrecy of a meeting he had had with Reginald Coupland who was a member of the Peel Commission. At this meeting, Coupland had asked whether the Jews would be prepared to financially help the proposed Arab state. Namier had answered that such help would not be in cash but the "Jews were prepared to develop certain areas in the Arab state, in order to use them also for the purpose of a population exchange" - (the intention being development for the purpose of transferring Arabs from the proposed Jewish state to the proposed Arab state). <sup>(3)</sup>

On 12 June 1937, Shertok dined at the house of George Wadsworth, the U.S. Consul-General, during which they conversed at length. In the course of this conversation, the question of Transjordan came up. According to Shertok's diary, Wadsworth had said that "he knew Government had been rather strongly impressed by the suggestion contained in our final memorandum to the Royal [Peel] Commission about transplanting Arabs from Western Palestine to Transjordan in order to make room for new Jewish settlers. This was considered to be an eminently constructive proposal." <sup>(4)</sup>

It is not clear which memorandum Wadsworth is referring to. Masalha suggests that it was one drafted jointly by Ben-Gurion and Rutenberg in May 1937. <sup>(5)</sup> No such memorandum has been traced. However, a letter (not a memorandum) which indeed proposed transfer of Arabs to Transjordan, was written jointly by Ben-Gurion and Rutenberg on 7 June. <sup>(6)</sup> Perhaps the intention is to this letter.

On 11 July 1937, which was just a few days after publication of the Peel Report, a draft document entitled: "Re: Partition. Outlines of an Inquiry into the Problems of Exchange of Land & Population" was written. The initials of the writer are illegible, but on the top right hand corner is written "Mr. [Moshe] Shertok", showing that he received a copy of this document.

The subjects dealt with in this document are: "the problem of transfer of population"; how the experiences of population transfer in other countries could be applicable to Palestine; "voluntary or compulsory exchange of population"; geographical and other information required to implement a transfer in Palestine; the procedure of transfer of population. <sup>(7)</sup>

We can thus see that no time was lost in getting to work in order to advance the Peel Report's proposal; to transfer Arabs from Palestine!

### Reactions of American Jewish Press

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<sup>1</sup> / Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, op. cit., p.58.

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes, Inner Zionist Council, 11 February 1937, (p.295), (CZA S5/293) ; *The Diaries of Moshe Sharett*, vol.ii, (Tel-Aviv, 1971), pp.16-17.

<sup>3</sup> / Moshe Shertok, Handwritten Diary entry, 23 March 1937, pp.77-78, (CZA A245/2) ; *Ibid.*, pp.90-91.

<sup>4</sup> / Moshe Shertok, Diary notes, 12 June 1937, pp.58-59, (CZA A245/6) ; *Ibid.*, pp.187-88.

<sup>5</sup> / Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, op. cit., p.56.

<sup>6</sup> / Ben-Gurion, *Memoirs*, vol.4, pp.206-07.

<sup>7</sup> / Re: Partition. Outlines for an Inquiry into the Problems of Exchange of Land & Population, 11 July 1937, (CZA S25/10109).

In May 1937, the newspaper "The New Palestine", which was the official organ of the American Zionist movement, put forward its own proposal for the transfer of Arabs. In an editorial entitled "Why Ignore Transjordan?", the paper wrote that since "Transjordan is practically empty of settlers" it could support a large increase in population. This is especially so as the soil there is much superior to the soil in Western Palestine. "Transjordan could become the natural reserve for the accommodation of tens of thousands of Arabs.... Many thousands of Arabs in Palestine would automatically and naturally pass over the Jordan and find place for themselves in the Transjordan development." The editorial writer felt that "a discussion of this idea might be fruitful of results." <sup>(1)</sup> According to Medoff, this was the first time that "The New Palestine" "went on record as favoring efforts to encourage Arabs to leave Palestine." <sup>(2)</sup>

A month later, the same paper again came out in favour of Arab transfer. "Perhaps a scheme can be worked out for transferring Arabs from the Jewish area to the Arab area." <sup>(3)</sup>

### **British Government Reactions to the Peel Report**

On 22 June 1937, the Peel Report was signed and circulated to the various ministerial departments. The Private Secretary immediately asked the Foreign Office's Eastern Department for its observations. The Report had made recommendations on provisional measures to be adopted during the continuation of the Mandate and final recommendations for a radical solution. On both these subjects, Sir George William Rendel, Director of the Eastern Department of the British Foreign Office, made his observations on the following day.

He was prepared under the prevailing circumstances to accept partition, but added that "this does not mean that the proposals of the Commission, particularly in regard to the method of partition, are not open to certain serious criticisms." <sup>(4)</sup> He then put forward five criticisms of the Peel Commission's scheme of partition. These were - the exclusion of the new Arab state from any reasonable access to the sea; the allocation to the Jews of the best land; the problems arising from corridors; the continued British control over a number of cities in northern Palestine; and the incorporation of the new Arab state into Transjordan. <sup>(5)</sup> It is apparent that Rendel made no objection whatsoever to the proposal for the transfer of population, which was an integral part of the Peel Commission's method of partition.

Similarly a Foreign Office memorandum of 19 June, 1937 which had made preliminary comments and criticisms on the Peel Report, <sup>(6)</sup> had made no mention of the transfer proposal.

Rendel's memorandum was passed around the department for the observations of its civil servants, which were very positive. "I have no criticism to offer on Mr. Rendel's comments with which I agree cordially." <sup>(7)</sup> "Mr. Rendel has done an admirable piece of work and I am glad that my first reactions should have been similar to his ..." <sup>(8)</sup> None of these comments made any objection to population transfer.

Two days later, William Ormsby-Gore, the British Colonial Secretary, produced a memorandum for the British Cabinet. He wrote, "It would be difficult in any circumstances for His Majesty's Government to advise the rejection of the main argument and essential recommendations of a unanimous Royal Commission." Their "penetrating analysis of the situation" led him "to accept without hesitation" their "main conclusion that the best hope of a permanent solution... lies in the drastic and difficult operation of partition." Ormsby-Gore continued, "The particular scheme of partition which is submitted in the Report... appears to me to be equitable and well conceived in its main outlines." He added that "modifications of detail" might be found necessary and "numerous practical difficulties" might arise, but he

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<sup>1</sup> / "Why Ignore Transjordan?" The New Palestine, (New York), vol.xxvii, no.17, 7 May 1937, p.4.

<sup>2</sup> / Medoff, thesis, pp.186-87.

<sup>3</sup> / "Palestine Partition and its Implications", The New Palestine, (New York), vol.xxvii, no.21, 4 June 1937, p.5.

<sup>4</sup> / Palestine Report, Preliminary departmental comments on the recommendations of the Royal Commission, 23 June 1937, p.4, (PRO FO 371/20807 E 3427 6029).

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., pp.4-6.

<sup>6</sup> / Memorandum on Palestine Report, 19 June 1937, (PRO FO 371/20807 E 3330).

<sup>7</sup> / Palestine Report, Departmental Comments, 23 June 1937, op. cit., p.2 (un-numbered) of introduction.

<sup>8</sup> / Ibid., p.3 (un-numbered) of introduction.

saw no reason why "given a reasonable measure of consent, these difficulties should not be surmounted." (1) Ormsby-Gore concluded by putting forward a draft statement of policy to be published simultaneously with the Peel Report. (2)

Following a request, on 28 June, Rendel presented his comments on Ormsby-Gore's memorandum. He wrote that whilst "the principle of partition is right and must be adopted" he doubted whether the Foreign office could commit themselves to Ormsby-Gore's statement that the proposed scheme of partition could be regarded as "equitable and well conceived." He added, "Indeed, the objections to the 'particular scheme of partition' put forward by the Commission seem very formidable." He then referred to his earlier memorandum in which his objections were listed. (3) Later in his memorandum, Rendel suggested amendments to Ormsby-Gore's draft "Statement of Policy". (4)

Simultaneously, with the publication of the Peel Report on 7 July, the British Government brought out a "Statement of Policy", which closely resembled the draft written by Ormsby-Gore together with some, but by no means all, of the amendments suggested by Rendel. This statement began by noting that the Government had considered the unanimous Report of the Peel Commission and "find themselves in general agreement with the arguments and conclusions of the Commission." (5) They felt that Arab and Jewish aspirations could not be satisfied under the terms of the present Mandate and that "a scheme of partition on the general lines recommended by the Commission represents the best and most hopeful solution of the deadlock." (6) Towards the end of this document they stated that "in supporting a solution of the Palestine problem by means of partition, His Majesty's Government are much impressed by the advantages which it offers both to the Arabs and the Jews." (7)

Insofar as this study is concerned, the relevant point emerging from all the above is that neither this "Statement of Policy" of the British Government nor the above quoted documents from the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office, make any objections whatsoever to the Peel Report recommendation regarding population transfer, compulsory if necessary. This fact is particularly important in view of the document published by the British Government less than six months later (and described later in this work).

It is possible that the British Government had also expressed a positive attitude towards transfer of the Arabs from Palestine twenty years earlier, at the period of the Balfour Declaration. Earlier in this work, we referred to the tribute to Weizmann broadcast by the B.B.C. Third Programme at the end of 1963 in which Lord Boothby, a non-Jewish friend of Israel and President of the Anglo-Israel Association, stated that the Balfour Declaration "was a 'watered down' version of a much tougher original draft which would have made Palestine a Jewish State outright and moved the Arab population elsewhere 'more or less'." (8) In consequence of this statement, a lively debate took place in the British Jewish press. During the course of this debate, two themes were discernible - Weizmann's own personal attitude to transfer and the British Government's attitude at the time, to this question. The first we have already dealt with under the heading of the "Attitude of Weizmann towards transfer." With regard to the British Government's attitude, a "Jewish Chronicle" Editorial described Boothby's "original Balfour Declaration" as a myth. It pointed out that all successive versions of this Declaration were on record and nowhere was the removal of Arabs contemplated. (9)

Boothby's reply to these criticisms was that he had based himself on the memoirs of Sir

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<sup>1</sup> / Report of Palestine Royal Commission, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 25 June 1937, p.2, (PRO CAB 24/270 5268 [C. P. 166 (37)]).

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., pp.4-6.

<sup>3</sup> / Palestine Report, Memorandum from Foreign Office (Rendel Minutes), 28 June 1937, p.2 (un-numbered), (PRO FO 371/20807 E 3531 5268).

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., pp.4-7 (un-numbered).

<sup>5</sup> / Palestine, Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, Cmd 5513.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., para.3.

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid., para.7.

<sup>8</sup> / "Weizmann more formidable than Churchill", Jewish Chronicle, (London), 27 December 1963, p.11.

<sup>9</sup> / Editorial, "Balfour Declaration Myth", Jewish Chronicle, (London), 3 January 1964, p.7.

Alec Kirkbride, who for decades had served the British Government in Palestine (including Transjordan). Kirkbride had written concerning this transfer of Arabs. "At the time of the issue of this (Palestine) mandate, His Majesty's Government were too busy setting up a civil administration in Palestine proper, west of the river Jordan, to be bothered about the remote and undeveloped areas which lay to the east of the river and which were intended to serve as a reserve of land for use in the resettlement of Arabs once the National Home for the Jews in Palestine, which they were pledged to support, became an accomplished fact." <sup>(1)</sup> Boothby added that Kirkbride had been asked by a friend if he was absolutely certain of these facts, since this friend had never seen them documented either in British, Jewish or Arab archives. Kirkbride replied that he was "absolutely certain" adding that he thought that it had not been documented because "before such a plan was in even the rudimentary stage, the Churchill-Abdullah settlement of 1921, which resulted in the formation of the Emirate of Transjordan, put an end to it." <sup>(2)</sup> The identity of this "friend" is not stated, but it is possibly Christopher Sykes, who in his book "Cross Roads to Israel" wrote in a footnote that he had received a "communication" in this matter from Kirkbride. <sup>(3)</sup>

In addition to the evidence of Sir Alec Kirkbride, Boothby had based himself on numerous conversations he had had with Weizmann, who had been a close personal friend of his. He had also received a letter from Vera Weizmann, the widow of Chaim Weizmann confirming the accuracy of his statement in the radio programme. <sup>(4)</sup>

In letters to both the "Jewish Chronicle" <sup>(5)</sup> and the "Jewish Observer and Middle East Review", Boothby pointed out that by a slip of the tongue, which is easy enough in an impromptu and unscripted broadcast, he gave the impression that such a transfer was written into the first draft of the Balfour Declaration. What in fact he meant to convey was that until the settlement imposed on the Middle East by Churchill in 1921, "Some transfer of population was regarded as implicit in, and consequential upon the Balfour Declaration." <sup>(6)</sup>

Possible support for Kirkbride's and Boothby's contention can be found in a telegram sent by Brigadier-General Gilbert Clayton to the British Foreign Office on 18 November 1918. Clayton wrote that "the districts East of the Jordan are thinly populated and their development would allow of considerable emigration from Palestine thereby making room for Jewish expansion." <sup>(7)</sup> This indicates that this was the line of thought amongst those British involved with Palestine at the end of the First World War. [At this period, Clayton was Chief Political Officer of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and also Military Governor of O.E.T.A.-South. A few years later, he was appointed Chief Secretary to the Government of Palestine.]

In January 1964, Jon Kimche, the Editor of the "Jewish Observer and Middle East Review" visited the Weizmann Archives. There, the Director, Boris Guriel told him that "serious substantiation can be found for Lord Boothby's contention as to the original meaning of the Balfour Declaration prior to its final version ... The Arabs were never mentioned in the original draft and, by way of omission, the possibility of a transfer became plausible." <sup>(8)</sup> In a letter to the same newspaper, Guriel pointed out that "regardless of whether or not the actual draft contained the 'transfer' point in letter, it is the spirit and the logical consequence which count." <sup>(9)</sup> Kimche observed that after he had "heard the views of Boris Guriel, the able and knowledgeable Director of the Weizmann archives in Rehovot, it looked to me as if Lord Boothby was right after all in his controversy over the Balfour Declaration." <sup>(10)</sup>

In the course of this correspondence, opposing opinions were expressed by Sir Leon Simon,

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<sup>1</sup> / Sir Alec Kirkbride, *A Crackle of Thorns*, (London, 1956), p.19.

<sup>2</sup> / Lord Boothby, Letters to the Editor, *Jewish Chronicle*, (London), 17 January 1964, p.7.

<sup>3</sup> / Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel*, op. cit., p.61 fn.1

<sup>4</sup> / Lord Boothby, Letters to the Editor, *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, (London), 28 February 1964, p.20.

<sup>5</sup> / Lord Boothby, Letters to the Editor, *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, (London), 24 January 1964, p.7.

<sup>6</sup> / Boothby, *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, 28 February 1964, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> / Telegram, Clayton to British Foreign Office, 18 November 1918, p.6, (PRO FO 371/3385 F747/191229).

<sup>8</sup> / Boris Guriel, Letters to the Editor, *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, London, 6 March 1964, p.21.

<sup>9</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.22.

<sup>10</sup> / "Was Boothby Right?", *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review*, (London), 7 February 1964, p.9.



who had been one of the members of the advisory Political Committee which Weizmann and Sokolow had set up early in 1917. This Committee heard reports of discussions with British Government representatives and discussed the various drafts of the "Balfour Declaration", both those proposed by its own members and those submitted by the Government. Simon stated that he could not recollect a word being spoken about transfer of populations, and that "my certainty on that point is shared by Mr. Harry Sacher," another member of this Committee. (1) In support of his case, Simon (2) quoted from instructions issued by Lord Curzon, British Foreign Secretary, and strong anti-Zionist, to the heads of the Palestine Administration. "The Arabs will not be despoiled of their land nor required to leave the country." (3)

Simon did not, however, state the reason for the formulation of these instructions. Herbert Samuel, who at that time was Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the Economic Development of Palestine, had been asked how the hostility to Zionism in Palestine could best be allayed by the administrative authorities on the spot. In his answer, Samuel pointed out that this hostility resulted from the fact that the British administrators in Palestine were acting towards the Arabs in a way which was not in accord with the Balfour Declaration. He concluded that as a result "there would naturally arise among the Arabs a feeling of doubt whether the establishment of the Jewish National Home in Palestine is really a decided issue, and a tendency to believe that if an agitation were set on foot and a threatening attitude adopted on their part, the British Government might well be ready to abandon the intentions it had at first announced." To prevent this contingency, Samuel proposed that certain instructions be sent by the British Government to the administration in Palestine. (4) These were accepted by Curzon, who then incorporated in a despatch the identical instructions as formulated by Samuel.

In conclusion, we might state that during the course of the correspondence in 1964, Boothby observed that this resettlement of the Arab population "could, and should, have been carried out between thirty and forty years ago by the British Government, on lavish lines, when they had both the power and the money to do it." (5)

#### **Bonne's Memorandum**

A few days after the publication of the Peel Report, Dr. Alfred Abraham Bonne, an economist who had been Director of the Economic Archives for the Near East in Jerusalem produced a memorandum, entitled "Outline for an Enquiry into the Problems of Exchange of Land and Population."

He began by explaining that some past population exchanges "had had good results, both by removing the latent possibilities of racial and religious strife and by creating new possibilities for increased immigration." On the other hand "most of the efforts to settle racial controversies in territories of mixed population by agreement were not successful." Hence, according to Bonne, the Peel Commission came to the conclusion regarding Palestine that "the racial antagonism between Jews and Arabs could only be settled by very radical means. i.e. by the exchange of population." (6)

The Peel Commission Report had quoted as a precedent the Greco-Turkish population exchange. Bonne summed up the principles involved in this exchange and then pointed out the differences and analogues between the Greco-Turkish exchange and the proposed Jewish-Arab population exchange. He concluded that this exchange would "remove definitely the antagonism between Jews and Arabs in the new state", but in view of the technical difficulties involved, it would have to be carried out energetically with the active support and guidance

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<sup>1</sup> / Leon Simon, Letters to the Editor, Jewish Observer and Middle East Review, (London), 21 February 1964, p.26.

<sup>2</sup> / Leon Simon, Letters to the Editor, Jewish Observer and Middle East Review, (London), 6 March 1964, p.22.

<sup>3</sup> / Telegram, Earl Curzon to Colonel French, Foreign Office, London, 4 August 1919, Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919 - 1939, First Series, vol.iv, 1919, ed. E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, (London, 1952), (henceforth BFP), p.329.

<sup>4</sup> / Herbert Samuel to Sir W. Tyrrell, 5 June ,1919, BFP, pp.283-84.

<sup>5</sup> / Boothby, Jewish Chronicle, 17 January 1964, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup> / A. Bonne, Outline for an Enquiry into the Problems of Exchange of Land and Population, Jerusalem, July 1937, p.1, (CZA S25/10059).

of the Government together with outside financial help. <sup>(1)</sup>

Bonne then discussed the voluntary or compulsory nature of this population exchange. He noted that the "fact that the Commissioners themselves have considered a compulsory exchange of population entitles the Jewish Agency to examine such a possibility without the fear of being charged with the reproach to have taken the initiative for the evacuation of the Arabs." However, he felt that the easiest solution would be for the Arabs themselves to agree to a voluntary exchange of population since a compulsory exchange would "lead to grave attacks on Zionism and would endanger the position of Jews in the Diaspora." Bonne wrote that it would be difficult to imagine the Zionist Movement, whose aim was to create a home for a landless people, being instrumental in the expulsion of an Arab people against its will. Were the Zionists to contemplate such an evacuation, the consequences would be very grave. <sup>(2)</sup>

However, Bonne recognised the fate of the proposed Jewish State entirely dependent on this exchange of population and that it was therefore necessary "to find a formula which is acceptable to the Arabs by not having the character of a compulsory expulsion, and which will nevertheless lead to the evacuation of the country by the Arabs." Since he was certain that the Arabs would not agree to a voluntary transfer, he considered that the problem of their evacuation should become part of a greater scheme such as, "The Reform of the Agricultural Situation in the Two New States". Bonne proposed that the best way to implement this would be by a "Mixed Commission", whose composition included neutral experts and which would be attached to the League of Nations. Such a Commission might "without too much stressing the point of 'Compulsory Evacuation', positively formulate its programme, say, 'Achievement of a Great Agricultural Reform in Both States by the Resettlement of the Arab Population in the New Arab State, Development of New Water Sources, Draining of Swamps, Rounding Off and Partition of Musha'a Lands, etc.'" He added that if after thoroughly investigating the feasibility of the scheme it was found to be workable, "it could claim to eliminate the disadvantages of compulsory evacuation without foregoing its advantages." <sup>(3)</sup>

Bonne's memorandum then discussed the statistical and technical details of such a transfer, including the size of the Arab population to be evacuated, its vocational distribution, the area of the Arab owned land in the proposed Jewish State which would have to be purchased, and the finance involved in such a transfer. <sup>(4)</sup>

Because of his expertise in this subject, Bonne was assigned various duties regarding the proposal for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. These are to be found in a document headed "Distribution of Duties". This document, which is undated, seems to have been written between the time of the publication of the Peel Report (early July 1937) and the start of the 20th Zionist Congress (early August 1937).

Amongst those listed "for the [20th Zionist] Congress" are Dr. Bonne, whose duty was concerned with the "Transfer of Arab Residents from the Jewish Area to the Arab Area". His name was also listed "for Negotiations with the British Government and the League of Nations" on the question of "Transfer of Land and Population". <sup>(5)</sup>

Reference was made to Bonne's memorandum in a memorandum brought out at the same period by Dr. H. Oppenheimer. In it he commented, "It has often been said that the evacuation scheme proposed by the Royal Commission is incompatible with their demand for the protection of minorities." To resolve this conflict, Oppenheimer considered that one would have to distinguish between two periods: the transition period, namely the period whilst the Arabs were being transferred, and the period which followed after. During this transition period "the methods of protecting the minorities have to be adapted to the requirements of the evacuation scheme." Only after completion of the transfer, would the Arabs remaining in

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.1-3.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.3.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., pp.3-4.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., pp.4-9.

<sup>5</sup> / Halukat haTafkidim (Distribution of Duties), undated, (CZA S25/10109).

Palestine "enjoy full protection of their rights." (1)

### Mapai Central Committee

At a meeting held between Ben-Gurion, Weizmann and the British Colonial Secretary, Ormsby-Gore on 28 June 1937, Weizmann requested that he and his friends be given a copy of the Peel Report before the official publication date. Ormsby-Gore agreed that this matter would be raised at a meeting to be held in two days time. (2)

On 1 July, Blanche Dugdale wrote in her diary, "Went to Zionist office and found Chaim (Weizmann) raging, after a telephone talk with Boyd (Ormsby-Gore's secretary) in which he learned he was not to get the Report till Monday (5 July) - i.e. three days before publication. I have never seen him so angry." (3) We also know from her diary that by Friday, 2 July, Shertok knew the contents of the Peel Report. (4) However Baffy did not state from where Shertok got his "pre-publication" information on the contents of the Peel Report, but it could well have been from Weizmann. A few days earlier (29 June), Weizmann, who by then had elicited from various sources information on many of the points made in the Peel Report, wrote a confidential letter to Stephen Wise. In this letter he listed these points and in connection with the transfer proposal, Weizmann wrote: "Something in the way of an exchange of populations - or perhaps more correctly of territories." (5)

On 5 July - two days before the publication of the Report - the Mapai Central Committee met. ["Mapai" - an acronym for Mifleget Poale Eretz Israel - the Palestine Workers' Party, was founded in 1930 by the amalgamation of several labour groups, as a Zionist-Socialist party faithful to the ideal of national redemption and socialism in the homeland. It immediately became the dominant party of the Jewish Community in Palestine.]

At the Mapai meeting on 5 July, Shertok gave a summary of the Peel Report, including the section on the population exchange proposal. He reported that the Commission had presented the exchange proposal very forcefully. "They say: At first glance, this appears to be a very bold thing, but the question before us is such that it requires a bold solution."

However, as Shertok pointed out, although the Commission put forward its proposal as an "Exchange of Population", the unequal numbers of Arabs and Jews involved by this "exchange" meant that the stress would inevitably be on a "compulsory transfer" of Arabs. He added, however, that the Peel Commission did not state this specifically but "hoped" that the Arab and Jewish leaders would themselves come to an understanding on this matter. (6)

Shertok's summary was followed by a discussion. However, only two speakers - Chaim Shorer and Yitzchak Ben-Zvi - referred to the recommendation on population transfer. Shorer felt "there was no real value to be placed on the chances of transferring the Arabs to Transjordan, because they would not wish to leave a Jewish Palestine of their own freewill, and we are not going to transfer them by force." (7)

Yitzchak Ben-Zvi, a founder of Mapai and later the second President of the State of Israel, commented in passing on this proposal, "Obviously there are great difficulties attached to the partition plan, for example the difficulty in transferring 100,000 Arabs from the Galilean mountains." (8)

The Mapai Central Committee was divided over the Peel Commission proposals, but decided to accept the principle of partition.

Further comments on transfer of Arabs were made by several speakers at a Mapai Council meeting held between 9 - 11 July 1937, which was a few days after the official publication of the Peel Report.

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<sup>1</sup> / H. Oppenheimer, Memorandum, The Economic Position of the Arab Minority in the Proposed Jewish State, July 1937, pp.1-2, (CZA S25/8127).

<sup>2</sup> / Note of Conversation with Ormsby-Gore, 28 June 1937, pp.4-5, (WA).

<sup>3</sup> / Baffy, op. cit., p.48.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.49.

<sup>5</sup> / Weizmann to Wise, 29 June 1937, p.2, (American Jewish Historical Society, Stephen Wise Papers, Box 122).

<sup>6</sup> / Minutes of Mapai Central Committee, 5 July 1937, pp.7-8, (Mapai, file 23/37, vol.2).

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid., p.12.

<sup>8</sup> / Ibid., p.13.

Amongst the speakers at this meeting was Yitzchak Tabenkin, who whilst stating that the Mapai Party should not press for a decision supporting the transfer of "tens of thousands of Arabs", added that "if the Arabs were to agree and we would be able to transfer them, I would not rebel against this". However, he said that he was against the establishment of a Jewish State if it involved the compulsory transfer of Arabs. <sup>(1)</sup> Hence we see that Tabenkin was prepared to accept voluntary transfer of Arabs whilst strongly opposing compulsory transfer.

Berl Katznelson spoke at some length on the question of Arab transfer. He said that this proposal in the Peel Report would do a great service to the Zionist cause were it to be implemented but were it not to be implemented it could be dangerous. He pointed out that there was a saying that there are things that one should always think about, but should never speak about. This saying was appropriate to the question of Arab transfer. He reminded the meeting that he had said at the time of the Arab pogroms that one needed to find all sorts of political solutions regarding the Arab question and "I told myself: The historical solution will be population exchange." Katznelson knew that there were Arab countries neighbouring Palestine who needed money and an increase in population, but to speak about it would be harmful and could lead to the Arabs rebelling. He observed that the British were talking of Arab transfer, and he asked whether they had a plan for implementation; whether in fact there could there be such a plan and whether it could be implemented. If not why were the British talking about it?! <sup>(2)</sup>

Israel Idelson, a leading member of the Kibbutz HaMe'uchad movement, spoke about the demographic problem in Palestine and pointed out that no-one at that meeting could possibly believe that it would be possible within the near future to implement what the Peel Commission had proposed regarding Arab transfer. The Arabs would not transfer voluntarily - it was not in their interests to move to Transjordan or Beersheba. Regarding compulsory transfer, Idelson queried whether it was implementable or desirable? Moshe Shertok then interjected: "The compulsion comes after the agreement." Idelson agreed with Shertok and drew the parallel with the Greco-Turkish transfer, adding however, that the reason for Greece's agreement to compulsory transfer was that she knew that if her nationals did not transfer from Turkey, they would remain under an oppressive regime. It was the reality of the situation which forced Greece to agree to the transfer. <sup>(3)</sup>

Another speaker who brought up the question of transfer was Yitzchak Wilkansky (Elazari-Volcani), an agronomist who was one of the founders of the Institute for Agricultural Studies in Rehovot. He reminded the meeting that in the past when the Zionists had bought tracts of land, it was called "expulsion" and "now the mouth that forbade is the one which permits and speaks of population transfer. I think that we need to hold on to this paragraph even more than [demanding] extending the borders [of the proposed Jewish State]. This paragraph is the most important one for us and we should not be over-pious and righteous at a time when the Righteous Gentiles of the World, are in fact giving us permission". Wilkansky felt that implementing such transfer would not be easy "but this paragraph is very important and is worth more than two million dunams [of land]." <sup>(4)</sup>

These were not the first occasions that the various forums of the Mapai party had debated the question of possible partition and Arab transfer from Palestine. At a meeting of the Mapai Central Committee held five months earlier at the beginning of February, these questions had been discussed. The Peel Commission had just finished taking evidence in Palestine and Ben-Gurion attempted on the basis of its questions and comments, to forecast its recommendations. After putting forward a number of possibilities, he suggested that the Jews should be prepared for a radical solution of the problem, such as the establishment of two states, Jewish and Arab, in Palestine. The Commission was already thinking on these lines and it had also previously been suggested by Sir Stafford Cripps, a prominent member of the British Labour Party. After discussing the minimum practical area for the Jewish State, Ben-

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes of Meeting of Mapai Council, 9-11 July 1937, address by Tabenkin, p.17, (Mapai Archives).

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., address by Katznelson, p.24, (Mapai Archives).

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., address by Idelson, pp.4-5, (Mapai Archives).

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., address by Wilkansky, pp.12-13, (Mapai Archives).

Gurion pointed out that there would be three hundred thousand Arabs within its borders which could result in a serious rebellion by the Arabs.

In the discussion which followed, Shertok said that such a partition plan was "filled with difficulties and explosive". He referred to the three hundred thousand Arabs who would find themselves under a Jewish Government. "It won't be easy to make a population exchange", said Shertok, "It won't be an easy thing to remove the Arabs of Bet Dagon and Zarnuga from their houses and orchards, and resettle them in the Huleh. And if (the Commission) really want to remove the Arab population by force, it will undoubtedly lead to bloodshed on such a scale that the present (Arab) rebellion in Palestine will in comparison fade into insignificance." He felt that population transfer could not be implemented, "at least during the transition period" without British might and he was doubtful whether the British would have the courage to defend militarily the building of a Jewish National Home. <sup>(1)</sup>

Shertok's opinion regarding the impracticability of the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine came up again in a conversation in London during the following month with a few colleagues, including Weizmann, Namier and Blanche Dugdale, who were voicing their opinions regarding the possible partition of Palestine. Shertok considered the partition plan as compared with other possibilities to be acceptable, but he felt that a major difficulty would be the question of defence. He added that population transfer was out of the question, since the Arabs in the Jewish State would not be prepared to exchange their orchards for land in Transjordan. <sup>(2)</sup>

Just over a month later at a meeting of the Zionist General Council held in Jerusalem on 22 April, the question of the Arabs in the proposed Jewish State came up. Shertok repeated his objections to the transfer of population which he felt was a "false attraction and a harmful idea." Again he queried the likelihood of any Arab being prepared to exchange land and asked what the proposed exchange would involve, adding that such a plan could lead to bloodshed. He also discounted the parallel with the Greco-Turkish population exchange, where he maintained the conditions were completely different, although he declined to minimise the differences. However, Shertok did qualify his statement with regard to the "distant" future. He said that he was prepared to see as a future possibility "the exchange of population on a more decisive scale and over a much greater area." <sup>(3)</sup>

Shertok's view that transfer might be possible in the future came up again at a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive in London at the beginning of 1943. Namier said that "transfer was the most essential thing" although he realised its difficulties especially concerning moving the peasants. To this Shertok replied that transfer could only come about by agreement. He did not envisage that such an agreement would be achieved prior to the creation of a Jewish State or of large-scale Jewish immigration though they "would work for such an agreement." Shertok said that British experts believed that the Arabs would become reconciled to a Jewish State once it had been established and that it was "then that transfer might become a possibility" but he did not think the two things would come about simultaneously.

In answer to a query as to whether "the question of transfer should be a matter for discussion amongst themselves or in public", Shertok replied that he "would not raise it in public, but of course, if someone were to raise it at a meeting", he would reply to it. Namier felt that the "whole question of transfer would be discussed on a much larger scale" after the termination of the Second World War and said that he had been told that "the question of transfer was gaining ground among statesmen." Whereupon Shertok answered, "If transfer on a large-scale were to come into question, then naturally (we) could bring in (our) own comparatively small problem." <sup>(4)</sup>

### **Council of "World Unity"**

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes of Mapai Central Committee, 5 - 6 February 1937, pp.11-12, (Mapai, file 23/37, vol.2).

<sup>2</sup> / Diaries of Sharett, vol.ii, op. cit., p.70.

<sup>3</sup> / Minutes of Zionist General Council, Jerusalem, 22 April 1937, pp.9-10, (CZA S5 277/1).

<sup>4</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 16 January 1943, p.5, (CZA Z4/302/26).

From the beginning of the twentieth century, a number of Zionist socialist parties of differing shades of ideology had been formed in the Diaspora, and during the course of the subsequent decades these underwent a number of splits and amalgamations. In 1932, at a meeting in Danzig, most of these Zionist socialist parties amalgamated to form "World Unity" (Ihud Olami).

Immediately before the 1937 Zionist Congress, "World Unity" held its own conference in Zurich and on the evening of 29 July 1937, Ben-Gurion delivered the opening lecture. During the course of this lecture, he spoke at length on the Peel transfer proposal, giving it his full support. He listed what he saw to be the advantages of the Peel recommendations including the fact that "The Arabs dwelling in these plains will be removed and transferred to the Arab State." <sup>(1)</sup> He praised the Commission for proposing by this transfer (if necessary compulsory), to compensate for the small territorial area of the designated Jewish State, thus providing opportunity for increased Jewish settlement. He then claimed that using Jewish agricultural methods it would be possible to replace each Arab family by at least five Jewish families.

However, "The Commission does not suggest removal of the Arabs, it suggests transferring them and settling them in the Arab State. I think", said Ben-Gurion, "that I do not need to explain the fundamental difference between removal and transference."

Ben-Gurion continued, "Up to now we have implemented our settlement in Palestine by means of transfer of the (Arab) population from location to location... only in a few cases of our new settlement was it not necessary to transfer the former inhabitants." Was such transfer of Arabs on a voluntary basis or was compulsion used? Ben-Gurion said, "In most cases the transfer was arranged by agreement with the tenant farmers and only in a minority of cases was a compulsory transfer necessary." It would seem that the tenant farmers were first given an opportunity to come to an arrangement with the Jewish settlers. Failing such an arrangement, compulsion was used.

Ben-Gurion did not consider that there was anything wrong with such transfers. "If it is possible to transfer the Arabs from one village to another within the area of the British Mandate - it will be difficult to find any political or ethical reason against transferring these Arabs from an area under Jewish rule."

As is evident from our earlier quotation, Ben-Gurion considered that there was a fundamental difference between removal and transference. He added that the Jews would not be able to agree to a transfer, even if suggested and implemented by the British, were it to involve removal. He defined "removal" as "the destruction of the financial basis of the transferees." He said however, that even with the highest ethical standards, one could not oppose a transfer which guaranteed the transferees "sufficient material conditions" and "maximum national security". These were the conditions which the Peel Commission required.

Ben-Gurion concluded that by this transfer the Arabs would obtain "full and complete satisfaction of their national desires." If this transfer were to guarantee the Arabs physical living conditions which were no worse than those obtaining (and only under such conditions would transfer, according to Ben-Gurion, be possible), then their financial and personal rights would in no way be affected." <sup>(2)</sup>

At the subsequent debate, nearly twenty speakers referred to this transfer proposal. Berl Katznelson, who was a strong opponent of partition, came out strongly in favour of transferring the Arabs from Palestine. On the morality of transfer, he said, "My conscience is completely clear. A distant neighbour is better than a close enemy. They will not lose by their transfer and we certainly will not. In the final analysis, it is a political reform of benefit to both sides. For a long time, I have been convinced that this is the best solution and during the time of the troubles, I was strengthened in my conviction that this must happen one of these days." Katznelson was disappointed by the Peel Commission's recommendation that the Arabs be transferred to areas of the proposed Arab State within Palestine. "I did not imagine", he

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<sup>1</sup> / Al Darcei M'dinateinu, (Tel-Aviv, 1938), p.61.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., pp.72-73.

continued, "that the transfer 'to outside Palestine' would mean the area of Shechem (Nablus). I believed and still believe that their future lies in Syria and Iraq." <sup>(1)</sup> According to the historian Yosef Gorny, Katznelson's strong endorsement of transfer was also made in a private conversation with Ahuvia Malkin. <sup>(2)</sup>

Aharon Zisling, a leader of the Kibbutz HaMe'uhad movement and member of the original Ahdut Ha'avodah party, like Katznelson opposed partition. He said, "I do not dispute our moral right to the transfer proposal. There is absolutely no ethical objection to this suggestion, which will have the effect of stimulating the development of national life." He added that this could turn out to be a most humane inspiration. <sup>(3)</sup>

Eliezer Kaplan, a founder of Ze'irei Zion in Russia and treasurer of the Jewish Agency Executive discounted any comparison with the expulsion of Jews from Germany. "Here we are not speaking of expulsion but of an organised transfer of a number of Arabs from an area within the Jewish State to another place within the Arab State, i.e. to their own national environment, and we want to ensure that the conditions there will be, at the least, no worse than their previous conditions." <sup>(4)</sup>

Eliahu Lulu, a public worker in Mapai, was a supporter of partition. He refuted the idea that transfer would be political provocation. "It is a just and reasonable plan, ethical and humane in all senses." He pointed out that in exchange for the land in Palestine which an Arab transferee would have to sell, he would be able to purchase plots in Iraq, causing what had once been a prosperous land to flourish again, as a result of Arab immigration. Even should it be compulsory, Lulu had no doubts that transfer was justified. "If we oppose all rights to transfer, then we must oppose what we have achieved up to now - the transfers from Emek Hefer to the Bet Shean valley, from the Sharon to the mountains of Ephraim etc." <sup>(5)</sup>

Golda Myerson (later Golda Myer, Prime Minister of the State of Israel) said, "I would agree that the Arabs leave Palestine and my conscience would be perfectly clear", but she questioned the possibility of such a transfer. If the Arabs remained, however, they would have to be guaranteed equal rights. <sup>(6)</sup>

Joseph Bankover, a member of Ahdut Ha'avodah and a founder of Kibbutz Ramat Hacovesh said, regarding compulsory transfer, "As a member of (Kibbutz) Ramat Hacovesh, I would be very happy, were it possible to free ourselves of our pleasant (Arab) neighbours of Kfar Miski, Tirah and Kalkiliya." However, like Golda Myerson, Bankover questioned the feasibility of transfer. He said that he had not been able to find any firm commitment to compulsory transfer in the Peel Report. <sup>(7)</sup>

David Remez, one of the leaders of the Histadrut Labour Union said that he had little faith in population transfers "although this solution is completely ethical and just." Since the conditions of the Arabs would be incomparably better in the Jewish State than in the Arab State, Remez did not think that the Arabs would move voluntarily and he doubted whether there was anyone who would force them to move. <sup>(8)</sup>

Shlomo Lavi, an enthusiastic supporter of partition said that the demand that the Arabs move out of Palestine because they had many other Arab Homelands, whereas the Jews had no other National Home, was "very just and very ethical." However, in reality, this could not be put before the world as a serious claim. <sup>(9)</sup>

Hayim Greenberg, a leader of the Zionist labour movement in America said that he had not found in the Peel Report anything about England's implementing the transfer of the Arabs. This he thought was good, since England was intending to implement a compulsory transfer.

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.179-80.

<sup>2</sup> / Yosef Gorny, *The Arab Question and the Jewish Problem*, (Tel-Aviv, 1985), p.433 ; Yosef Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs 1882-1948*, (Oxford, 1987), p.259 fn.40.

<sup>3</sup> / Al Darcei M'dinateinu, op. cit., p.116.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.82.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.122.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., p.123.

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid., pp.93-94.

<sup>8</sup> / Ibid., p.168.

<sup>9</sup> / Ibid., p.100.

He explained that it was not a question of ethics - "one could find an ethical authorisation" - but it would be dangerous for the Jews of Poland, Germany etc. <sup>(1)</sup> The next speaker, Dov Hos, a representative of the Histadrut and Mapai in London, said that on the question of transfer he was closer to the views of Greenberg than to Ben-Gurion. <sup>(2)</sup>

Israel Idelson (Bar-Yehudah), a leading member of the Kibbutz HaMe'uhad movement was also worried about the effect compulsory transfer might have upon the safety of Jews living in the Diaspora. He doubted whether the Arabs would agree to move out of Palestine voluntarily, since they were confident that no harm would come to them should they remain, and he rejected the use of force, as Jews in the neighbouring Arab countries would be hostages to the Arabs' displeasure. <sup>(3)</sup>

Dr. Aryeh Tartakover, a member of the Zionist labour movement in Poland, and author of the book "A History of the Jewish Labour Movement", asked whether establishing a principle that a state should be free from minorities might not be used against the Jews in the surrounding Arab States to prevent them from living there. He suggested that this was "too great a price to pay in order to get rid of only a few tens of thousands of Arabs from the Jewish State, (because we would certainly not get rid of more than that)". <sup>(4)</sup> [The words in parenthesis are Tartakover's.] [One might ask here, whether, if it had been possible to remove the quarter of a million or so Arabs then living in Palestine from the Jewish State, Tartakover would have been prepared to pay the price?]

Berl Locker pointed out that the transfer proposal depended on so many premises, such as the finding of suitable land, and Arab agreement, that he was in great doubt whether in fact it would be possible. <sup>(5)</sup> Another delegate who questioned its feasibility was Chaim Shorer, one of the few former members of "Hapoel Hazair" who opposed partition. Shorer spoke of the "illusion of the transfer of Arabs from our borders." <sup>(6)</sup>

A similar line was taken by Shlomo Kaplanski, a founder of the World Union of Poale Zion, (and in the early 1940s Chairman of a committee on Jewish-Arab Relations). Kaplanski opposed the partition scheme preferring a bi-national state. He did not believe that it would be possible to transfer twenty thousand Arab families, who had lived in the plains for generations, to another part of Palestine. He said that he would not enter into the ethical side of the question. If a Jewish State were to be established in part of Palestine, it would be necessary to live in peace and harmony with the "Arab part of Palestine and with all the neighbouring countries." <sup>(7)</sup>

Avraham Hirshfeld was critical of Ben-Gurion's attitude towards transfer, describing it as fantasy. "Transfer does not come into consideration", said Hirshfeld. He pointed out that the Arabs would not move from areas such as Acre, Safed and Metulla where there were large concentrations of Arabs. <sup>(8)</sup>

Strong opposition to the transfer proposal was voiced by the Labour ideologist, Yitzchak Tabenkin, who described it as "a wild and un-ethical idea." He said that it was easy for the English to spread such slogans about, but that the Jews should not base their political aspirations on the removal of two hundred thousand Arabs from their villages and cities. Most of the Arabs would in any case not agree to move and such a transfer could completely poison relations with neighbouring countries and cause harm to world Jewry. It could also close the door on constructive meetings with the Arabs. <sup>(9)</sup> However, as we see elsewhere in this work, at the same period, in his speeches to the 20th Zionist Congress and to a Mapai Council Meeting, Tabenkin agreed to the idea of a voluntary transfer and such agreement of his continued into the 1940s.

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1 / Ibid., p.126.

2 / Ibid., p.128.

3 / Ibid., pp.106-07.

4 / Ibid., p.132.

5 / Ibid., p.133.

6 / Ibid., p.146.

7 / Ibid., p.91.

8 / Ibid., p.196.

9 / Ibid., pp.191-92.



Shmuel Yavne'eli, who had, a quarter of a century earlier, gone to Yemen in order to encourage the Jewish community to emigrate to Palestine, said that he did not consider it necessary to implement the forcible transfer of the Arabs from Palestine. <sup>(1)</sup> Opposition to transfer also came from Ze'ev Feinstejn, a worker in Ahdut Ha'avodah and a founder of Kibbutz Ayelet Hashahar. He said that there were a million Arabs in Palestine who must remain there. "We do not want to expel a single Arab... we have developed without expulsion." <sup>(2)</sup>

As we have seen, many if not most of the speakers at this conference, all of them members of the Zionist labour movement, were in favour of transfer - although some felt that it was impossible in practice - whilst only a few came out against transfer. The division of opinion on this question, did not follow the pattern of the division on the question of partition of the country. There were delegates such as Katznelson and Zisling, who opposed partition, yet were in favour of transferring the Arabs.

In his book, "Partition of Eretz-Israel in Mandatory Period", Shmuel Dothan, concluded from the proceedings of this Conference that "this transfer question was shown in a new light. No longer did the apologists try to prove that the Arabs had never been removed from their land, but more honestly denied that there was anything wrong with such removal. The transfer of Arabs from the Jewish area to an Arab State was not a sin, but an ethical act which would benefit both Jews and Arabs alike." <sup>(3)</sup>

### **British Parliamentary Debates**

The British Parliament has two chambers. The upper Chamber, known as the House of Lords, in 1937 consisted mainly of hereditary lords temporal and non-hereditary lords spiritual. The lower Chamber, the House of Commons, in 1937 had 640 members elected by popular franchise, each member representing a specific constituency of the United Kingdom.

On 20 and 21 July 1937, both Houses of Parliament debated the recommendations of the Peel Commission. In the Parliamentary Reports on both these debates, only a few scattered paragraphs dealt with the question of the transfer of population. Many of the speakers did not mention transfer at all.

The debate in the House of the Lords began on the 20 July and was adjourned to 21 July. Early speakers in this debate were Lord Peel, Chairman of the Peel Commission, and the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, who was the Deputy Colonial Secretary. However, neither of these speakers specifically mentioned the subject of population transfer.

The first speaker to mention transfer was Viscount Samuel (Herbert Samuel). In the period leading up to the Balfour Declaration, Herbert Samuel, a Jew, played an important role in the preliminary behind-the-scene activities, constantly guiding the Zionist leaders. Weizmann described him as "discreet, tactful and insistent." When the British were granted the Mandate over Palestine, Samuel, was appointed as the First High Commissioner and served between the years 1920-25. During the early part of his term of office, he laid the foundations of the Palestine civil administration and gave official recognition to the Jewish representative bodies. However, later in his term of office, he made efforts to appease Arab anti-Zionism and restricted Jewish immigration into Palestine.

In his speech to the House of Lords, Samuel came out against the partition proposal. This caused anger not only in the Zionist community, but also in the ranks of the British Government, who had gradually been persuaded to accept the idea of partition. Samuel was extremely scathing in his criticism of the recommendation of the Peel Commission concerning the transfer of population. "The Commission say there ought to be a removal of population, or what is called strangely enough, an exchange of population, that the Jews from the Arab State should be brought into the Jewish State and the Arabs in the Jewish State should be transferred. But how can you have an exchange of population where there are 225,000 Arabs in the Jewish State and 250,000 Jews in the other?"

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., p.135.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.136.

<sup>3</sup> / Shmuel Dothan, Partition of Eretz-Israel in Mandatory Period, (Jerusalem, 1979), p.153.

Samuel then referred to the Peel Commission's approval of the way the Greco-Turkish exchange of population was carried out. It was "quite true", said Samuel, that "it was admirably done". But he believed that the circumstances surrounding this Greco-Turkish transfer were completely different - the Greeks were fleeing from Asia Minor after their disastrous campaign, their armed forces heavily defeated.

"There is nothing of that kind in Palestine," said Samuel. "There is nothing of that sort to induce 225,000 Arabs to leave the land in which they and their fathers have been settled for a thousand years where they have their mosques and where they have their graveyards."

Samuel objected to the proposal "that the new Jewish State should be built upon the basis of taking away 100,000 Arabs, or whatever the number may be, from this district, compulsorily dispossessing them, no doubt with compensation and finding them land elsewhere."

We might again point out here that the Peel Report mentioned that when the Nobel Peace Prizewinner, Dr. Nansen, had first proposed the compulsory Greco-Turkish population transfer, he had been sharply criticised for the "inhumanity of his proposal." However, the Commission considered that the success of the transfer had fully justified the apparent "inhumanity."

Samuel noted that another part of the report referred to the protection of minorities and asked whether the protection offered to the Arab minority would take the form of the compulsory uprooting and relocation elsewhere. In fact, paragraph 39 of Chapter xxii of the Peel Report states that the whole purpose of the proposal for the transfer of population was to protect minorities. The emergence of nationalism as a force after the First World War, was endangering minorities in Europe and Asia including Palestine. However, Samuel questioned whether it would be possible to relieve the large disparity between the size of the Jewish and Arab populations in "the so-called Jewish State" by means of a transfer such as that advocated in the Peel Report. <sup>(1)</sup>

Lord Melchett, who was at the time Chairman of the Jewish Agency Commission, supported the transfer of population. Unlike Samuel, Melchett accepted the parallel of the Greco-Turkish transfer and added that he often quoted it himself, and often pointed out that it showed an example of how the Jewish population of Eastern Europe might be transferred to the Middle East. He believed in the feasibility of the Arab-Jewish transfer, but was sceptical of the British Government's intentions. He asked, "Do the Government really seriously intend to pursue the transfer? What are its real intentions in that matter?" <sup>(2)</sup>

Lord Lugard, British Member of the Mandates Commission hoped that, since the transfer would be attended with great difficulty and would take a great deal of time, the existing Mandate would continue in operation until the successful completion of the transfer was in sight. <sup>(3)</sup> [In the case of the Greco-Turkish transfer it had taken about eight years to resolve all the problems.]

A few days before this debate, Lord Lugard had met with Weizmann. Although there is no minute on this meeting in the Weizmann Archives, it is referred to in a letter written by Weizmann to Lord Hailey on 18 July. <sup>(4)</sup> On the day of the meeting, Weizmann reported to Ben-Gurion, who wrote in his diary, "Lugard favours the transfer of Arabs and is of the opinion that the Government is able and is obligated to put it into operation." <sup>(5)</sup> Incidentally, from Weizmann's letter to Lord Hailey, it would appear that the meeting took place on 18 July, whereas from Ben-Gurion's diary the date is given as 17 July. Needless to say, this small discrepancy does not affect the reported contents of the meeting.

One of the speakers during the debate was the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Cosmo Gordon Lang. The Archbishop supported partition and advised the Lords to "trust the judgment of the Commission" and give "at least a most favourable consideration to

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<sup>1</sup> / Parliamentary Debates, Lords, vol.106, (henceforth Lords), 20 July 1937, cols.634-35.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., col.660.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., col.669.

<sup>4</sup> / Weizmann Letters, vol. xviii, op. cit., no.155, p.166.

<sup>5</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 17 July 1937, (BGA) ; Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol.4, op. cit. p.302.

their verdict." He fervently hoped that it would bring about an Arab-Jewish reconciliation in a country where peace and goodwill should prevail. <sup>(1)</sup> Nowhere in his speech did the Archbishop mention the proposal for population transfer. One would have assumed that had he considered it to be in any way unethical, he would have broached the subject.

The debate in the House of Commons took place on 21 July and continued for nearly eight and a half hours. It was opened by the Colonial Secretary, William Ormsby-Gore who supported the transfer of population. He indicated the need for a series of fact-finding inquiries to ascertain where and how many Arabs could be settled in Transjordan and elsewhere in Palestine, "if there is to be a scheme of transfer, and obviously a scheme of transfer is most desirable." <sup>(2)</sup> In requiring these "fact-finding inquiries", Ormsby-Gore was repeating a recommendation of the Peel Commission which called for an immediate survey and authoritative estimate of the practical possibilities of irrigation and development in the areas of Transjordan, the Jordan Valley and Beersheba.

Support for the transfer proposal was also voiced by Earl Edward Winterton, a Conservative member of over thirty years standing, who had served in Gallipoli and Palestine during the First World War and was afterwards Under-Secretary of State for India. It is of interest to note that although Winterton was an anti-Zionist and a leading supporter of the Arabs, he supported the population transfer proposal of the Peel Commission. Several months earlier, Winterton had suggested that Palestine be divided in such a way that Western Palestine up to the Jordan would be a Jewish State and Transjordan an Arab State. This was conditional on the British Government's investing very large sums of money in the development of Transjordan and the Arabs in the Jewish State (of Western Palestine) being given the choice of remaining or moving to Transjordan. <sup>(3)</sup>

In his speech to the House of Commons, Winterton said "The question of transfer is still in a very tentative state but I should hope that no one on either side of the House would say that the scheme is a bad one." He commended the "very satisfactory transfer of minorities" in the Greco-Turkish population exchange and hoped that "something of the same kind could be done in Palestine, and that it might lead to a solution of the minorities question." He recommended that population transfer be carefully considered in the greatest detail by the Mandates Commission. <sup>(4)</sup> A few weeks later, the Permanent Mandates Commission sitting in Geneva did fully consider this subject and also questioned Ormsby-Gore concerning the British Government's intentions regarding the proposed transfer of population.

Sir Arnold Wilson, a Conservative member with a long record of support for fascist regimes in Germany and Italy, who had spent nineteen years in Arabic-speaking countries said that he believed in, the inevitability of partition and saw in it a better prospect of justice for both Arabs and Jews than one could hope to obtain by the "present state of an indissoluble marriage of incompatible spouses." <sup>(5)</sup> He considered that it was possible to get men of good will to work together under the auspices of a third party and was confident that "in the long run, provided we do not attempt a compulsory transfer of population, the thing will work."

Stating that there were 260,000 Arabs and 2000 Jews to be transferred, Wilson added that the Jews should give the fullest assurances to the Arabs who wished to remain in the Jewish State. He believed that many Arabs would stay since nationalism had not reached the point where they would willingly leave their ancestral lands. In a similar vein, Wilson said that the Arabs should give the fullest assurances to the many Jews who, he believed, would wish to remain in the Arab State. He believed that "population makes work and work makes population" so that the Jewish population in the area of the proposed Jewish State could be considerably increased "without any great transference of population." <sup>(6)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Lords, 20 July 1937, col.651.

<sup>2</sup> / Parliamentary Debates, Commons, vol.326, (henceforth Commons), 21 July 1937, col.2250.

<sup>3</sup> / Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol.4, op. cit., p.123.

<sup>4</sup> / Commons, 21 July 1937, col.2357.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., col.2294.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., col.2296.

Daniel Frankel was the Labour member for the Mile End division of Stepney, in the East End of London, an area which had a large Jewish concentration. Although a Jew, Frankel had never officially been associated with the Zionist movement. He was concerned that if the population transfer took place, it would place hundreds of thousands of Arab peasants (fellaheen) under feudal Arab landlords for an immeasurable length of time.

[The semi-feudal economy was the principal factor preventing the Arab peasant from attaining a higher standard of living. The landlord would often take 55 per cent of the gross yield of the tenant farmer, whilst the usurer was paid according to a rate of interest that ran from 25 to 100 per cent in the period between sowing and harvesting.] Frankel felt that the salvation of the Arab peasants would come from working side by side with Jews in the Jewish State. (1)

A similar point was made by Colonel Josiah C. Wedgwood, a distinguished military man. He sat as an independent Labour member and whilst remaining a member of the Labour Party did not acknowledge the authority of the Parliamentary Whip. Wedgwood began his speech by congratulating the Arabs on the admirable presentation of their case that afternoon. He considered that the proposed population transfer would not be just a transference of over two hundred thousand Arabs from Jewish to Arab territory, it would mean delivering the Arab peasants into the complete control of the effendi landlords. "Nationalism is very well, but for those 500,000 peasant cultivators in Palestine, ... their livelihood, comes before politics."

Wedgwood strongly objected to "the extraordinary proposal" to transfer at least one hundred thousand Arabs from the proposed Jewish State; to deport them from their ancestral homes and plots of land, to buy land for them elsewhere "and to take them there and dump them." We can see that Wedgwood was making a very harsh assessment of the Peel Commission's recommendations, since the Report devoted many paragraphs to the need for careful preparation before such a transfer be implemented.

Wedgwood complained that the Report approached transfer "as though it were a natural and normal thing to do" without having taken a word of evidence as to the acceptability of such a premise. In fact, the Peel Commission spent two months in Palestine and heard evidence from over a hundred witnesses. However, for most of the two months, the Arabs boycotted the Commission and not until the end of this period did their spokesmen give evidence of an extremist nature. Therefore any absence of evidence from Arabs regarding the acceptability of transfer was largely due to the Arab attitude towards the Commission.

Wedgwood paralleled the proposed Palestine transfer with the deportation from Crete of the Mohammedan minority who had begged to be allowed to stay and even offered to convert to Christianity, but whose offer was not accepted. (2) Sir Arnold Wilson interjected that a much fairer parallel was the Panjat Canal Colonies. He said that there was in progress a great transfer of labour from one end of Iraq to the other. He also considered that an administrative operation in a small country (Palestine) in 1937, could not be compared to the transfer of a people from Crete to Asia Minor in 1910. (3)

Wedgwood replied, "For goodness sake let the people who are to be transplanted have some say in the matter before their fate is sealed." He objected to the Colonial Office's dictating to Parliament. [Certainty in a democratic country, the legislature should be a control on the Executive branch of Government.] Wedgwood considered that the House of Commons was a "better guardian of British honour and a better guardian of humane principles than the Colonial Office." (4)

In a letter to "The Times", published on the day of the Commons debate, Wedgwood wrote, "The 250,000 Arab cultivators in the Jewish State (the size of Kent) are to be deported and they will learn the fate of the 250,000 Moslems who were deported from Crete, who begged to be allowed to become Christians that they might stop in their homes. It was not

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1 / Ibid., col.2289.

2 / Ibid., cols.2300-01.

3 / Ibid., cols.2301-02.

4 / Ibid., col.2302.

thought they would become good Christians and they went to die in Turkey." (1)

From a reading of the above comments of Colonel Wedgwood in the House of Commons and his letter to "The Times," one might easily conclude that Wedgwood was violently anti-Zionist. However, he was a strong supporter of the Zionist cause. He had promoted the idea of Palestine as a seventh dominion within the British Commonwealth, and had written a book on the subject entitled "The Seventh Dominion." This idea had even received the blessing of the Zionist Revisionist Party at their third world conference in Vienna in 1928.

James Armand Edmond de Rothschild, a Liberal member of Parliament, (son of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, "Father of the Yishuv"), who had served in France and Palestine during the First World War and was Chairman of the Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association, began his speech by opposing the transfer proposal. "I dislike this idea of the transfer of Arabs elsewhere." He had hoped that the Jews and Arabs could get together and develop Palestine. Rothschild felt that a small Jewish State would not solve the problems since agitators from the Arab State would foment yet more strife in the Jewish State. He discounted the parallel of Greece and Turkey since there the population to be transferred was larger and the distances were greater than in Palestine.

However, despite his "dislike" of "this idea", Rothschild did accept the principle of transfer, but with certain provisos. "The Commission envisage transfer to the new Arab State, but there are greater opportunities in Trans-Jordan." [To be accurate, the Peel Commission planned on transfer to all the areas of the proposed Arab State (including Transjordan), provided large-scale plans for immigration and development were executed]. "With regard to the urban population," continued Rothschild, "there should be scope in the towns of the new Arab State." (2) His prime aim here was to ensure that urban Arabs were not forced to become land labourers, a point also made later in the debate by Douglas Clifton Brown.

The recommendation of the Peel Commission for the partition of Palestine placed the Galilee with its almost wholly Arab population within the boundaries of the Jewish State. The population transfer from this area was to be effected only on a voluntary basis. The Arabs who would not be part of this voluntary transfer troubled two Members of Parliament.

The Conservative member, Colonel Douglas Clifton Brown considered it unfair that 125,000 Arabs of the Galilee, including 10,000 Druze Arabs, would be forced to become citizens of the Jewish State. He was also concerned that if transferred, those Arabs should not be subjected to a topographical change. He felt it would be unfair that the Arabs of the coastal town of Acre who were seamen and merchants might find themselves transferred to the plains of Beersheba, a town at the north of the Negev desert far removed from the coast, or that Arabs from the hills of Northern Galilee be moved to somewhere in the plains. He suggested, "If nothing else could be arranged this block of Arabs should be transferred to Syria rather than to Jewish territory." (3) Here, Clifton Brown was exceeding the recommendations of the Peel Commission on the transfer of the Galilean Arabs.

A similar issue was raised by Anthony Crossley, a Conservative member who was an enthusiastic supporter of the Arab cause. He said that he was not going to oppose the principle of partition, adding that he was the first member of the House to state, "that it was necessary to segregate Arab from Jew in Palestine, and to divide them." He then made two criticisms of the partition plan. Firstly, that the Jews had been given too much land; secondly that the completely Arab population in the Galilee - an area in which "there is no Jewish colonisation at all" - could suddenly find themselves in the Jewish State. Crossley felt that in order "to avoid friction in the future, it would be far better if that population was handed over to the Lebanon and Syria." (4) Here we see that Crossley, a strong supporter of the Arabs, realised that it was necessary to separate Arabs and Jews completely, even to the extent of moving all the Galilean Arabs out of Palestine.

The Labour member, Thomas Williams, who was a member of both the Executive

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1 / Josiah C. Wedgwood, Letters to the Editor, The Times, (London), 21 July 1937, p.10.

2 / Commons, 21 July 1937, col.2320.

3 / Ibid., cols.2309-10.

4 / Ibid., cols.2325-27.

Committee of the Labour Party and the Shadow Cabinet questioned the ability of the Government to carry out such a transfer of population. Williams referred to the Peel Commission's suggestion that such a population transfer would call for the "highest statesmanship on the part of all concerned." He asked whether, when the Government accepted the principle of partition, they also accepted the principle of transfer and whether, in particular they accepted the principle of compulsory transfer in the last resort. Williams was convinced that the proposed transfer of the nearly quarter of a million Arabs who were then living within the borders of the proposed Jewish State would create a problem with which the Government would be incapable of dealing "unless they manifest much higher statesmanship than they have manifested for a long period of time." He asked whether it was the Government's intention to carry out the transfer of population, if partition were to be accepted in principle and worked out in detail. <sup>(1)</sup>

The debate in the House of Commons was concluded, the House resolving "That the proposals contained in Command Paper No. 5513 (the Peel Commission Report) relating to Palestine should be brought before the League of Nations with a view to enabling His Majesty's Government after adequate inquiry, to present to Parliament a definite scheme taking into full account all the recommendations of the Command Paper." <sup>(2)</sup> The British Parliament did not reject any of the recommendations of the Peel Commission, including the population transfer proposal.

Ben-Gurion, however, after reading reports of the Parliamentary debates was rather pessimistic, in particular in connection with the transfer proposal. In his diary entry of 22 July, he wrote that the most doubtful item was the removal of the Arabs and in the event of its non-implementation, it would be just for the British to compensate the Jewish State with additional territory. <sup>(3)</sup>

The Parliamentary Debates in both Houses showed a diversity of opinion regarding the transfer of population. Three speakers directly supported the transfer proposals as recommended by the Commission. Two members in suggesting that the Arab population of the Galilee (which was intended to become part of the Jewish State) should be transferred to Syria (and Lebanon), were in favour of a more comprehensive transfer than that envisaged by the Peel Commission. Of these five supporters of transfer, three were supporters of the Arab cause, having realised the necessity of removing the Arab population from the area of the proposed Jewish State, in order to avoid future friction.

Two members spoke strongly against transfer. Another member began by opposing it in moderate terms, but during the course of his speech showed himself prepared to accept transfer with certain provisos. One member did not want to see a compulsory transfer. Two speakers were concerned that transfer might place Arab peasants under feudal Arab landlords. A few speakers were sceptical of the ability of the Government to effect this transfer. Finally, many members did not even mention the proposal to transfer population, in their speeches.

Following the debate in the House of Commons, "a group of Members of Parliament representative of responsible pro-Arab opinion in this country" submitted a letter to Ormsby-Gore, which he in turn passed on to the Cabinet. <sup>(4)</sup> There were twelve signatories to this letter. They included Douglas Clifton Brown, Anthony Crossley and Arnold Wilson, all of whom had spoken on the transfer of Arabs, in their speeches in the House of Commons.

In their letter, they wrote concerning transfer: "The principal obstacle to the successful formation of the proposed states is the existence of the large Arab minority within the borders of the Jewish State. We doubt the possibility of compulsory transference; but we do not question the need and desirability of transference on a voluntary basis." <sup>(5)</sup> As we can see from this letter, even a pro-Arab Parliamentary lobby realised that it would be undesirable for

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., col.2342.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., col.2367.

<sup>3</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 27 July 1937, (BGA) ; Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol.4, op. cit., p.318.

<sup>4</sup> / Ormsby-Gore to Cabinet, 11 August 1937, (PRO CAB C.P. 203(37)).

<sup>5</sup> / 12 M.P.s to Ormsby-Gore, 29 July 1937, (PRO CAB C.P. 203(37)).

Arabs to live in a Jewish state.

### **Permanent Mandates Commission**

The year 1920 saw the creation of the Permanent Mandates Commission, whose function was to examine the reports of the various Mandatory Powers and present facts and recommendations to the Council of the League of Nations.

Its thirty-second (extraordinary) session, held in Geneva, Switzerland between 30 July and 18 August 1937, was devoted entirely to Palestine. As in the case of the British Parliamentary debates, the discussions of the Mandates Commission revealed a wide divergence of opinion on the validity of the conclusions of the Peel Commission, in particular with reference to the workability of the Mandate and the desirability of partition.

The British member of the Permanent Mandates Commission, Lord Hailey, was in favour of the Peel plan. He considered that a sound scheme of partition would be greatly preferable to a continuation of the Mandate. However, Baron Van Asbeck took the opposite view. The Chairman, Pierre Orts believed that partition was in harmony with the spirit of the Covenant of the League of Nations and of the Balfour Declaration and that it took into account the principle of the dual obligation towards both Jews and Arabs. However, Orts considered that too early an establishment of independent Arab and Jewish States might be dangerous and suggested instead the establishment of separate Mandates for the Jewish and the Arab States.

During the course of the Commission's sessions, the British Colonial Secretary, William Ormsby-Gore, was subjected to both an oral and a written critical examination of the partition plan, including searching questions regarding the possibly compulsory transfer of population.

At one of the early sessions, Ormsby-Gore made a general statement regarding the proposed population transfer. He referred to the recommendation in the Peel Report that efforts be made to arrange some transfer of population. "But this," said Ormsby-Gore, "will take time, and do not let the Mandates Commission imagine that transfers of population - particularly of Arab cultivators wedded for generations to their land - is going to be an easy matter!"

He suggested that the "cause of a lot of trouble already in Palestine" had been cases "where Jews have acquired land and displaced the cultivators." <sup>(1)</sup>

However, in 1931, an investigation carried out by Lewis French, into allegations that Jewish land purchases were leaving Arab farmers landless, had found these allegations to be largely groundless.

Large tracts of land in Palestine were owned by absentee landlords, frequently residing in distant Arab capitals and worked by tenant farmers who were Arab peasants (fellaheen). Lands purchased by Jews could only be registered when the Registrar of Lands was satisfied that each tenant farmer involved would "retain sufficient land in the District or elsewhere for the maintenance of himself and his family." <sup>(2)</sup>

Incidentally, the word "elsewhere" in this Ordinance and the phrase "other land" in a 1922 Ordinance requiring compensation of tenants by cash or "other land", indicate that the British authorities did not disapprove of the transfer of Arab tenant farmers from one place to another.

Ormsby-Gore warned the Commission that the transfer of Arab families out of the proposed Jewish State would be a "slow laborious process". He then tendered the views of his Government regarding the possibilities of transfer "assuming the Arabs are prepared to move." The Peel Report had spoken of a compulsory transfer, if necessary, for the Arabs of the Plains. Until then, Ormsby-Gore had made no reservations in all his pronouncements on this subject. This was the first time that he had spoken of the need for agreement by the Arabs to such a transfer. It would seem that under "cross-examination" by the members of this Commission, and opposition from certain quarters, including some Jewish sources, he was put on

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<sup>1</sup> / League of Nations, Permanent Mandates Commission, Minutes of the Thirty-Second (Extraordinary) Session, Geneva, July - August 1937, (henceforth PMC Minutes), pp.21-22.

<sup>2</sup> / Aumann, Land Ownership in Palestine, op. cit., p.14.

the defensive and thus modified his stand on compulsory transfer. However, at a later meeting of the Commission, he defended the use of the term "compulsory".

Ormsby-Gore informed the Commission that the British Government was in favour of the speedy appointment of an expert body to investigate the question of transfer, in order to advance a solution by means of partition. The Peel Report had in fact called for the immediate establishment of such a body, and nearly a month earlier in his meeting with Weizmann, Ormsby-Gore had spoken about setting up a committee which might include Sir John Campbell, who had had experience in population transfer. Ormsby-Gore told the Commission that the British Government already had some data on the question of transfer from one of their most experienced agricultural officers who was confident that one hundred thousand Arab families could be resettled in Transjordan alone. This was apart from the possibilities of resettlement of Arabs within the areas of the proposed Arab State, west of the Jordan. <sup>(1)</sup>

The question of a voluntary transfer as distinct from the compulsory transfer proposed by the Peel Commission came up during the proceedings. The Chairman of the Commission asked for confirmation that the "proposed transfer of the rural Arab populations would only be effected if these populations freely consented." Ormsby-Gore replied that that was his view "as at present advised." He defended the Peel Commission's use of the term "compulsory" saying that the Commission had felt that "after a period of trial, the possibility of using compulsion might be considered." [The Peel Commission did not in fact use the expression "after a period of trial" as suggested by Ormsby-Gore, but "in the last resort."]

Ormsby-Gore informed the Commission that "he was not prepared to commit himself there and then to the principle of eventual compulsion", adding that "compulsion" involved a long preliminary trial period of voluntary transfer, after which the matter would be referred back to the League of Nations for discussion before any possible "compulsion" could take place. Neither the League nor the British Government, said Ormsby-Gore, should be asked to commit themselves at present to the principle of compulsory transfer. He added that he personally would hesitate to envisage a compulsory transfer to an Arab state without the prior agreement of the Government of the said Arab State. <sup>(2)</sup> We should note here that Ormsby-Gore spoke only of seeking agreement for transfer from the receiving Arab state and not from each individual Arab to be transferred.

Towards the end of the proceedings, in answering a written question about the natural rights of the native population, Ormsby-Gore said that "he did not like talk about compulsory transfer." He added that he believed that quite a number of Arabs when faced with the fait accompli of a Jewish State would for "sentimental reasons" prefer to live "in an Arab atmosphere under an Arab government with Arab ways of life" rather than remain under a Jewish government. Ormsby-Gore was also doubtful whether Arabs would want to live under a Mandatory Power. He was of the opinion that provided there was a genuine Arab State and a genuine Jewish State, the operation of political factors would bring about a large voluntary transfer of population. <sup>(3)</sup>

As will be recalled, the Peel Commission had quoted the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey in 1923, as a precedent. Their final observation on the subject was that the courage of the Greek and Turkish statesmen had been justified by the resultant cordial relations between these two countries. On this Ormsby-Gore asked, "The question was: Were responsible statesmen justified in taking not a pessimistic view, not the most optimistic view, but a reasonably optimistic view?" He maintained that they were. <sup>(4)</sup>

Towards the end of the proceedings, this comparison with the Greco-Turkish transfer came up again in a reply given by Ormsby-Gore to a written question. He considered that the problem of the Arab transfer was easier even than the Greco-Turkish interchange of population, since the Arabs would be moving only a short distance to a society with the same

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<sup>1</sup> / PMC Minutes, p.22.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.26.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., p.177.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.40.



language, civilisation and religion as themselves. <sup>(1)</sup>

A major objective, if not the major objective of Zionism was a massive Jewish immigration from the Diaspora into Palestine. How were all these Jewish immigrants to be absorbed, in view of the relatively small area of the proposed Jewish State? In reply to a question by Mlle. Valentine Dannevig, a Norwegian social worker and member of this Commission, regarding increasing Jewish immigration, Ormsby-Gore offered several alternative methods of absorbing a large Jewish immigration, including population transfer. He explained that the Zionists had estimated from experience gained in the last fifteen years, that they could "by their scientific methods enable at least three Jews to earn a livelihood for every one Arab who was displaced" from a given area of land. [Ben-Gurion had estimated at least four or five Jews for every Arab transferred.] Ormsby-Gore concluded that the concentration of Jewish brains, money and effort combined with the complete absence of restrictions, political or otherwise on Jewish immigration into the area of the proposed Jewish State would enable the full absorption of a large Jewish population.

Both the Balfour Declaration and the Preamble and Paragraph 2 of the Palestine Mandate, state "that nothing should be done which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." In the continuation of her question on Jewish immigration, Valentine Dannevig asked how such a transfer of Arab population could be effected without prejudicing these rights. To this Ormsby-Gore replied that the Mandate guaranteed the civil and religious rights of the Arab population of Palestine, although these rights had never been clearly defined. He commented that although a specific obligation regarding these rights would be operative in the Jewish State, "it would be fatal to the political, if not also to the economic success of the Jewish State for the Jews to make a ruthless or over-speedy attempt to get the Arabs in that State out of it." He explained that the rights of a native population, whether or not formally guaranteed, were in British eyes, inherent and known as "natural rights." <sup>(2)</sup>

It should be noted that in his answer to Dannevig's question, Ormsby-Gore made no suggestion that the proposed transfer of Arabs from the Jewish State would contravene the terms of the Balfour Declaration or the Mandate. Nor had the six members of the Peel Commission who included lawyers and experienced diplomats, obviously well acquainted with every word of the Mandate, considered their unanimous proposal for population transfer, compulsory if necessary, to be incompatible with the terms of the Mandate. There is, of course, also the possibility that any incompatibility with the terms of the Mandate was felt to be irrelevant, since the Peel Commission proposed terminating the Mandate and replacing it by Partition.

The Chairman of the Permanent Mandates Commission then commented that his understanding of Dannevig's question was of a more limited scope than that attributed to it by Ormsby-Gore. According to the Chairman's understanding of the question, Dannevig was concerned that the Peel Commission's proposal to transfer the Arab population out of the Jewish State "might possibly lead to compulsory surrender of immovable property for example, by means of expropriation", thus causing an infringement of the rights of the "non-Jewish population of Palestine." In answer to the Chairman, Dannevig said that she was not only concerned with the "protection of property, but also the protection of persons." <sup>(3)</sup> One might add here, that although "property" is a far less sensitive subject than "persons" during an exchange of population, the question of immovable property must be considered very carefully. It took seven years to settle the property disputes following the Greco-Turkish population exchange. However, after settling these problems, the two countries signed a treaty of friendship.

In the Palestinian transfer, a further complication in this matter of immovable property arose. The Commission had received a letter from the Arab side pointing out that there was land belonging to certain Moslem religious foundations within the area of the proposed Jewish

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., p.181.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.177.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., p.179.

State. However, Ormsby-Gore pointed out that under Koranic law, while such land could not be sold, it could be exchanged for land of equivalent value. This had frequently been accomplished all over the Moslem world. <sup>(1)</sup>

Dannevig asked whether there was "any hope that Arabs would wish to leave the Jewish State, where they would have a better chance of livelihood than as settlers in a poor country which would have to be developed with all the toil and difficulty which fell to the lot of settlers in new countries?" [This question fails to mention that the areas designated as the future Jewish State had been "developed with all the toil and difficulty" of Jewish settlers who since the 1880s had laboured day and night to develop a Jewish homeland. In addition to draining malarial swamps and establishing agricultural settlements, the Jews had built cities which included amongst other facilities, health and educational institutions. This Jewish development had acted as an incentive for Arabs from neighbouring countries to move into Palestine, most particularly to areas of large Jewish concentrations, in order to take advantage of these social services and of the employment opportunities.]

In reply to Dannevig, Ormsby-Gore answered that "nothing was more remarkable in the history of the last few years in Palestine than the complete confounding of all those who took what might be called the economic interpretation of history." He agreed that were it to be necessary to transfer the Arabs "long distances to a strange country" there might be difficulties. However, since the Arabs were to be transferred a mere few miles to a "people with the same language, the same civilisation and the same religion," the transfer would be easier from a geographical and practical point of view, than the Greco-Turkish exchange of population. He felt that although not all the Arabs would be willing to be transferred some would wish for it on grounds of sentiment." He was confident that if land was prepared and homesteads provided not too far distant from their present homes, many Arabs would utilise the opportunity to move. He concluded by assuring the Commission, that if the League of Nations approved the partition plan, the British Government would make an intensive study of Transjordan in order to determine the cost and areas suitable for resettlement. <sup>(2)</sup>

Transjordan occupied about seventy-six per cent of the area of the original Mandated Palestine and Ormsby-Gore explained that the reluctance of the people and Government of Transjordan to develop the country "had been entirely due to the fear that Trans-Jordan too, was to be regarded as an area of Jewish settlement." He added that once this fear, (regarded by the Arabs as "the advance guard of Jewish aspirations for political power"), was shown to be groundless, and the development of Transjordan by and for the Arabs established, the situation would change. Ormsby-Gore considered that there was great potential for settling large numbers of Arabs in Transjordan where they would earn a better livelihood than they could hope for, while living as they were, on the "hills of Palestine." <sup>(3)</sup> The final stage in the proceedings was an exchange of views between the Members of the Commission concerning possible solutions for the future administration of Palestine.

Dannevig, in enumerating some of the advantages and disadvantages of partition, regarded a "large Arab minority in the proposed Jewish State leading to the proposal for a transfer of population," as a disadvantage. <sup>(4)</sup> [Ben-Gurion, in his diary entry on the advantages and disadvantages of this partition plan had included the transfer of Arabs from the Jewish State as an advantage!]

The Chairman considered various possible solutions. He felt that one of the difficulties of the partition proposal was that "the Jewish State would again be exposed to the odium inevitably attaching to the transfer of the Arab rural population, no matter how that transfer might be effected."

Over forty years earlier, Herzl had made the same point, but had concluded that a "bad odour" for a period following the removal of an indigenous population was worth the long-term result. Similarly, the Peel Report was concerned with finding a long-term solution of the

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., p.192.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.181.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., pp.177-78.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.198.

Palestine question which included the establishment of a Jewish State within Palestine.

Any long-term solution was liable to cause short term inconveniences or unpleasantness, a fact that the Chairman of the Mandates Commission obviously recognised when he admitted that in spite of the odium inevitably attaching to it, "transfer was an essential condition if the appeal to the spirit of the Balfour Declaration were not to be revealed as serving merely as a lure." (1)

In his concluding remarks, the Chairman again declared that any solution must be in conformity with the "spirit of the Balfour Declaration" and this meant the creation of a Jewish State capable of setting up a Jewish National Home within its borders. "A territory of the limited size" proposed by the Peel Commission for the Jewish State "would not fulfil that condition, particularly if the proposed transfer of the Arab rural population proved to be impracticable," added the Chairman. He felt that it was illusory to imagine that the Arabs would "willingly migrate to Transjordan" and asked whether there had been a case in history where an entire population had abandoned their country of origin, home to their ancestors for generations, in order to make a fresh start by settling in another country where the soil was less fertile for the sole reason of a "feeling of racial community." (2) The Chairman was effectively saying that since it was very unlikely indeed that the Arabs would voluntarily leave the Jewish State and since the fulfilment of the spirit of the Balfour Declaration would not be possible if the Arabs remained in the Jewish State, a compulsory transfer of the Arabs would be inevitable.

At the close of the session, the Permanent Mandates Commission submitted a Report to the Council of the League of Nations which included a "Preliminary Opinion." (3) The Report stated that the Members of the Commission were formulating their views on the desirability of maintaining the existing mandate, and on the advantages and drawbacks of the various alternative systems which might be contemplated regarding the future of Palestine. These systems included, the Partition of the Territory, the Creation of Two Independent States, Provisional 'Cantonisation' and Two Mandates.

Under the option of "Partition of the Territory" was a section dealing with the proposal for the transfer of population, which read, "The Commission would be failing in its duty if it did not draw the Council's attention to the delicate problem of the transfer of populations from one territory to the other which might be necessary if there was a partition. In order to guarantee that the advantages of such a transfer should outweigh the disadvantages, particular care would have to be given to ensure that it was carried out with the greatest fairness." (4) In other words, the Permanent Mandates Commission was prepared to accept the transfer of the Arabs from the Jewish State, provided it was carried out with due care.

### League of Nations

The League of Nations was established in 1920 with the object of promoting international peace and security. It functioned through an Assembly, a Council and a permanent Secretariat. The Assembly consisted of representatives of all the members of the League and had six standing committees, the "Sixth Committee" dealt with political questions. The members of the Council were drawn from among the members of the League, some on a permanent basis and others elected for terms of three years.

On 14 September 1937, the 98th session of the Council discussed the work of the Permanent Mandates Commission on the Palestine question. The meeting was addressed by the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, but no specific mention was made of population transfer. (5)

Among the many subjects discussed by the Sixth Committee (Political Questions) of the Assembly was the Palestine Mandate, on which delegates from a number of countries spoke.

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1 / Ibid., p.201.

2 / Ibid., p.202.

3 / Ibid., pp.227-30.

4 / Ibid., p.229; League of Nations Official Journal, vol.18, 1937, p.1093.

5 / League of Nations Official Journal, vol.18, 1937, pp.899-904.

These included the Moslem states of Egypt, Iran and Iraq; countries with a high Jewish population such as Poland and Lithuania; and also a number of European and American States. However, only two of the speakers directly mentioned the transfer of population, namely the delegates from Norway and Albania.

Christian Lange, the delegate from Norway and a Nobel Peace prizewinner, considered that the area allocated by the Peel Commission for the Jewish State was too restricted. He reminded the Committee that "it had been hoped to open up Trans-Jordan also to Jewish immigration", but since nothing had been done in that direction, that possibility now seemed to have been excluded. He suggested increasing the area of the proposed Jewish state by including "the triangle situated in the south of Palestine between the Dead Sea, the Gulf of Akaba and the Mediterranean," namely the area of the Negev. He pointed out that although it was a desert with "a very small scattered population" of nomadic Arab tribes, it was possible to sink wells and undertake irrigation projects in order to provide for a large colony of farmers. This would involve a large financial outlay, but as Lange pointed out "the Jews had been able to overcome financial difficulties in the north of Palestine." With regard to the Arabs then living in the Negev, Lange suggested that if necessary they "could be transferred elsewhere at a relatively low cost." <sup>(1)</sup>

Moshe Shertok, who had been present in the chamber to hear Lange, was pleased with his entire speech. <sup>(2)</sup>

The delegate from Albania, Medhi Frasheri, had been, under the Turks, Governor of Palestine and had represented Albania at the League of Nations for many years. In the course of his speech he gave a historical summary of Palestine in the twentieth century and observed that promises had been made to Jews regarding the establishment of a Jewish National Home which had been "embodied in various acts of the League of Nations, in particular the Balfour Declaration." However, he added that "Nobody of course, contemplated turning the Arabs out of Palestine in order to allow the Jews to take their place." <sup>(3)</sup>

It should be mentioned that the "promises" and "various acts" referred to by Frasheri, involved the whole of Palestine west of the Jordan, Transjordan and part of Syria. Subsequent partitions had, however, removed Syria and Transjordan from the Jewish National Home, and the Peel Report was proposing the removal of a large part of Western Palestine, thus necessitating the dismantling of Jewish settlements in Transjordan, south of the Sea of Galilee.

In the following year, however, Frasheri, speaking as a former Governor on the Palestine problem, suggested separate zones for Jews and Arabs "with minorities to be exchanged on both sides." <sup>(4)</sup>

The Plenary Session <sup>(5)</sup> of the Assembly was addressed by the delegates from Egypt and Iraq, who spoke on the Palestine question, but neither speaker directly mentioned the transfer of population.

On 30 September 1937, the Assembly adopted a resolution in which it "Expresses its conviction that the problem of Palestine, which is at present before the Council, will be equitably settled, account being taken to the fullest possible extent of all the legitimate interests at stake." <sup>(6)</sup>

### **Twentieth Zionist Congress**

The Zionist Congress, established by Theodor Herzl was the highest authority in the Zionist Organisation. The first Congress was held in Basle, Switzerland in 1897. Subsequently

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<sup>1</sup> / League of Nations Official Journal, Special Supplement, no.175, Records of the Eighteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly, Minutes of the Sixth Committee (Political Questions), Geneva, 1937, (henceforth L. of N. 175), p.24.

<sup>2</sup> / Moshe Shertok, Handwritten Diary entry 21 September 1937, p.60, (CZA A245/2) ; Diaries of Sharett, vol.ii, op. cit., p.332.

<sup>3</sup> / L. of N. 175, p.27.

<sup>4</sup> / "Medhi Frasheri, 88, Ex-Albanian Leader", The New York Times, 28 May 1963, p.28.

<sup>5</sup> / League of Nations Official Journal, Special Supplement no.169, Records of the Eighteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly, Plenary Meetings, Text of the Debate, Geneva, 1937.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., Annex 5, p.140.

the Congresses were held annually until 1901 and then biennially, apart from the period of the war years. As it was not possible during the periods of the Ottoman regime and the British Mandate to hold these Congresses in Palestine, the Congress delegates met in various European cities.

The twentieth Congress took place in Zurich, Switzerland, in early August 1937, a few weeks after the publication of the Peel Report.

The Zionist Labour Party had the highest representation at this Congress. Next in size was the Centralist General Zionists, which a few years earlier had split into two factions A and B, the latter being the smaller more right-wing group. Next in size was the Mizrachi Religious Zionists. There were also a few delegates of the Jewish State Party, a splinter group of the Revisionists, who had remained within the World Zionist Organisation, when the Revisionists had walked out a few years earlier. Finally, there were a number of unaffiliated delegates from countries under Nazi domination where elections were not possible.

In order to prepare himself for this Congress, Weizmann had had a secret meeting with the British Colonial Secretary, Ormsby-Gore at which Weizmann had stressed the vital importance of implementing the proposal to transfer the Arabs from the Jewish State. [Details of this secret meeting and its dramatic disclosure at the Zionist Congress have been described earlier.]

As was to be expected, the proceedings at this Zionist Congress were taken up by a detailed discussion of the Peel Report, whose proposals divided the Zionist Movement. There were those delegates led by Weizmann and Ben-Gurion who were prepared to accept partition in order to have an independent Jewish State. Opposition to partition was led by Menachem Ussishkin, President of the Jewish National Fund, who at the beginning of the century had led the opposition to the Uganda proposal.

At this Congress, the delegates delivered their speeches in Hebrew, Yiddish, German or English. These speeches were recorded verbatim in notebooks by the stenographers at the Congress. None of these notebooks seem to have survived. <sup>(1)</sup>

Immediately after the sessions, these speeches were translated into Hebrew and typed. Some of these typescripts still survive and are to be found in the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. <sup>(2)</sup>

A few days later, these speeches were published in the "Congress Newspaper" and several months later were published in an official book entitled "Stenographic Report of 20th Zionist Congress".

In addition to all this, reports of the speeches appeared in the various newspapers of that period, including the "Daily News Bulletin of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency" and the "Palcor Bulletin of the Zionist Telegraphic Agency".

For all intensive purposes, the "Congress Newspaper" and published official book are identical. However a comparison between the typescript and the "Congress Newspaper" shows considerable differences, in particular in connection with the question of transfer. Many of the statements made by the various speakers on transfer, by the time the "Congress Newspaper" had been printed, had been modified, partially deleted or in some cases even completely deleted!

The historian Benny Morris considers that this editing was done by the speakers themselves, or by the Zionist Movement leaders, or by Moshe Kleinman, the editor of the "Congress Newspaper", acting on orders from his political superiors! <sup>(3)</sup>

Possibly, due to the speed at which this "censoring:" was done, it was sometimes done in an amateurish manner. For example, whereas Ben-Gurion's and Weizmann's proposals on transfer were deleted from the "Congress Newspaper", a number of these deleted comments

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<sup>1</sup> / "How Zionist Leaders Doctored Historical Documents About Plans for Mass 'Ethnic Cleansing' of Palestinian Arabs", Benny Morris, Internet, <http://www.a-squared.net/azw/library/articles/data/6.htm> ; Benny Morris, "Kach shuptsu hamismachim hazionim", Ha'aretz, (Tel-Aviv), 4 February 1994, p.5B.

<sup>2</sup> / CZA S5/1543.

<sup>3</sup> / Morris, Internet, op.cit.; Morris, Ha'aretz, op.cit.

were referred to by several other speakers in the very same "Congress Newspaper"!

During the course of the Congress, a number of delegates spoke on the question of transfer. Where relevant or significant, we shall bring, when known, both the statements appearing in the transcript and also those which appeared in the official printed book.

Naftali Landau, an engineer from Eastern Galicia, and delegate of the General Zionists B, considered that "without the transfer we will not succeed in carrying out our programme." He suggested that it might be possible, by injecting large sums of money and engaging technical expertise, to increase the population density of Jewish settlement. He warned that "we must not forgo transfer. On the contrary, we must demand that England and the League of Nations implement it." (1) [Since the Mandate for Palestine had been granted to Britain by the League of Nations, the final decision regarding the implementation of the proposals of the Peel Commission would lie with the League of Nations.]

Dr. Barnett Brickner of the United States, a delegate of the General Zionists A, said that experience from past population transfers showed that transfers were very difficult and imposed heavy responsibilities. However, in the Palestine case "we only want to transfer the Arabs from one place to another in the country where they live." (2)

Joseph Baratz, a leading figure in the Mapai party and a founder of the collective settlement movement in Palestine said that he did not believe that it would be possible to transfer 300,000 Arabs and considered that increasing the Jewish population in Palestine did not depend on an Arab exodus but on Jewish immigration. Baratz assumed, however, that a proportion of Arabs would opt for transfer. He asked what "Hashomer Hazair" and the other opponents of transfer feared. "Has not transfer continued during our 40 - 50 years of work on the land? Have we not transferred Arabs from Degania, Kinneret, Merchavia, Minhalel and Mishmar Haemek?" (3)

Two of the five places mentioned by Baratz (Merchavia and Mishmar Haemek), were Kibbutzim belonging to the "Hashomer Hazair" movement, the same movement condemning transfer at this Congress!

A few days earlier in a lecture to the "World Unity" council, Ben-Gurion had revealed that in only a very few cases of modern Jewish settlement had it not been necessary to transfer Arabs, adding that a small number of these transfers had been achieved by compulsion.

Baratz mentioned the co-operative settlement, Merchavia, host in past years to a "Hashomer" conference. "There, there was transfer. In what way was that a sin?" He explained how the settlers had arranged for the best possible conditions for the transferred Arabs and said that the same would be done for the Arabs whose transfer was currently under discussion. "I know that even before the emergence of the recommendation for a Jewish State," continued Baratz, "the members of one Jewish settlement had prepared a programme for the transfer of Arabs from certain villages in the Galilee to Transjordan." He knew of cases where the Arabs, with the proceeds of the sale of their land in Palestine, had bought land in Transjordan, that was five times the size of their original plot. [A comparison of prices, made a few years later in 1944, showed that the Jews were paying ten times as much in Palestine for arid or semi-arid land, as the price paid for rich black soil in Iowa in the United States.] Baratz asked, "What therefore is this artificial panic which is being created on this subject?" (4)

From the official minutes, we can see that Chaim Weizmann told the Congress that he saw in the partition plan definite advantages. The size of the proposed Jewish State would be over a million dunams, the Jews would be in their own house "and there will also be the possibility of population transfer." (5)

Unfortunately, the original transcript of Weizmann's speech has not survived.

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<sup>1</sup> / Official Minutes of 20th Zionist Congress, (Zurich 1937), (henceforth 20th ZC), p.154; Congress Newspaper, (Zurich 1937), no.6, 11 August 1937, p.4.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.160; Ibid., p.5.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., pp.124-25; Ibid., no.5, 10 August 1937, p.8.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.125; Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.72.

However, from others sources (see later), we know that he said more on the subject of transfer than appeared in the official minutes!

Berl Katznelson spoke of the changes in attitude towards population transfer that had been achieved under the Mandate. "Years ago they said we were driving out the Arabs, but today they are speaking about the transfer of tens of thousands of Arabs from one place to another." (1) We see that Katznelson's comments on the subject at the Congress were much more restrained than at the "World Unity" Council meeting held a few weeks earlier.

David Ben-Gurion made his speech to the Congress during the closed session of Saturday night, 7 August. What did he tell the Congress regarding the Peel proposed for population transfer? According to the official minutes of Ben-Gurion's speech to the Congress, (2) he did not mention population transfer. However, it is quite clear from the other sources that Ben-Gurion did speak on the subject of population transfer at the Congress, but that parts of his speech were deleted from the official minutes!

According to the original transcript, Ben-Gurion said that one needed to examine the question of transfer thoroughly and see whether it was possible, essential, ethical and beneficial. "We do not want to expel. Transfer of population [i.e. Arabs] has taken place until now, in the Emek, in the Sharon and in other places. The work of the J.N.F. on this subject is known to you. Now transfer will have to be done to a completely different extent. In many parts of the country it will not be possible to have new Jewish settlement unless there is transfer of Arab fellaheen." Ben-Gurion pointed out that the Peel Commission had dealt seriously with this question and he felt it was important that the transfer proposal came from the Peel Commission and not from the Zionists. "Population transfer will permit an extensive settlement programme", continued Ben-Gurion. He considered fortunate the fact that the Arab people had large and barren tracts of land and suggested that the continually increasing power of the Jews in Palestine would increase the possibility of implementing a large transfer. (3)

The various newspaper reports also show that Ben-Gurion spoke about transfer of Arabs. The Daily News Bulletin of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency despatched from Zurich on 8 August quoted directly from his speech to the Congress. "For me, the decisive fact is that for the next 15 years the Jewish State will be able to receive another one-and-a-half million Jews and the possibility that Jewish-Arab understanding will be greater with the transfer of the Arabs, ethically necessary and practicable. Zionism fully recognises the rights of the Arabs in Palestine and shall refrain from infringing them. Transfer of Arabs has repeatedly taken place before in consequence of Jews settling in different districts, and we shall have to provide the transferred Arabs with money for settling under their own Government." (4)

The Palcor Bulletin of the Zionist Telegraphic Agency also reported on Ben-Gurion's speech to the Congress but with a significant difference. Instead of reporting that Ben-Gurion referred to the transfer of Arabs as "ethically necessary and practicable", Palcor reported Ben-Gurion as asking "Was the transfer of Arabs ethical, necessary and practicable?" (5)

A study of the official minutes of other speakers at the Congress also shows that Ben-Gurion spoke about population transfer. Yaacov Riftin, the Political Secretary of Hashomer Hazair said that "a number of labour leaders have now spoken from the podium of this Congress in their agreement to the transfer plan, which is anti-Socialist, and dangerous from the standpoint of Diaspora Jewry. If Ben-Gurion and Rubashov can say this - what can we expect from the Progressive Zionists?" (6)

Zalman Rubashov, was one of the founders of the Labour Zionist Movement, who later changed his name to Zalman Shazar and became the third President of the State of Israel. A

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1 / Ibid., p.79; Congress Newspaper, no.5, op.cit., p.2.

2 / Ibid., pp.95-110.

3 / Typewritten transcript of address by Ben-Gurion to 20th Zionist Congress, 7 August 1937, p.2, (CZA S5/1543).

4 / "World Zionist Congress", Daily News Bulletin, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, (London), vol.xviii, no.184, 9 August 1937, p.2.

5 / Palcor Bulletin Zionist Congress, Zurich, Bulletin no.7, 8 August 1937, p.4.

6 / 20th ZC, p.142; Congress Newspaper, no.6, op.cit., p.2 .

study of the official minutes of Rubashov's speech shows that he referred only indirectly to transfer. Rubashov told the Congress that "The question of Jews and Arabs in Palestine can be solved by separate territorial concentrations of the two peoples in Palestine on the basis of independent administrations." He felt that the best solution which had been suggested up to then - the solution which was both the most Zionist and the most humane - was for the two nations to live in close proximity without assimilation or exploitation by either side. <sup>(1)</sup>

Moshe Shertok was another delegate who mentioned Ben-Gurion's reference to transfer. He said, "Ben-Gurion has already pointed out that the Kibbutz Mishmar Haemek owes its existence to the transfer of Arabs from that place to another location." <sup>(2)</sup>

According to the official minutes Yitzchak Tabenkin did not mention transfer. The original transcript, however, devotes a whole paragraph to his comments on transfer! He began by saying that in his opinion the transfer of Arabs was not possible. "I have nothing against this, that we transfer Arabs by their own freewill from extensive farming to intensive farming, but it is a completely different thing to establish an Arab state and be willing to put into effect a forcible transfer." Tabenkin considered that the Arab would not freely move, he would not want to leave; economically it would not be good and a Jewish state would be a financial paradise for an Arab minority. "The only way remaining would be by force", he concluded. <sup>(3)</sup>

Dr. Arthur Ruppin's comments on transfer also only appear in the original transcript. "First of all, we must prepare suitable land for farmers in the Arab state", stated Ruppin, "and only then attempt to bring them there as far as possible with their agreement and only if another way is not found - by expropriation." He then asked whether the Zionists were sure that the Arab state would be prepared to prepare land for Arab transferees from Palestine? It is possible that there would be passive resistance by the Arabs and after a number of years the British would say that they had done all that was possible. The bottom line would be that the Arabs would remain in the Jewish state and then there would be enormous difficulties in the spheres of internal, external and economic affairs. <sup>(4)</sup>

Later in his speech, Ruppin again spoke on transfer. He said that Weizmann was sceptical about the Peel Commission's proposal on transfer, and that he was even more sceptical than Weizmann. He did not believe that the Arabs would leave of their own free-will. He pointed out that they were speaking of about 300 villages; it was not a question of transferring individual Arabs, but people who had relatives in every village and who had lived there for generations. In any country, he said, it was difficult to move farmers from one place to another, and even the Peel Commission had thought that only with great difficulty after many years it might be possible to implement their transfer proposal. <sup>(5)</sup>

The delegates representing the extreme left-wing movement "Hashomer Hazair" were especially vocal in their opposition to the population transfer proposal. The first "Hashomer Hazair" speaker on this subject was Eliezer Perry, a founder of Kibbutz Merchavia, who described this transfer proposal as a "reactionary suggestion" which even if doomed to remain just an idle dream with no possibility of realisation, would "stain the flag of the Zionist movement" and show Jewish aspirations to be quite contrary to the needs of the Palestinian Arabs. <sup>(6)</sup>

Ya'acov Riftin, also representing "Hashomer Hazair" of Palestine felt that the plan which would sanction the transfer of Arabs from Palestine was an "attempt to kill the Zionism of today and would set up a barrier between Zionism and the 'latter days' of justice and socialism freedom... The transfer idea is dangerous". He wanted the Congress to oppose partition and population transfer strongly. <sup>(7)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., p.61.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.176; Congress Newspaper, no.7, 12 August 1937, p.3.

<sup>3</sup> / Typewritten transcript of address by Tabenkin to 20th Zionist Congress, 9 August 1937, p.2, (CZA S5/1543).

<sup>4</sup> / Typewritten transcript of address by Ruppin to 20th Zionist Congress, 6 August 1937, p.1, (CZA S5/1543).

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.2.

<sup>6</sup> / 20th ZC, p.43; Congress Newspaper, no.4, 8 August 1937, p.1.

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid., p.142; Ibid., no.6, op.cit., p.2.



Finally Mordechai Ben Tov of "Hashomer Hazair" wanted to know, "If, for example, we have here based the false, blemished and dangerous proposal of transfer on the fact that a few Arabs near Mishmar Haemek moved a distance of a few metres to tend their fields." He was very surprised that Weizmann, whom he was accustomed to look upon as a man who carried a "dream in his heart", could use this "fateful" word "transfer".<sup>(1)</sup>

Mrs. Tamar De-Sola-Pool, from the United States, a delegate of the General Zionists A, said that she spoke on behalf of the majority of the Young "Hadassah" Women of America. ["Hadassah," the largest Zionist organisation in the world is a "voluntary, non-profit organisation dedicated to the ideals of Judaism, Zionism, American democracy, healing, teaching and medical research".] She was disturbed that the Jewish people, who had learned through generations of suffering to be merciful, were already speaking about the transfer of the Arab inhabitants, people who had dwelt there for many generations.<sup>(2)</sup>

Abba Hillel Silver, a delegate of the General Zionists A from the United States, after referring to Dr. Ruppin's views on the difficulties inherent in transferring three hundred thousand Arabs, concluded that "the transfer of the Arab population can not be achieved and from the ethical aspect it should not be supported."<sup>(3)</sup> As we have already seen, eight years later, Silver was to come out in support of ex-President Hoover's plan for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq.

Golda Myerson, a Mapai delegate, reminding the delegates that the Peel Report had proposed the transfer of Arabs to other places, asked whether the Arabs had agreed to such a transfer, or whether they were prepared to enter into negotiations on this proposal? She said that all this talk was wishful thinking. It would be fair for the Arabs who had plenty of other countries to forgo Palestine in the Jews' favour, but this would demand the consent and goodwill of the Arabs.<sup>(4)</sup>

Dr. Moshe Glikson, a delegate of the General Zionists A, a member of the Central Committee and editor of the newspaper "Ha'aretz" pointed out that there was a great vagueness regarding the transfer and that therefore no surprise should be occasioned by the discovery amongst the delegates of enthusiasts who believed that it was possible to transfer hundreds of thousands of Arabs from the Jewish State in one go. He went on to quote Dr. Weizmann who had given his opinion at the Congress that it was possible to transfer one hundred thousand Arabs to the Arab States during a period of twenty years. He added that there were others who believed in the possibility of a complete transfer of the Arabs during the course of a short period. However, Glikson regarded this as wishful thinking and dangerous wishful thinking at that. He said that Dr. Weizmann had told the delegates of the plan to set up a fund for a large resettlement, but that he personally was of the opinion that not many Arab fellahin would be found who would agree to leave the Jewish State.<sup>(5)</sup>

Glikson's concluding paragraph on transfer does not appear in the official minutes! In it he stated that "by way of compulsion we will not be able to remove the Arabs from the Jewish State and no settlement plan will rouse the Arab felaheen to leave the Jewish State and go to the impoverished Transjordan. And the Arab leaders and the nationalistic Arab youth for their part will make sure not to weaken the Arab 'irredenta' in the Jewish State."<sup>(6)</sup>

Earlier in his speech, Glikson made a statement which also did not appear in the official minutes. He said that Shmuel Zuchovitsky, a leading figure in the agricultural sector, had asked Weizmann not to show any mercy on the question of a complete transfer of Arabs in a short period of time.<sup>(7)</sup>

Furthermore, in the official minutes, the statements on transfer which Glikson reports Weizmann as saying do not appear! Also, "The Jewish Chronicle" report on Weizmann's

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., p.211; Ibid., no.8, 13 August 1937, p.2.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.155; Ibid., no.6, op.cit., p.4.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., p.126; Ibid., no.5, op.cit., p.8.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.148; Ibid., no.6, op.cit., p.3.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.164; Ibid., p.5.

<sup>6</sup> / Typewritten transcript of address by Glikson to 20th Zionist Congress, 9 August 1937, p.4, (CZA S5/1543).

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid.

address to the Congress <sup>(1)</sup> brings a transfer proposal which finds no place in these official minutes.

The comments on transfer by Golda Myerson, Moshe Shertok and Ya'acov Riftin in the official minutes are in substance the same as in the original transcript. <sup>(2)</sup>

Menachem Ussishkin, a member of the Central Committee was also extremely sceptical about the possibility of putting the proposed transfer plan into operation. "Suddenly Mohammed will leave our State - Why?" he asked. Ussishkin doubted whether in the probable event of the Arabs not agreeing to transfer voluntarily, there was any hope that someone would compel them to depart from the country leaving their land to the Jews. <sup>(3)</sup>

The newspaper "The New Palestine" reproduced the text of the address by Stephen Wise, President of the Zionist Organization of America, to the Congress. In it, Wise devoted only one paragraph to transfer. He regarded a comparison of the proposed transfer in Palestine to the Greco-Turkish population transfer as "utterly illogical". According to Wise's assessment, both the Greeks and the Turks were "eager" to be transferred and they were both "passionately yearning to return to their own land." However, in the case of Palestine, there were two reasons why there could not be an exchange. Firstly, since there were hardly any Jews within the area designated to be the Arab State, there could hardly be any "exchange" of population, and secondly, the Arabs would not want a decrease in their standard of living, which would accompany their transfer from the Jewish to the Arab State. <sup>(4)</sup> This paragraph of Wise's on transfer is missing from the official minutes! <sup>(5)</sup>

The American Labor Zionist leader, Hayim Greenberg, delivered a very short address at the 20th Zionist Congress. <sup>(6)</sup> In it, he did not mention transfer. However, immediately after publication of the Peel Report, Greenberg addressed a meeting of the League for Labor Palestine Central Committee held in New Jersey, where he did mention transfer. He stated that the transfer of Arabs was unfeasible. He felt that there was no moral and political possibility to force the Arabs to leave the proposed Jewish State. Furthermore, there was no reason to think that they would voluntarily move to a place which had a lower standard of living. On the other hand, if they remained they would listen to the agitation of their Arab leaders and would be an irredenta in the proposed Jewish State. <sup>(7)</sup> It seems that Greenberg offered no solution to this dilemma.

After about two weeks of deliberations, nearly two-thirds of the delegates voted for a resolution which rejected the proposals of the Peel Commission on partition, but not the actual principle of partition and empowered the Executive Committee to negotiate with the British Government about the precise terms for the proposed establishment of a Jewish State.

As far as the accuracy of the minutes of the Congress are concerned, it is more than obvious that what is described as the "official" minutes are minutes which have been greatly tampered with and it would therefore be more accurate to describe them as "censored" minutes!

Benny Morris was very critical on this "doctoring" of historical documents, claiming that "the Zionist movement is perhaps one of the most skillful practitioners of this strange art" He added that a "large part" of "the historic Zionist documents and protocols" which have "been opened up now appears to be deficient and faulty, if not patently false". At the end of his article, Morris claimed that "the speeches, debates, diaries and memoranda that the Zionist bureaucrats issued wholesale passed through the sieve of political censorship on the way to publication: a large portion disappeared or was distorted. What happened to the 1937 documents also happened to Zionist documents from other years." <sup>(8)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / "Congress Rejects Partition Plan", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 13 August 1937, p.23.

<sup>2</sup> / Typewritten transcript of addresses by Myerson, Shertok and Riftin to 20th Zionist Congress, (CZA S5/1543).]

<sup>3</sup> / 20th ZC, p.188; Congress Newspaper, no.7, op.cit., p.4.

<sup>4</sup> / Stephen Wise, "Answer to Britain Is 'Non Possumus'", The New Palestine, (New York), vol. xxvii, no.26, 3 September 1937, p.6.

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes of 20th Zionist Congress, (Zurich, 1937), pp.133-38.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., p.212.

<sup>7</sup> / Medoff, thesis, p.194.

<sup>8</sup> / Morris, Internet, op.cit. ; Morris, Ha'aretz. op.cit.

A British Foreign Office minute (of December 1937) in summarising the general consensus at this Congress regarding compulsory transfer stated that "great stress was laid on the necessity for the enforced evacuation of the Arabs from the proposed Jewish area." However, even were Britain not to implement any forcible eviction of Arabs, it would be of little real practical significance, since the refusal of the Jews on principle, to employ Arab labour and the urgency of the Jews to claim all available land for new immigrants would make the position of any Arabs left in the Jewish area most difficult so that "they may well be driven out by Jewish economic pressure in almost as disastrous a way as if they were removed by us by force." <sup>(1)</sup> [As we shall see later, the opposition by the British Government, to this compulsory transfer was the result of a change in their attitude towards the recommendations of the Peel Report, which only arose several months after its publication.]

### **Jewish Agency Council**

The "Mandate for Palestine" made specific mention of a "Jewish Agency" whose functions would include "to assist and take part in the development of the country", subject always to the control of the British Administration. At first the Zionist Organisation acted as the Jewish Agency, but it was soon felt that the membership of the Jewish Agency should be extended in order to represent World Jewry. After negotiations, extending for several years, with American Jewry and other Jewish communities in the world, an extended Jewish Agency came into being in 1929, incorporating fifty per cent Zionists and fifty per cent non-Zionists. Congresses of the Zionist Organisation were to be followed by a meeting of the Council of the Jewish Agency.

At the meeting of the Jewish Agency Council in Zurich immediately following the twentieth Zionist Congress, the non-Zionists on this Council showed themselves to be just as divided as the Zionists on the question of partition.

The first speaker to mention the transfer of the Arab population was Arthur Ruppin, who was concerned with the technical feasibility of such a transfer. He did not think that the transfer plan was impossible, but he felt that it would be very difficult to implement. He said that the analogy of the transfer of Greeks from Asia Minor to Greece was not relevant to Palestine, since there had been sufficient land in Greece for the transferees, whereas in Transjordan suitable land would have to be found. Ruppin maintained that the majority of the Arabs would remain in Palestine since the conditions there were far superior to those obtaining in Transjordan. There were better health conditions, better educational opportunities and a better market for products. <sup>(2)</sup> One might add that these better conditions were brought about not by Arab endeavours, but by Jewish colonisation, development and hard work in Palestine.

Menachem Ussishkin, one of the chief opponents of partition, challenged Weizmann's claim that "when we have our own sector in Palestine and they (the Arabs) have their own, we will be able to make a peace treaty because then we will have something to offer them." Ussishkin said, "Dr. Weizmann, Sir, What will you have in our small State to offer the Arabs, that you cannot offer today? First of all, you will be able to offer the removal of three hundred thousand Arabs from our country. That is what they are discussing now (at the Permanent Mandates Commission sessions) in Geneva and at the (Zionist) Congress." Immediately there were interjections from the plenum, "This is what the Royal Commission said - not us."

Ussishkin continued, "When the proponents of partition are asked 'Where will we settle Jews in our small land in which there (are) so many Arabs?' they answer, 'We will resettle the Arabs in the neighbouring countries.'" He said that he agreed with Ruppin who had considered transfer to be very difficult, almost impossible. Ussishkin therefore concluded that there were but two alternatives. The first was for the Arabs to remain in Palestine, leaving no room for the Jews; the second was that the Jews would be forced to transfer the

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<sup>1</sup> / Minute, Foreign Office, 11 December 1937, p.2, (PRO FO 371/20822 E 7298).

<sup>2</sup> / 20th ZC, p.23 (Hebrew numerals); Congress Newspaper, op.cit., no.11, 19 August 1937, p.2.

Arabs out of Palestine, a solution which seemed to Ussishkin to be unachievable. <sup>(1)</sup>

The next speaker on this question was Dr. Judah Leib Magnes. Magnes was Chancellor of the Hebrew University and one of the most radical of the adherents of the "Brit Shalom" movement, (an organisation advocating a bi-national state in Palestine), although he himself was not officially a member of this group. Magnes had submitted to the Arabs a programme according to which the Jews would remain as less than forty per cent of the population of Palestine, on condition that they be allowed to develop a spiritual centre for Judaism in Palestine.

In his speech to the Council, which was continually interrupted, Magnes said that people had, in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, been transferred from country to country against their will, from which compulsory transfers the world was still suffering. However he had full confidence in the Peel Commission's attempts to solve the Palestine problem. <sup>(2)</sup> According to Magnes, they had said, "We are forced to transfer these Arabs, otherwise there will not be room for Jews to settle."

Magnes, however, seems to have misunderstood them. The Peel Commission's main concern had been not with the difficulty of accommodating Jewish immigrants within the proposed boundaries of the Jewish State, but with the fear that a mixed population of Jews and Arabs would be a constant source of friction. It was for this latter reason that the Commission recommended compulsory transfer from the areas of mixed population.

Magnes commented, "You say that you want to transfer the Arabs to Transjordan with their agreement, even though the Royal Commission has stated that if the Arabs refuse to leave the Jewish State voluntarily, it will be necessary to use compulsion." He told the meeting that it was unrealistic to assume that the Arabs would be willing to leave the Jewish State. Even in the event of some Arabs agreeing to transfer, their fellow Arabs would not permit them to enter the Arab State, since the Arab leaders would prefer them to remain as a hostile element in the Jewish State. Magnes' speech was followed by stormy protests from the plenum! <sup>(3)</sup>

According to the Peel Commission's partition plan, the Negev was to be allocated, in its entirety, to the Arab State. Moshe Smilensky said that he would prefer an arrangement whereby the fellaheen remained in the Jewish State and the Jews received another one and-a-half million dunams of land in the Negev. <sup>(4)</sup> [A month earlier, Ben-Gurion has also weighed up the two alternatives - transfer of Arabs or the Negev. However, he had finally concluded that the transfer of Arabs was more important than the Negev.]

### **Jewish Agency Committee for Transfer of Arabs**

Although a number of delegates at the Jewish Agency Council meeting held in Zurich in August 1937, had spoken of the impracticability of transferring the Arabs from Palestine, the Jewish Agency took the Peel transfer proposal very seriously. Towards the end of 1937, they established a "Committee for the Transfer of Population", which, as part of its work, commissioned a number of memoranda and statistical surveys on various aspects of such a transfer.

In September 1937, the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, informed the Council of the League of Nations that the British Government would be sending another commission to Palestine to work out details of the partition of the country. However, the composition of this new commission under Sir John Woodhead was not announced until early 1938.

On 25 October 1937, a conference was held in order to discuss a number of subjects including the "Transfer of Population". The handwritten notes on this conference are headed by the initials of the participants. It would seem that they included David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Shertok and Dov Joseph. The notes include the various committees which it was planned to set up. The "Transfer of Population" committee was to comprise Thon. Weitz,

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.33-34 (Hebrew numerals); Ibid., no.12, 23 August 1937, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.50 (Hebrew numerals); Ibid., p.3.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., p.51 (Hebrew numerals); Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.52 (Hebrew numerals); Ibid., p.4.

Ashbel, a Farmers' representative, Bonne and Nachmani. Eliahu Epstein would be its secretary. <sup>(1)</sup>

At a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive held on 21 November 1937, Moshe Shertok, head of the Jewish Agency Political Department, said that his department was preparing for this new British Commission. He told the Executive that a number of committees had been set up and that some of them had already begun their work. Dr. Dov Joseph, legal adviser of the Jewish Agency's Political Department in Jerusalem, assisted by Dr. Fritz Simon, organised the work of all the committees.

He announced the membership of these various committees. The "Committee for the Transfer of Population" had the following membership: Dr. Jacob Thon, Doctor of Laws, previously Director of the Palestine Office of the Zionist Organisation and then Director of the Palestine Land Development Company; Dr. Abraham Granovsky, Doctor of Laws, who had made a special study of population transfer and was on the Directorate of the Jewish National Fund; Joseph Weitz, Director of the Jewish National Fund's Land Development Division; Dr. Alfred Bonne, an economist who had directed the Economic Archives for the Near East in Jerusalem; and Joseph Nachami, Director of the Jewish National Fund Land Office for the Galilee area. Eliahu Epstein (later Elath), Director of the Middle East Section of the Jewish Agency's Political Department acted as secretary. <sup>(2)</sup>

The Population Transfer Committee held its first meeting on 15 November 1937. Dr. Joseph opened the meeting and told its members that their function was to "prepare a programme for the transfer of population and to coordinate the information required for this." Their foremost task was to assemble comprehensive details on the Arab population dwelling in the area designated as the future Jewish State.

Weitz asked whether the Committee was to express its opinion on the expediency of existing possibilities for the transfer of the Arab population, or just to assemble the information. Thon answered that the Committee must first assemble and digest the information. Only then would it be possible to discuss Weitz's question.

Granovsky wanted the Committee to examine the possibility of granting the Arabs some favour in exchange for any concessions they might make to the Jews. He was very concerned with the mechanics of transfer and felt that the Committee should discuss "how the transfer of population will be carried out" and "by what means the transfer will be implemented."

Thon said that the activities of the Committee should be divided between the assembling information concerning the Arab population, and investigating opportunities for agriculture in Transjordan. This, said Thon, was the only way to solve the problem of the transfer of the Arabs living within the borders of the proposed Jewish State. [The Peel Commission had also called for an investigation to determine the absorptive capacity of Transjordan.]

Nachmani said that the Committee "needs to find a solution to the question of the means of transfer. This forces us to deal not only with the details and minutiae concerning a plan for the removal of the residents but also to concern ourselves with the possibilities for their resettlement elsewhere."

Weitz disagreed. He felt that the Committee's first consideration should be how to free more land for Jewish settlement in areas of Arab concentration "and what is the optimum solution for the removal of the Arab residents from these areas."

Joseph explained that coordinating information was only one of the functions of this Committee. It would have to deal with a number of other problems connected with the transfer, in the light of experience from other population transfers. The members of this Committee would have to familiarise themselves with all aspects of transfer as they would be the Jewish Agency experts on all questions connected with population transfer. The meeting ended with a discussion on nomination of further members to the Committee and allocation of duties among the members. <sup>(3)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Notes on Conference, 25 October 1937, (CZA S25/10109).

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., vol 27/1, no.14, 21 November 1937, p.3, (CZA).

<sup>3</sup> / Minutes, Population Transfer Committee, 15 November 1937, (CZA S25/10060).

After the first meeting, an invitation was extended to the Jewish Farmers' Federation of Palestine to nominate two representatives to the Committee, <sup>(1)</sup> which they did a few days later. <sup>(2)</sup>

The second meeting of the Population Transfer Committee took place less than a week later on 21 November, when Weitz delivered the opening lecture to the Committee. He explained that his two basic premises had been firstly, that the purpose of the transfer of Arabs from the proposed Jewish State was not only to "decrease the Arab population" but also to "vacate land at present settled and held by Arabs, and free it for Jewish settlement" and secondly, that "the transfer could not be accomplished by force since there was no such force available." Hence the conditions would have to be such as would persuade the Arabs to agree to voluntary transfer. Such inducements would have to be both political, with international agreements and the establishment of a suitable atmosphere between the two sides, and financial, so that the Arabs would themselves recognise the advantages accruing to them from such a transfer.

According to Weitz's plan, about 87,000 Arabs were to be transferred to the areas of Palestine designated as the future Arab State, to Transjordan and to Syria. Weitz suggested that as the transfer should involve as little environmental or climatic change as possible for the transferees, the Arabs from the coastal plain should be transferred to the Gaza area; those from Upper Galilee to neighbouring Syria; those from Bet-Shean Valley to the eastern Jordan Valley; and those from the Galilean mountains to the hilly areas of Transjordan. Weitz then quoted figures for the area of land required for the transferees and the cost involved in such purchases and transfers. <sup>(3)</sup>

Weitz's plan allowed for the removal of from a quarter to a third of the Arab population from the area of the planned Jewish State. Bonne, however, stressed the need "to transfer the maximum possible number of Arabs and not be satisfied initially with a partial solution." He considered that there would be many points to clarify, including those of procedure and finance. Priority must be given to clarification of the "compulsion" to be used in the transfer. Bonne said, "There is no cause to relinquish lightly the proposal of 'compulsion' proposed not by the Jews but by the English. Together with this it is clear that we do not want 'compulsion' in the full sense of the word, but are interested in applying as light a pressure as possible." Bonne added that the Jews would not leave the transferred Arabs to their fate but would actively concern themselves with their resettlement. He was also concerned with fixing the rate of transfer of the Arabs. Bonne said that it was obvious that the process and means of transfer would be completely different should the transfer take five years or more as compared with transfer within a shorter period. <sup>(4)</sup>

Joseph considered that the Committee should not limit themselves to the transfer of the tenant farmers and the Bedouins alone. "We must work on a programme of transfer for the remaining classes of Arabs as well." Thon agreed and said that the Committee's chief concern should be establishing the order of priority for the transfer of the various classes of Arabs. Ashbel pointed out that this could be done by utilising existing research on the social structure of the Arab population. <sup>(5)</sup>

Towards the conclusion of the meeting, Weitz stressed that the transfer proposal could only be implemented by political agreement and recommended that the transferees be directed especially to Transjordan, since such a destination would strengthen the development of the Arab State and have an important influence on the success of the partition plan. He added that "the possibility of transferring all the Arabs must be investigated", but if this were not possible, then the Committee would have to decide "who it will be possible to transfer in the near future." He thought that the transfer would be a lengthy proposition but

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<sup>1</sup> / Political Department of Jewish Agency to Jewish Farmers Federation of Palestine, 16 November 1937, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>2</sup> / Jewish Farmers Federation of Palestine to Political Department of Jewish Agency, 22 November 1937, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>3</sup> / Minutes, Population Transfer Committee, 21 November 1937, pp.1-4, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>4</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>5</sup> / *Ibid.*, pp.6-7.

that the aim should be the speediest possible completion of the transfer. Weitz concluded by proposing that the Committee set up two sub-committees, one of which would look into procedural matters and the other assemble information regarding land and population. His suggestion was accepted. <sup>(1)</sup>

Regarding this meeting Weitz wrote in his diary, "I opposed the view that on the one hand we must increase the number of Arabs to be transferred and on the other hand (accordingly) increase the time period (for its implementation). I said that in my opinion we will gain no benefit from this. The objective must be to decrease the [Arab] population by one third but during a period of two to three years." He also commented that Dr. Joseph would use compulsion to implement the transfer were the matter to be put into his hands. <sup>(2)</sup>

At the following meeting held on 29 November, Dr. Kurt Mendelsohn, an expert on population transfer, from Holland, gave a lecture on the experiences and conclusions to be gained from past population transfers.

He began by asking whether, in view of the different conditions applying then in Palestine, as distinct from those in other countries, one could use the same methods for population transfer?

Even though a political solution was a precondition for population transfer, Mendelsohn stated that he would not deal with this aspect. His question was whether and how one could establish such conditions that the Arabs would leave Palestine of their own free-will and the land would thus pass into the hands of the Jews for settlement.

Experts in Greece were of the opinion that the transfer of villages on a large scale was almost impossible without compulsion or the threat of compulsion. The large scale transfer which had taken place in the Balkans could only be implemented by the use of intensive agrarian reform, and this would likewise have to be the case in Palestine. In addition, financial incentives would have to be given and specific financial arrangements made.

With regard to the time span to implement such a transfer, Mendelsohn said that the transfer of Turks from Greece involved 300,000 people and was accomplished in 12 months. One would have to see that at least the first stage of the Arab transfer from Palestine would be finished within a ten year period, otherwise the transfer would be offset by natural population growth.

After very briefly discussing the methods of resettlement in the Balkans, he went on to explain the special requirements regarding Palestine, namely: the order in which different classes of Arabs should be transferred; the development of Transjordan for the purpose of resettlement; the special arrangements for the transfer of Druze villages from the upper Galilee to Syria and Lebanon; and the moral responsibility towards the Arab transferees.

Mendelsohn concluded his lecture on a comment regarding the financial aspects of such a transfer. <sup>(3)</sup>

Following the lecture, various other speakers briefly mentioned a few of the points discussed by Mendelsohn in his lecture. These included agrarian reform and the question of the transfer of other minority groups such as the Druze and the Christians. <sup>(4)</sup>

In a letter written on the following day by Thon to the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, he pointed out that "one of the foremost and decisive conditions for the success of the proposed Jewish State is the transfer of the Arab population from its area." Thon said that public opinion in Europe and America and amongst the Diaspora Jews could be influenced positively by publicising the parallel between the successful compulsory Greco-Turkish population exchange and the proposed Arab population transfer. <sup>(5)</sup>

A meeting of the Sub-Committee on Procedure for the Transfer of Arabs was held on 1 December. In the course of his opening speech, Thon pointed out the differences between the

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.7-8.

<sup>2</sup> / Joseph Weitz, Handwritten Diary entry 21 November 1937, pp.381-82, (CZA A246/3) ; Weitz, Diary, op. cit., vol.1, p.287.

<sup>3</sup> / Minutes, Population Transfer Committee, 29 November 1937, pp.1-3, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., p.4.

<sup>5</sup> / Thon to Jewish Agency Political Department, 30 November 1937, (CZA S25/10060).

Peel Commission Report, which spoke of the possibility of compulsory transfer of the Arabs, and the comments of Ormsby-Gore at the Permanent Mandates Commission, rejecting compulsion. [Actually Ormsby-Gore was rather vague on this point when being cross-examined by the members of the Commission.] Thon said that in view of the importance of transfer for the successful establishment of the Jewish State, various inducements such as monetary grants should be used to urge the Arabs to transfer voluntarily and within a set period, "and only after all these methods fail should compulsion be considered."

Granovsky felt that the use of compulsion could have dangerous repercussions for Diaspora Jewry. In his opinion "there was no possibility of the use of compulsion, but the chances of voluntary transfer of Arabs were slight." Mendelsohn also opposed the use of force. However, he supported the use of "pressure, such as agrarian reform or Governmental means" in order to encourage transfer.

Bonne opposed looking at the compulsory transfer in isolation. It was impossible to carry out both the partition of the country and the transfer against the will and open opposition of the Arabs. "On the other hand... when the Arabs realise that the partition is inevitable, and after Arab representatives will sit down with the Jews and the English to discuss future relations, then the question of transfer will become a matter of State policy that will be implemented even without the agreement of every rural Arab."

The opinions of other Jewish groups were discussed. The answer in principle to the question of compulsion depended on the assessment of the viability of the Jewish State in the event of the Arabs' remaining and becoming an irredenta. <sup>(1)</sup>

The meeting continued on 5 December and "after a prolonged discussion it was decided unanimously to propose the following formula as the stand of the Committee on the question of compulsion. The proposed Jewish State will not be viable as long as a large Arab minority remains. The transfer of the Arab population in large numbers is therefore a pre-condition for the establishment of the State", as Arabs in the Jewish State would form a fifth column and the land occupied by the Arabs was needed by the Jewish State. "In the event of not achieving the agreement of the Arabs to their transfer or of its non-implementation by England with or without the co-operation of international bodies, (the transfer) will not be realised." <sup>(2)</sup> Thus the resolution which was to have defined the Sub-Committee's views on compulsion was disappointingly vague.

The second Sub-Committee which dealt with the details of resettlement also met on 5 December. Opening the meeting, Weitz said the Sub-Committee had to decide "if the population transfer must be total or if we should be satisfied in the early stages with a partial transfer." Ben-Ami, a representative of the Jewish Farmers' Federation of Palestine felt that for practical reasons the transfer of population was impossible. Nachmani, in considering candidates for transfer said that there was "full justification" for the removal of homeless and unemployed Arabs from the area of the proposed Jewish State. "Now", he said, "we must concentrate on that point and consider both a maximal and minimal plan." Epstein said, "This Sub-Committee must prepare material concerning the question of a total transfer", while admitting the right of the Sub-Committee to determine the order of priority in the transfer of the various classes of Arabs.

The meeting discussed other problems which would need verifying, such as land ownership, size of rural and urban populations, and social classes among the Arab population. Towards the end of the meeting, Nachmani proposed investigating the possibilities of settlement in Syria and Transjordan. Ben-Ami was against transferring Arabs to Transjordan as he required that this area be left empty for future Jewish settlement. However, he agreed that in the case of absolute necessity, the Arabs could be settled in the southern part of Transjordan. The meeting resolved that within a fortnight, Nachmani and Epstein should present material on the possibilities of settlement in Syria and Transjordan, after which the Committee would make a general inspection of the various sites in Syria. <sup>(3)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes, Sub-Committee on Transfer of Arabs, 1 & 5 December 1937, pp.1-2, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.3.

<sup>3</sup> / Minutes, Population Transfer Committee, Sub-Committee on Settlement, 5 December 1937, pp.1-2, (CZA



The minutes of the next meeting of the Sub-Committee on Procedure held on 19 December, again quoted the resolution on "compulsion" but very little else was reported. <sup>(1)</sup>

The Jewish Agency office in London was kept abreast of the discussions going on in these various committees in Jerusalem. On 29 December 1937, a letter was sent to Arthur Lourie at the Jewish Agency's London office, including reports on the "composition and activities" of the Jerusalem, security, boundary, and transfer committees. <sup>(2)</sup> The report on the "Exchange of Land & Population Committee" and its two sub-committees, listed their membership, the papers which had been read by three of its members who were experts in this field, and referred to a study of "the question how to avoid, as far as possible, compulsory transfer by combining the transfer of the rural population with a planned agricultural reform..." and "'stock-taking' of the Arab agricultural assets in the territory of the proposed Jewish State". <sup>(3)</sup>

At about the same time, the British Government issued a Despatch "Policy in Palestine" presenting a complete volte-face. According to this document the British Government had "not accepted the Commission's proposal for the compulsory transfer in the last resort of Arabs from the Jewish to the Arab area."

Following this, on 27 January 1938, Simon sent a memorandum to Shertok saying, "Since the (British) Government has not accepted the principle of 'compulsion'", the Sub-Committee on Procedure should end its theoretical debate on the subject and concentrate on a constructive plan for agrarian reform in Palestine and Transjordan, "which would permit the purchase of land in the Jewish State and attract the Arabs to intensive settlement" in the Arab State. <sup>(4)</sup>

A few weeks earlier, Dov Joseph had travelled to America. Before his departure, Simon wrote to him, worried that during his absence "not very much will be done" by the Transfer Committee and he should therefore appoint a member of the Jewish Agency Executive to take charge of this Committee. <sup>(5)</sup>

On 3 February 1938 Simon wrote to Thon informing him that Shertok wanted the Sub-Committee on Procedure to investigate the possibility of finding suitable vacant land in the proposed Arab State, in Transjordan and in Syria and to prepare a plan for the resettlement of the Arabs transferred there from the Jewish state. He continued, "Such a plan is a pre-condition for all negotiations on our part on the question of compulsion." <sup>(6)</sup> From this we can see that although the British Government had by then rejected compulsory transfer, the Jewish Agency still proposed to consider the question.

At a meeting held on 10 March to discuss the collation of material for the Woodhead Commission, Simon was requested to convene an early meeting of the Transfer Committee, to invite Shertok, Hexter and Joseph to attend, and to ask this Committee to compile figures regarding the absorptive capacity of Palestine and Transjordan. <sup>(7)</sup> At this meeting which took place on 23 March, Thon reported to the Committee on the assemblage, then in progress, of data on Arab villages situated in the proposed Jewish State. A discussion on the report followed, after which Thon mentioned the search for vacant land, especially in Transjordan and Syria, for the resettlement of the Arabs leaving the Jewish State. Shertok pointed out that the Jewish Agency had a memorandum on the agricultural situation in Transjordan.

Hexter was convinced that there would be strong opposition from the Woodhead Commission, to a reduction in the size of the small-holdings of transferred Arabs, involving a change from "extensive" to "intensive" farming. Hence the Committee would be well-advised to base their calculations regarding transfer of the Arabs on "extensive" farming methods.

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S25/10060).

<sup>1</sup> / Minutes, Sub-Committee on Transfer of Arabs (Procedural Questions), 19 December 1937, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>2</sup> / ? to Arthur (Lourie), 29 December 1937, (CZA S25/10109).

<sup>3</sup> / Memorandum, Exchange of Land & Population Committee, undated (December 1937), (CZA S25/10109).

<sup>4</sup> / Memorandum, Simon to Shertok, 27 January 1938, p.2, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>5</sup> / Simon to Joseph, 5 January 1938, (CZA S25/10109, S25/5123).

<sup>6</sup> / Simon to Thon, 3 February 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>7</sup> / Minutes of Meeting regarding collection of material for the Technical Commission, 10 March 1938, p.3, (CZA S25/5123).

Thon considered one hundred dunams to be quite sufficient for a peasant small-holding and said that even on this basis there was enough available land in Transjordan and Syria.

Thon raised the question of "compulsion". Joseph said, "At the moment we should not concern ourselves with the question of compulsion in the transfer of the Arab population from Palestine", and stressed the need to prove to the Woodhead Commission that there was enough land already available for the Arab transferees from the future Jewish State. <sup>(1)</sup>

Unlike many other committees, the activities of this Committee were not limited to meetings! During the period when it was in existence, there were in progress various surveys of potential areas outside Palestine for Arab transferees, and the collection of statistical data appertaining to the Arabs in Palestine. <sup>(2)</sup>

For example, a study was made of the el-Jezireh area of northern Syria. In mid-March 1938, Simon wrote a note to Epstein informing him that Shertok wanted him to finish as quickly as possible his research concerning "the Jezireh area as a place of resettlement for Arabs from the future Jewish state." <sup>(3)</sup>

At a meeting of the "Population Transfer Committee" held about a week later on 23 March, Epstein delivered a report on the material he had assembled concerning the settling of Arabs from Palestine in this area. He felt that the Syrian Government might be interested in increasing the Arab population in that area since it was near the border with Turkey and was in constant danger from the Kurds and the Bedouins who lived there. He added that he still required additional information and after he received it, would present all the material in the form of a memorandum. <sup>(4)</sup>

Bonne observed that the population density in Syria was much lower than in Palestine and although the Committee had no details of land ownership in Syria, its sparse population made it an attractive proposition for resettlement of transferees. Later in the meeting he asked why Iraq should not be taken into consideration as a possible destination of transfer. Joseph said that Iraq was unsuitable as it did not have a common border with Palestine. Shertok, however, felt that the possibility should be investigated. <sup>(5)</sup>

Zalman Lipschitz considered that the material Epstein had assembled was too general and it was thus necessary for someone to go to Syria in order to check the population density and land-ownership there. The meeting agreed that Epstein should complete his memorandum on the Jezireh. <sup>(6)</sup>

In the days following, Lipschitz had a meeting with Epstein and they came to the conclusion that "there is no other way to obtain details regarding land ownership and valuations in connection with transfer of Arabs from Palestine and their resettlement in the Jezireh, other than by a visit and investigation on the site by a team of experts who would research and assemble the required information and would submit ... on the basis of their work, a general and detailed report of the entire problem." He then suggested the composition of such a team, which would include Epstein and Weitz, and he considered that such a team could complete the work within eight to ten days. If Thon concurred, the team would be able to travel at the beginning of April. <sup>(7)</sup> However, from the minutes of a meeting of this committee held two months later, we can see from Weitz's comments that a committee of experts did not go to the Jezireh. <sup>(8)</sup> Epstein, however, wrote <sup>(9)</sup> that he went there in 1938, and he is quite possibly referring to this period of that year.

On 26 April, Simon sent Weitz, Thon and Lipschitz a memorandum on the Jezireh and asked that they should study it. <sup>(10)</sup> The author of this seventeen page memorandum (written

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes, Population Transfer Committee, 23 March 1938, pp.1-2, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>2</sup> / Various Memoranda etc., may be found in CZA S25/10059, S25/10060, S25/10061, S25/8929.

<sup>3</sup> / Epstein to Simon, 17 March 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>4</sup> / Minutes, Population Transfer Committee, 23 March 1938, p.2, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., pp.2-3.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., p.3.

<sup>7</sup> / Lipschitz to Thon, 28 March 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>8</sup> / Minutes, Subcommittee on Transfer of Population, 22 May 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>9</sup> / Eliahu Elath (Epstein), *Zionism and the Arabs*, (Tel-Aviv, 1974), p.15.

<sup>10</sup> / Simon to Thon, Weitz, Lipschitz, 26 April 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

in French) <sup>(1)</sup> was not stated, but it was not Epstein. Since Simon's representatives were at the time in Syria and thus had the opportunity to obtain any additional information from the author of the memorandum, he said that Weitz, Thon and Lipschitz should immediately indicate any questions that might need answering. <sup>(2)</sup> Two days later Epstein submitted a twenty-four page memorandum in Hebrew <sup>(3)</sup> to Thon, which included topographic, demographic, economic and political information and also "suggestions regarding transfer of the Arab population from the proposed Jewish state to the area." Epstein explained that this memorandum had been prepared from official government sources, and also from oral and written information which he had obtained from both individuals and institutions during his last visits to Syria. He added that some of the details could not be fully verified due to the great difficulties appertaining to the collection of this data. <sup>(4)</sup>

On Epstein's memorandum, Lipschitz wrote that he had studied it and concluded that the author had succeeded in the objective given to him, namely "to compose a monograph on the Jezireh which would serve as information to the members of the committee in their deliberations on the problem of population transfer from the proposed Jewish State to the Jezireh area in Syria." Lipschitz added however, that the practical problem of population transfer was only dealt with in this memorandum in a superficial manner. He considered that it would thus be difficult for the members of the committee to suggest a practical programme for population transfer based only on the information in their possession; the assembling of more detailed information would be necessary, and he listed out eleven points which would have to be verified. These included listing the various sparsely-populated areas of the Jezireh which would be suitable for the transferees, their present population, their agricultural potential, what preparatory work would have to be done on the agricultural land, the state of the transport and health facilities, and what would be the financial outlay to implement transfer. Lipschitz concluded that with such information the committee would be able to prepare a transfer plan. <sup>(5)</sup>

About a month earlier, on 31 March, Simon had written a letter to David Horowitz, who at that time was Director of the Economic Department of the Jewish Agency, informing him, that at a meeting of the "Borders Committee" the question was raised regarding the possibility of transfer of Arabs from the cities of Jaffa, Ramleh and Lod, to the proposed Arab State. It had been agreed to refer the matter to Horowitz for a report on the economic and financial possibilities of such a transfer. <sup>(6)</sup>

The next meeting of the Transfer Committee seems to have taken place on 22 May 1938. Wilhelm Hecker delivered a lecture on the question of fixing the borders of the proposed Jewish state and the transfer of Arabs. In his opinion "from 40 to 50 thousand families should be transferred to Iraq."

Weitz regreted that the Committee had not sent its own experts to Syria and Transjordan and insisted on the need for members of the Committee to visit these countries and investigate the territory personally. Nachmani agreed with Weitz but said that the present political situation precluded the possibility of travelling to Syria and Transjordan. However, the Committee had sufficient data to consider transfer to the areas bordering Palestine. "The sole objection to this", he said, "is that we have always thought of these areas as a reserve for our own settlement."

Granovsky said that there was no need to destroy this reserve. "We must strive to transfer the Arabs as far as possible from our borders, if possible to Iraq." Ashbel, agreeing said, "It is obviously worthwhile to distance the Arabs as much as possible." However, he added that the living conditions of the transferees must be taken into consideration. Hence, it would be easier to transfer the Arabs to the other side of the Jordan, where the conditions

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<sup>1</sup> / Rapport sur le Territoire de Jezire, (unsigned), 7 April 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>2</sup> / Simon to Thon et al., 26 April 1938, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> / Eliahu Epstein, Memorandum "The Jezireh", April 1938, (CZA S25/10059).

<sup>4</sup> / Epstein to Thon, 28 April 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>5</sup> / Lipschitz to Thon, 1 May 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>6</sup> / Simon to Horowitz, 31 March 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

prevailing were similar to those of Palestine, than to transfer them to distant countries with greater environmental differences. He therefore recommended transfer of the Arabs to the areas bordering Palestine. <sup>(1)</sup>

On the day following this meeting, Hecker wrote a letter to Simon, complaining that his memorandum had been "torn to pieces" and the pieces sent to different committees. He stressed that the main point of his memorandum concerned the division of Palestine into two or three areas, and that all his other suggestions were secondary. After explaining the problems which would arise from such a division of the country, he came on to the question of transfer.

He stressed that to transfer Arabs living in hilly areas to the coastal plain went against all logic. It was not for the Jews to suggest where the Arabs should be transferred - there were many possible areas. It would be first necessary to obtain agreement in principle for transfer from the British, which in his opinion would have to be by consent. The neighbouring countries would gladly accept fellahin, if it would not obligate them in any financial outlay. <sup>(2)</sup>

After receiving a copy of the minutes of this meeting, Hecker wrote a further letter, which mainly dealt with his ideas on transfer. He felt that the only solution was to contact the British Colonial Office and explain to them that England had to transfer a definite number of Arab families. The British representative would have to explain to the Iraqi government that for England to honour its obligations towards the Jews, "it would be necessary to transfer a proportion of the Arabs from Palestine to other places, under favourable conditions".

Concerning a location for the transferees, the Jews could only "hint". Hecker himself had ideas for such a location - parts of Iraq. Transjordan was another possibility, but he preferred not to settle Arabs exclusively in Transjordan. Also he was very doubtful whether it would be wise to transfer them to Syria and the Jezireh.

With regard to financing the transfer, Hecker said that Britain would have to make the necessary loans or guarantees. The only thing the Jews could do in the field was to pay for the land the Arabs would be vacating in Palestine. He added that the homes to be built for the Arab transferees should be of a good quality and have running water. <sup>(3)</sup>

There is also a memorandum written by Hecker in English entitled "Exchange of Land and Population". This memorandum is undated. However, in a letter from Simon dated 3 March 1938 to various members of the Jewish Agency Executive, he writes that he is enclosing three memorandums by Hecker, one of which is on the subject of "population transfer". <sup>(4)</sup> It is thus possible that Simon is referring to this memorandum of Hecker's.

Hecker considered that the conclusion of the Peel Commission that "no land surplus would be available" for the transferred Arabs was an error and he felt that "the absorptive capacity of wide stretches of land in Cis- and Transjordan" could be "considerably increased". Hecker suggested that the greatest possible area for the transferees should be considered, and this could include Iraq. <sup>(5)</sup>

He made an analysis of the population of Palestine and concluded that it was not Arab but a mixture of peoples who had migrated to Palestine, and this proved "that the Arabs have been and are always ready to emigrate to a country where economic prospects promise a better and easier life, they are an essentially mobile element. No genuine resistance against a transplantation would have to be feared in this respect, unless agitation with political arguments would work against the scheme." <sup>(6)</sup>

With regard to the mechanics of transfer, Hecker stated that his "suggestions diverge from the recommendations of the Royal [Peel] Commission". In his view transfer should be

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes, Transfer Committee, 22 May 1938, p.1, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>2</sup> / Hecker to the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, 23 May 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>3</sup> / Hecker to ?, 26 May 1938 (CZA S25/10061).

<sup>4</sup> / Simon to various members of Jewish Agency Executive, 3 March 1938, (CZA S25/10109).

<sup>5</sup> / Wilhelm Hecker, Memorandum "Exchange of Land and Population", [n.d.], pp.1-2, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., pp.2-3.

"entirely voluntary" and the Arabs should experience a "change for the better" as a result of transfer. With an improvement in living conditions, he felt sure the Arabs "would be only too glad to exchange their poor homes and scanty lives against new well planned estates which would also allow them to give their children a new start in life." <sup>(1)</sup> Finance for transfer would have to come from the British - not by taking money from the British Treasury but by the giving of guarantees. <sup>(2)</sup>

On 12 June, the Sub-Committee on Population Transfer met and were presented with technical information on various matters pertaining to transfer, including the size of land-holdings among the Arabs. <sup>(3)</sup>

In oral testimony given by Eliahu Epstein to the historian Yossi Katz in September 1987, the former stated that the last meeting of this Committee was the meeting held on 12 June 1938. The Committee was never formally dissolved and no memorandum by it was ever presented to the Woodhead Commission. <sup>(4)</sup>

In summarising the reasons for this Committee not being able to "translate theoretical discussion into practicality", Katz wrote that they had "insufficient data in their possession". To obtain such further data would have required "vast amounts of time and capital". In addition, there was no "body, either in Palestine or in the international arena" who "would impose a coerced transfer, which was a necessary condition for implementing any transfer whatsoever, given the Palestinian reality of that period". <sup>(5)</sup>

On 14 June 1938, a meeting of the "Committee for Determination of Agricultural Absorptive Capacity of Different Areas of the Country" took place. At this meeting, Thon said that without the transfer of Arab agricultural workers to the neighbouring countries, there could be no large scale Jewish immigration - "in short, without transfer there can be no absorption." <sup>(6)</sup> Granovsky felt that there were two alternatives; "Either we will be given the opportunity of transferring a decisive number of the Arab agricultural workers to the neighbouring countries, or in the event of this being impossible, that the Jewish State is given unlimited powers for agricultural legislation." He said that, discounting the matter of population transfer, the Committee must arrange a temporary settlement programme, a programme of agrarian reform based on compulsory expropriation of excess land, and a development programme. <sup>(7)</sup>

At the end of July 1938, Bonne sent Joseph a twelve page confidential memorandum on the financial aspects of the transfer of the Arabs. The subjects in this memorandum included the Arab population in the Jewish State, the classes of peasants, the cost of resettlement of the Arabs, various problems regarding land prices, the methods and sources of finance and the purchase of land and other immovables belonging to Arabs within the Jewish State. <sup>(8)</sup>

As we have seen, over the course of nine months, the Jewish Agency spared no pains in assembling information and statistical data, and held numerous meetings, in order to prepare a programme for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine.

### **Jewish Agency Executive**

During the end of May and the first half of June 1938, the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem discussed the question of the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. At the meeting of 29 May, Shertok told the members that the Woodhead Commission was asking for a feasibility study on the transfer of Arabs from the proposed Jewish State to Syria.

The Population Transfer Committee had already prepared a memorandum on Arab resettlement in Syria. However, Ussishkin was against supplying such information to the

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., p.3.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., pp.4-5.

<sup>3</sup> / Minutes, Sub-Committee on Population Transfer, 12 June 1938, (CZA S25/10059).

<sup>4</sup> / Yossi Katz, Partner to Partition, (London, 1998), pp. 102, 108.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.102.

<sup>6</sup> / Minutes, Committee for Determination of Agricultural Absorptive Capacity of Different Areas of the Country, 14 June 1938, pp.3-4, (CZA S25/42).

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid., p.5.

<sup>8</sup> / Alfred Bonne, Memorandum on financial aspects of transfer of Arabs, 27 July 1938, (CZA S25/10059).

Woodhead Commission as Syria was not under British jurisdiction. <sup>(1)</sup> No fewer than three members disagreed with Ussishkin and insisted that this information be supplied to the Commission.

Kaplan said, "It is our duty to prove that there is room for absorption in the neighbouring Arab countries." He added that had the Commission not requested information, it would have been the Jewish Agency's duty to volunteer such material. <sup>(2)</sup>

Ruppin agreed on the need to stress the existence of "the many empty areas in the neighbouring Arab countries", but he, like Ussishkin, was doubtful of the possibility of transfer to any area not under British Mandate. He therefore recommended that the Jewish Agency "stress in particular the possibility of absorption of Arabs in Transjordan." <sup>(3)</sup>

Ben-Gurion also believed that the Jewish Agency should supply the Commission with the information on Syria, although "it is obvious that we will not be able to transfer Arabs to Syria without the agreement of France and the Syrian Government." <sup>(4)</sup> [At the time, Syria was under a French Mandate.]

What we see from all these objections to Ussishkin's suggestion of withholding information from the Woodhead Commission, is that the members of the Jewish Agency Executive were keen to keep all doors open at a time when the British Government was having serious doubts about the whole question of population transfer.

At the meeting of 9 June, Ben-Gurion read out a letter from the Zionist leader, Dr. Fischel Rotenstreich, who was absent due to illness. In Rotenstreich's opinion, the Jewish Agency, if consulted on a solution to the Arab problem must "stand by the suggestion of the Peel Commission who sees transfer as the only solution to this question." <sup>(5)</sup>

The main discussion by the Jewish Agency Executive on the transfer of Arabs took place on the afternoon of 12 June 1938. Members of the Political Committee of the Jewish Agency participated in this meeting. During the course of the meeting, many aspects of the transfer proposal were discussed.

A number of speakers debated the compulsory or voluntary nature of the transfer and its ethical aspects. Ben-Gurion saw in the Peel Commission's proposals "two positive matters - the idea of a State and the compulsory transfer." He felt that carrying out this compulsory transfer would be the greatest achievement in the history of Jewish settlement in Palestine and would give the Jewish State an enormous area. "I favour compulsory transfer", said Ben-Gurion, "I see nothing unethical in it." <sup>(6)</sup>

Earlier we spoke about an exchange between Katznelson and Ya'ari at a Zionist General Council meeting in 1942. It is interesting to note how this exchange was written up in an "edited" version of Katznelson's writings published in 1947, three years after his death! "What is renounce?" asked Katznelson, "Renounce is when a man demands something and then goes back on it... Did Ben-Gurion ever speak of compulsory transfer and did he 'renounce' it? No, we never raised the standard of compulsory transfer and therefore we did not need to 'renounce' it." <sup>(7)</sup> The Editor was obviously unaware of (or closed his eyes to!) what Ben-Gurion and other Zionist leaders had said in the past.

Another speaker at this Jewish Agency Executive meeting was Shmuel Zuchovitsky, a member of the Inner Zionist Council and a leading figure in the agricultural sector. He was convinced that transfer was impossible without compulsion and saw nothing unethical in it, adding, "We want to help Jews to come to the Jewish country and want to help Arabs to move over to an Arab country." <sup>(8)</sup>

Berl Katznelson said that obviously even those Zionist groups who accepted partition without transfer would not oppose agreements with individual Arabs to leave Palestine. "But

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., vol.27/2, no.50, 29 May 1938, p.9, (CZA).

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.10.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., p.11.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., vol.28, no.52, 9 June 1938, p.2, (CZA).

<sup>6</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., vol.28, no.53, 12 June 1938, afternoon session, pp.8-9 aleph, (CZA).

<sup>7</sup> / Katznelson, Writings, vol.5, op. cit., p.112.

<sup>8</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., 12 June 1938, afternoon session, op. cit., pp.1-2 aleph.

what is meant by compulsory transfer?" he asked, "Is it transfer against the wishes of the Arab State? Against such wishes no force in the world could implement such a transfer." He explained that compulsory transfer meant that as soon as an agreement on transfer had been made, individual Arabs who objected to transfer could be compelled to transfer against their will. "If you have to make a transfer agreement with each Arab village and every individual Arab, you will never finish with the problem. We are continually carrying out transfers of individual Arabs," he said, "But the question will be the transfer of a larger number of Arabs with the agreement of the Arab State." <sup>(1)</sup>

Ussishkin spoke on the ethical aspects of transfer. He said that if after all the promises of the Balfour Declaration, it was possible "to steal from the Jewish people" nine-tenths of their historic territories and give them just a small strip of land and claim this to be ethical, then it was "most ethical" to transfer Arabs out of Palestine and resettle them in better conditions. <sup>(2)</sup> Yehoshua Suparsky, a member of the Inner Zionist Council, pointed out that part of the Zionist community wanted the Jewish Agency to insist in the implementation of the Peel Commission's compulsory transfer recommendation and not accept the latest pronouncement by the British Government. He felt, however that it was difficult to insist on compulsory transfer in the light of the situation appertaining at the time, although he did accept that "we need to stand by the principle of compulsory transfer" without however insisting on its immediate implementation. Suparsky added that Jewish Agency memoranda should state that the original views of the Peel Commission were correct and that the British Government in its later pronouncement was in error. <sup>(3)</sup>

Yitzchak Ben-Zvi suggested giving the Arabs the option of taking out citizenship within two to three years or leaving the country. He added that there were international precedents for this. <sup>(4)</sup> Ben-Zvi's suggestion is in fact a form of compulsory transfer.

An almost identical idea had been made just four days earlier at a meeting of the Political Committee of Mapai, when the "National Guidelines of the Jewish State" as formulated by Ben-Gurion, were presented. Under the section headed "The Jewish State and the Minorities" is found paragraph 19 of these guidelines which states: "With the establishment of the state, the option will be given to all Palestinian citizens who reside in the area of the state to decide within three years whether or not they accept citizenship of the Jewish state. In the event of the second option [i.e. them not accepting it], they will be required after this period to leave the country." <sup>(5)</sup>

In contrast to the above speakers at this Jewish Agency Executive meeting, there were a few members who wanted a non-compulsory transfer. The Labour leader, Eliezer Kaplan, very much wanted the transfer to be thoroughly considered and well-organised, "but I associate with those members who think that it is possible under certain conditions to organise a non-compulsory transfer." <sup>(6)</sup> Arthur Ruppin, after discussing the number of Arabs that it was "most desirable" to transfer to the Arab State said that "the transfer needs to be voluntary." <sup>(7)</sup>

Although many members of the Executive were in favour of a compulsory transfer, they realised that it would have to be implemented by the British and not by the Jews. Ben-Gurion said that not only could the Zionist establishment not carry out a compulsory transfer, they should not even suggest it. If such a suggestion from the Zionists could have achieved compulsory transfer, "I would suggest it", said Ben-Gurion. However, since this was not the case, such a suggestion from the Zionists would be very dangerous for the Jews both within Palestine and in the Diaspora. <sup>(8)</sup>

Ussishkin, similarly said that the Jews could not themselves carry out this transfer, as,

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.31-32.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.25.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., p.23.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., pp.33-34.

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes, Political Committee of Mapai, 8 June 1938, pp.4-5, (Mapai, file 23/38).

<sup>6</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., 12 June 1938, afternoon session, op. cit., p.4 aleph.

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid., p.27.

<sup>8</sup> / Ibid., p.9 aleph.

if they were to attempt it, "all the world would rise up and rebel against us." The first to oppose it would be the Jewish community who would fear repercussions on Jews in other countries. Ussishkin considered, "Only the British Government is able to do it, if they want." He explained that two things were required, "the might of England and Jewish money", and if the former were available, the latter would be found. <sup>(1)</sup>

Ben-Zvi felt that whereas immigration to the Jewish State needs to be within the prerogative of the provisional Jewish Government, the transfer of the Arabs from the Jewish State could not be so. It would require the British Government's taking responsibility and giving guarantees and would need the agreement of the Arab State. <sup>(2)</sup>

[Incidentally, just over a year later, Ben-Zvi was to inform the Jewish Agency Executive that he felt that the British had made an error when they forbade discussion on the Peel Report's recommendation regarding population transfer. <sup>(3)</sup> Presumably, he was referring to the British Government's Despatch of December 1937.]

Zuchovitsky was concerned with the public relations aspect of the transfer and suggested that the Zionist Establishment refer to it not as "the transfer which we are carrying out" but as "the transfer which the Mandatory Government must implement." He added, that any memorandum submitted must clearly stress this transfer as one of the conditions essential for the Jewish State to be realised, hence incumbent upon the British Government to implement. <sup>(4)</sup>

Katznelson blamed the British change of attitude towards the transfer proposal on various Zionist groups who argued against it within their institutions. As we see later in this work, the British Government in an Official Despatch stated, "On behalf of the Jews it was also made clear to us that Jewish opinion would be opposed to the exercise of any degree of compulsion." Katznelson added that transfer was a matter of principle. <sup>(5)</sup>

Although the British Government had changed its views on the transfer of the Arabs, both Eliahu Berlin <sup>(6)</sup> and Ben-Gurion held that this question could not just be dismissed. Ben-Gurion suggested that they compromise by altering the wording "compulsory transfer" to some other phrase - connected either with citizenship or agricultural zoning - having the same force. <sup>(7)</sup>

Ussishkin, who personally opposed the partition of Palestine, said that it would be impossible to establish a Jewish State with an Arab population of forty-five per cent. The British Government should be told that the Zionists were not themselves able to implement the transfer, and that therefore the Government had two options. They would either have to admit that it was impossible to remove the Arabs, in which case partition would be impossible and hence the Mandate would have to be continued or they would have "to implement the transfer by force over a period of years." <sup>(8)</sup> Ussishkin asked his colleagues what they would say if they were offered a State without Galilee, or without part of Jerusalem, or without complete sovereignty. Obviously, he said, that they would not accept it. Similarly they should say that they "would not accept the proposed state without freeing it of part of its rural Arabs and expropriation of their land." <sup>(9)</sup>

Various members of the Executive estimated the number of Arabs that it would be possible to transfer and the probable time span.

Arthur Ruppin said, "It is very much to be desired that we should be able to transfer 100,000 Arabs to the Arab State." <sup>(10)</sup> This could not be accomplished immediately. It would take between ten and fifteen years. Ruppin added that he did not believe in the transfer of

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., p.26.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.35.

<sup>3</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., vol.31/1, no.10, 22 October 1939, p.18, (CZA).

<sup>4</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., 12 June 1938, afternoon session, op. cit., p.20.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.32.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., p.36.

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid., p.9 aleph.

<sup>8</sup> / Ibid., p.26.

<sup>9</sup> / Ibid., p.27.

<sup>10</sup> / Ibid.



individual Arabs but "I believe in the transfer of complete villages." (1) Zuchovitsky also felt that even "if it is impossible to transfer all the Arab inhabitants, it should be possible to transfer a portion of them - 100,000 people." (2) However, Shertok considered that Ussishkin's programme of transferring forty thousand Arab agricultural families (actually Ussishkin quoted a figure of sixty thousand (3)) to Transjordan within a short period was Utopian. (4)

David Senator, although a member of the Brit Shalom, a group whose aim was a bi-national state said, "We should strive for maximum transfer." He added, "If we can ease the general problem by means of transfer, it would be very desirable and it is necessary as far as possible, to persuade and prove to the Commission that this is important." (5)

Ben-Zvi considered that in order to obtain a Jewish majority, (he obviously meant a decisive Jewish majority), it would be desirable to transfer a large number of Arabs within two to three years. He realised, however, that in practice this would not be possible and a much longer time would be required. (6) Shertok also felt that the time required to transfer sixty thousand Arab families would be protracted and could take fifteen to twenty years. (7)

Priority among transferees and destination of transfer was mentioned by a few speakers. Katznelson considered that for reasons of security, priority should be given to Arabs living on the border. (8) Ussishkin wanted the destination of transfer to be Transjordan and not the areas of the proposed Arab State west of the Jordan. "There is sufficient land in Transjordan", he said. (9) Ben-Gurion felt that it was best to transfer the Arabs to the el-Jezireh area in Northern Syria. (10)

Several speakers made suggestions on financing the transfer. Senator said that the Jewish Agency should suggest the setting up of a development department in the Arab State on the lines of that suggested for Palestine. The Jewish Agency would pay the Arabs the price of the land for resettling the Arabs and also compensation, as had been customary. Senator also recommended giving the Arab State not additional compensation, but a loan to help in the resettlement of the transferred Arabs. (11)

Ruppin suggested making an agreement with the British Government and the Arab State on the establishment of a development company which would operate in both Palestine and Transjordan. In Transjordan, all public lands would be at its disposal and the British would make a large loan to this company for the resettlement of Arabs in the Arab State.

Arab landowners in Palestine would be paid a little more than the market value for their land in the hope that this might "influence them to sell their land." With the money received, the Arab landowners would be able to settle in the Arab State and have a higher standard of living since the prices offered for land in the proposed Jewish State were four to five times higher than prices obtaining in Transjordan. In order to encourage the Arab tenant farmers to leave Palestine, Ruppin suggested that the Jewish Agency should "participate a bit in their transfer expenses," and should also arrange a loan from the development company to aid in their resettlement. (12)

All who spoke at this Jewish Agency Executive meeting were in favour of transferring the Arabs from Palestine and many were in favour of compulsory transfer. Even those who opposed the partition of Palestine, such as Menachem Ussishkin, were in favour of the transfer and both Arthur Ruppin and David Senator, who were members of "Brit Shalom" -

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1 / Ibid., p.28.

2 / Ibid., p.2 aleph.

3 / Ibid., p.25.

4 / Ibid., p.29.

5 / Ibid., p.21.

6 / Ibid., p.35.

7 / Ibid., p.29.

8 / Ibid., p.32.

9 / Ibid., p.26.

10 / Ibid., p.10 aleph.

11 / Ibid., p.21.

12 / Ibid., pp.27-28.

the organisation in favour of a bi-national (Jewish-Arab) State - supported the transfer of Arabs from Palestine!

### **Material Submitted to Woodhead Commission**

At the end of May 1938, Selig Eugen Soskin produced a draft memorandum for the Woodhead Commission on practical proposals for the execution of the "Exchange of Land and Population" recommendations of the Peel Commission.

[Soskin, an agronomist, and at one time Director of the Settlement Department in the Central Office of the Jewish National Fund, was one of the founders of the town of Nahariyah. He subsequently became spokesman on matters of agricultural settlement to the Revisionist movement. After the split in the movement, he joined the Jewish State Party.]

He sent his draft memorandum to Moshe Shertok requesting that he study it, and then correct or alter it as he thought necessary. <sup>(1)</sup> Shertok duly did this, inserting in his own handwriting various changes and amendments. [As this would imply Shertok's concurrence with the amended version, all quotes, direct and indirect, will be on the basis of the version as amended by Shertok.]

Soskin began his memorandum by pointing out that "an important part of the British public opinion did express itself in favour of such an Exchange." <sup>(2)</sup> This statement was presumably inserted in order to counteract the British Government's newly hostile attitude towards compulsory transfer.

Soskin then explained the importance of the exchange of land in enabling the Jewish State to build up a land reserve. This would make possible the settling of masses of Jews on national land - the paramount task of the new State.

The Peel Commission had recommended that from certain areas there be compulsory transfer, while voluntary transfer be retained in other areas. Soskin disagreed and wrote, "The 'exchange' should be compulsory not only in the Plains, as the Royal-Commission urges, but in the hill-country as well, where the majority of the Arab rural population dwell." <sup>(3)</sup> [Soskin was not the first to make this suggestion - Ben-Gurion had indicated it in his diary nearly a year earlier.]

In the absence of transfer, Soskin anticipated difficulties arising from Jewish agricultural labour competing with Arab agricultural labour, to the detriment of the former. After considering several possible solutions to this problem, Soskin concluded that in order to avoid the situation "where the natives do the heavy manual work and the immigrants use their brains & capital, we must insist upon the compulsory transfer of the whole rural arab population from the Jewish state into the arab state." <sup>(4)</sup>

From the time that the Peel Commission had put forward the transfer proposal, opinions had been expressed on the rate at which transfer could be implemented. Soskin considered that it had to "be done with the greatest speed possible. This is a revolutionary act which has to be finished in the shortest time." Presumably, he meant that it would be "a revolutionary act" in Palestine where no population transfer had been implemented in modern times. In other parts of the world, however, many successful population transfers had been carried out in previous decades. Soskin added that a transfer over a "long period" would be counteracted by the national increase of the Arab population.

Soskin claimed that the Arabs would benefit from such transfer and "would be freed from exploitation by the effendis." To carry out this transfer, he proposed the setting up of a Commission. Among their tasks would be selecting areas in Transjordan for colonisation of the Arabs. <sup>(5)</sup> Paragraphs dealing with finance were also included in this memorandum. <sup>(6)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Soskin to Shertok, 27 May 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>2</sup> / Selig Soskin, "Exchange of Land and Population", Memorandum to Members of Technical Commission, 23 May 1938, p.1, (CZA S25/10060).

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., pp.1-3.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.4.

<sup>6</sup> / Ibid., pp.5-7.

Some days after editing this memorandum, Shertok obviously had second thoughts about the wisdom of submitting it to the Woodhead Commission. This we know from a note written to Dr. Joseph - the initials of the author are illegible - on 13 June 1938. In this note the author wrote, "Mr. Shertok has induced Dr. Soskin not to send in his memorandum on Transfer of Population." (1)

Another memorandum for the Woodhead Commission which mentioned the Peel Commission's transfer proposal was written by Ussishkin. He submitted it towards the end of July 1938, and it was immediately published as a supplement to the Jerusalem newspaper, the "Palestine Review". In this memorandum, Ussishkin discussed the transfer from both political and ideological grounds. He pointed out that the Peel Commission had "made a sound political proposal:- to expropriate the land and to transfer the Arabs to Transjordan and to other Arab states... from a practical standpoint the proposal is sound and proper." (2) From the moral point of view, however, Ussishkin thought that perhaps it would be difficult. He considered that "no Jew and no Zionist" would say "that the million Arabs now in the country must leave it." (3)

At the hearings before the Woodhead Commission, Benjamin Akzin, a constitutional lawyer and political scientist, and then head of the Political Division of the New Zionist Organisation, submitted evidence on behalf of that Organisation. This was the organisation set up by the Revisionists after they seceded from the World Zionist Organisation in 1935. In his statement, Akzin reminded the Woodhead Commission that the Peel Commission had proposed a possibly compulsory transfer of Arabs, partly in order to increase the absorptive capacity in Palestine for Jews, and partly for other reasons. However, since that time the Colonial Secretary had "pointed out that a compulsory transfer of Arabs is not to be spoken of." Akzin wished "on behalf of the New Zionist Organisation to associate myself with this attitude. We believe that the compulsory transfer of the native Arab population from Palestine or from any part of Palestine would be greatly inequitable to the Arab population." The New Zionist Organisation rejected the idea "that the expulsion of part of the native population" should form part of Jewry's programme and hoped "that the question of compulsory transfer of Arabs is already no longer on the agenda."

With regard to voluntary transfer, Akzin considered it "extremely unlikely" that the Arabs would be willing to leave voluntarily, since their wages, land holdings and standard of living in the neighbourhood of Jewish settlements were rapidly improving. (4) In answer to a question as to whether an Arab would leave if he were to be given a good price for his land, Akzin answered, "Some of them will leave but others will continue to stay" since they could "get richer simply by waiting." (5)

From the above, we can see that Akzin was reiterating what Jabotinsky, the leader of the Revisionists, had said a year earlier, after the publication of the Peel Report. It must be remembered that the Revisionists were violently against any partition of Palestine and envisaged a Jewish State in the entire area of Mandatory Palestine (which included Transjordan), in which the Jews would form the majority. Due to their disagreements with the official Zionist Organisation on this and other matters, they had, a few years earlier, seceded from the Organisation. As a result, they did not have to take an actual decision on the proposal regarding the transfer of Arabs, following the publication of the Peel Report.

In this connection, Yehoyada Haim, in his thesis entitled "Zionist Attitudes towards the Palestinian Arabs 1936-39" asks what the position of the Revisionists would have been on transfer "in the event the partitioned Jewish State was imposed upon them by the British and they had to determine future policy in such a State." Haim considers that "had they been forced to make such a choice... the Revisionists might not have differed greatly from those

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1 / ? to Joseph, 13 June 1938, (CZA S25/10060).

2 / Menachem Ussishkin, Memorandum to the Palestine Partition Commission, 22 July 1938, p.24, (CZA S25/5117).

3 / Ibid., p.15.

4 / Benjamin Akzin, Evidence submitted to the Palestine Partition Commission, 20 June 1938, pp.8-9, (Jabotinsky Archives, 14-4 gimmel).

5 / Ibid., p.20.

Official Zionists", (1) who advocated transfer by compulsion, "inducements" or by "indirect pressure". (2)

### **Retraction of Peel Commission Recommendations**

In June 1937, the Arabs resumed and even intensified their acts of terror and assassination in Palestine, against both Jews and British officials.

On 23 December 1937, the British Government issued a "White Paper", entitled "Policy in Palestine", in the form of a Despatch from the Colonial Secretary to the High Commissioner for Palestine. Paragraph 3 of this despatch stated, "In view of the public attention that has been devoted to criticism of certain features of the tentative plan of partition which is outlined in Part iii of the Report of the Royal Commission, I wish to make it clear that His Majesty's Government are in no sense committed to approval of that plan, and in particular that they have not accepted the Commission's proposal for the compulsory transfer in the last resort of Arabs from the Jewish to the Arab area." (3)

Early drafts of this Government Despatch did not contain this phrase! In November 1937, the Colonial Secretary Ormsby-Gore submitted to the Cabinet a memorandum entitled "Policy in Palestine" (4) which included a "Draft of Proposed Despatch to Acting High Commissioner for Palestine". (5) Nowhere in this draft was there even a hint that the British Government had not accepted the idea of compulsory transfer of Arabs! The "terms of reference" for a further Commission which he intended to set up included the making of recommendations regarding "exchange of land and population" (6) - again no mention of any rejection of compulsory transfer!

Following the Colonial Secretary's memorandum, the British Foreign Secretary, submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet. With regards to transfer, this memorandum stated: "It is proposed that the quarter of a million Arabs at present in this area should be removed. As they are likely to be extremely unwilling to go, as there is very little alternative land of equal value on which they could be settled, and as nothing like a comparable number of Jews exists in the proposed Arab State against whom they could be exchanged, this operation, which would have to be carried out by force, is likely to be one of great difficult." (7) As we can see, the Foreign Secretary's objections to forcible transfer stem from practical rather than ideological considerations.

In answer, the Colonial Secretary brought out a further memorandum in which he argued that the Foreign Office memorandum had ignored "certain fundamental realities of the Palestine problem and of our position in relation to that problem." (8) It included a "Revised Draft of Proposed Despatch" - but still no mention of the Government not having accepted compulsory transfer of Arabs! However, presumably as a result of pressure from various quarters, the wording of the recommendations to be made by this further Commission was amended to read "the possibility of voluntary exchanges of land and population." (9)

On 17 December, the Colonial Secretary produced a "Second Revised Draft of Proposed Despatch" in which he "endeavoured to meet the views expressed by my colleagues." (10) It was only in this "second revised draft" that the statement claiming that the British Government had rejected the compulsory transfer of Arabs, first appeared! (11)

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<sup>1</sup> / Yehoyada Haim, *Zionist Attitudes towards the Palestinian Arabs 1936 - 39*, Thesis, (Georgetown University, Washington D.C., 1975), p.449.

<sup>2</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.448.

<sup>3</sup> / *Palestine Partition Commission Report*, Cmd 5854, London, October 1938, (henceforth Woodhead Report), *Policy in Palestine*, Cmd 5634, December 1937, - published as Appendix 1 to Woodhead Report, p.282.

<sup>4</sup> / Memorandum to Cabinet by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, November 1937, (PRO CAB C.P. 269(37)).

<sup>5</sup> / *Ibid.*, Appendix 1, pp.4-5.

<sup>6</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>7</sup> / Memorandum to Cabinet by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, November 1937, p.2, (PRO CAB C.P. 281(37)).

<sup>8</sup> / Memorandum to Cabinet by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, December 1937, p.1, (PRO CAB C.P. 289(37)).

<sup>9</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>10</sup> / Memorandum to Cabinet by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, December 1937, p.1, (PRO CAB C.P. 310(37)).

<sup>11</sup> / *Ibid.*

As can be seen, this statement was a reversal of the "Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government" which had been issued together with the publication of the Peel Report in July 1937. In fact this "Statement of Policy" had in no way suggested "that they (the British Government) have not accepted the Commission's proposal for the compulsory transfer in the last resort of Arabs from the Jewish to the Arab area." Here the British Government tried to rewrite history!

The Colonial Secretary's Despatch announced that the British Government was sending a Technical Commission to Palestine whose function was to look into boundaries, economic and financial problems, religious rights, and "the possibility of voluntary exchanges of land and population, and the prospects of providing by works of land development room for further settlement to meet the needs of persons desiring to move from one area to another." (1)

The "Partition Commission", as it was officially called, headed by Sir John Woodhead, arrived in Palestine in April 1938, stayed there for three months and subsequently published their Report in November 1938. Chapter 8 of this Report was entitled "The Possibility of Exchanges and Transfer of Population." In this chapter, the Commission examined "the possibility of voluntary exchanges of land and population and the prospects of making provision by works of land development, for a larger population than exists to-day and thereby facilitating the transfer of persons who desire to move from one area to another." (2) A footnote appended to the word "voluntary" stated that in the Despatch of 23 December, "it was announced that His Majesty's Government have not accepted the Royal Commission's proposal for the compulsory transfer in the last resort of Arabs from the Jewish to the Arab area. On behalf of the Jews it was also made clear to us that Jewish opinion would be opposed to the exercise of any degree of compulsion." (3)

The source for this "Jewish opinion" was not stated! Ben-Gurion and Weizmann supported the transfer proposal as set out by the Peel Commission, and there were favourable opinions expressed by Jews at the World Unity Council, the Zionist Congress at Zurich and in the British Houses of Parliament. It is true that there were other Jewish leaders who were opposed to compulsory transfer. It would therefore have been much more accurate and fair for the Woodhead Commission to have written that Jewish opinion was divided on this question.

After quoting figures for Jews resident in the proposed Arab State, (4) the Woodhead Commission concluded that "from the figures given in the previous paragraph" there was "little possibility of the voluntary exchange of rural population between the two states." (5) The Peel Commission had been fully aware of these figures (6) but had not been deterred by them from making recommendations regarding population exchange. The Peel Commission had hoped that a substantial area of land could be made available as a result of irrigation for the resettlement of the Arabs. However, the Woodhead Commission came to their conclusion purely from the population figures and only began considering the irrigation potential at a later stage of their Report.

After having discounted the possibility of an exchange of land and population, the Woodhead Commission considered the possibility of "a transfer on a voluntary basis of the Arab population." (7) They rejected this for the following reasons. Firstly, irrigation survey had shown that there would be insufficient land "available for the resettlement of more than a fraction of the number of Arabs included in the proposed Jewish State." (8) Secondly, "Even if it were possible to make land available for resettlement... it is unlikely that the Arabs themselves would be willing to leave their home lands and start afresh in a new area." The Report went on to speak of the Arabs' attachment "for their ancestral lands" and compared

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1 / Woodhead Report, Appendix 1, p.283.

2 / Ibid., para.104, p.52.

3 / Ibid., fn.

4 / Ibid., para.105, p.52.

5 / Ibid., para.106, p.53.

6 / Peel Report, p.389.

7 / Woodhead Report, para.178, p.82.

8 / Ibid.

the climate in the Jordan Valley unfavourably with that of the plains and hills. <sup>(1)</sup> Thirdly, "It is in any event improbable that the Arab cultivator would be prepared to migrate in order to create space for the Jews... The Arabs look upon the Jews as foreigners invading their country." <sup>(2)</sup>

"After studying the question with particular care", wrote the Woodhead Commission, "we have been forced to conclude, for the reasons given above, that the problem created by the large number of Arabs in the proposed Jewish State cannot be solved by means of either an exchange or a transfer of population." <sup>(3)</sup>

We can thus see, that in the course of sixteen months, the Peel Commission's recommendation for a transfer of population, compulsory if necessary, was reversed by the Woodhead Commission's rejection of even a purely voluntary transfer.

Incidentally, at the time when the Woodhead Report was being published, Shertok in a lecture to emissaries of the Keren Hayesod informed his audience that by mutual agreement an Arab tribe had just transferred to Transjordan. The Zionists had bought land in the Bet Shean valley on which lived part of an Arab tribe - the remainder living in Transjordan. The Zionists also purchased land in Transjordan for this tribe who is "transferring its people to Transjordan and vacating the land here." Shertok said, "We are not only buying land but we are also decreasing the number of Arabs in western Palestine." He pointed out that these Arabs were not being expelled - on the contrary, they were improving their conditions. <sup>(4)</sup>

Another example of such a transfer was reported by Abraham Granovsky to a meeting of the Directorate of the J.N.F. held in July 1938, The meeting was informed that the J.N.F. had come to an arrangement with the head of an Arab tribe for the transfer of this tribe from the land the J.N.F. had purchased from them in Palestine to a larger area of land in Transjordan which the J.N.F. had purchased for them. <sup>(5)</sup>

The Woodhead Report was published on 9 November 1938. It was accompanied by a "Statement of Policy" from the British Government that said, "The political, administrative, and financial difficulties involved in the proposal to create independent Arab and Jewish states inside Palestine are so great that this solution of the problem is impracticable." <sup>(6)</sup>

Two days later, Sir Laurie Hammond, a member of the Peel Commission, wrote a letter to Weizmann. He blamed this "impracticability" on the fact that the British Government had "denounced the compulsory transfer of population." He adhered firmly to the belief that "Jew and Arab under present conditions cannot live together, their standards of civilisation being "centuries apart". He said that Iraq's greatest need was an increase in population. "For the price we have paid for public insecurity", continued Hammond, "50,000 Arab families could have been started in Iraq, and the sub-district of Beisan, and the Galilean Hills cleared ready for intensive cultivation by those who have the means and energy for it." <sup>(7)</sup> Here, Hammond exceeds the Peel Report's recommendations which whilst referring to compulsory transfer for the Beisan, suggests in the Galilee a transfer which "could be effected on a voluntary basis." Hammond's letter mentions "clearing" the Galilean Hill, as well.

Following the publication of the Woodhead Report, both Houses of the British Parliament again debated the Palestine question and in the course of these debates, a few speakers briefly mentioned the transfer of the Arab population.

The debate in the House of Commons took place on 24 November 1938. In his speech, a Conservative member, Sir Walter Smiles, spoke about the displacement of Arabs in Libya which was caused by the settlement of Italian colonists on their land. He pointed out that these Arabs received compensation and suggested "that it might be just possible for something

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., para.179, pp.83-84.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., para.180, p.84.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., para. 181, p.84.

<sup>4</sup> / The Diaries of Moshe Sharett, vol.iii, (Tel-Aviv, 1972), pp.318-19.

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes of the Directorate of the J.N.F., 6 July 1938, pp.15-16 (1495-96), (CZA).

<sup>6</sup> / Palestine, Statement by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, London, November 1938, Cmd 5893, p.3.

<sup>7</sup> / Hammond to Weizmann, 11 November 1938, (WA).

on these lines to be done in Palestine." He then referred to the Greco-Turkish population exchange which he understood had turned out very well. "No matter what sacrifice or discomfort people who were transferred were put to at one time", said Smiles, "it might be better to get it over at once as the Greeks who left Asia Minor and went to Greece learned, rather than to be always at enmity with their neighbours." <sup>(1)</sup>

Captain Victor Cazalet, another Conservative member, queried whether Palestine could absorb a large Jewish immigration. He felt that at present it could not but added that he believed "that if we could get a great settlement of Arabs in Transjordan, we could place an enormous number of Jews in the next two or three years greatly to the benefit of the Jews and the Arabs." <sup>(2)</sup> As we have seen, this idea of transfer of Arabs to Transjordan had been suggested repeatedly in the previous years. It required only the necessary capital and will.

In the debate in the House of Lords on 8 December 1938, Lord Snell, leader of the Labour Party in the House of Lords, came out in favour of transfer of Arabs from Palestine. [In 1929, Lord Snell, then Harry Snell, a Labour Member of the House of Commons, had sat on the Shaw Commission which was sent out to Palestine after the pogroms of August 1929. In the subsequent Report, Snell dissented from the majority and contributed a long note of reservations, in which he dissociated himself from the general attitude of his colleagues towards the Palestine problem as well as from some of their criticisms and conclusions.]

In his speech to the Lords, Lord Snell said, "What we are doing in Palestine, or what should be done, is not the only illustration of its kind. We find that in Libya, for instance, the Arabs are displaced to meet the needs of modern cultivation. The 'Protector of Islam' had adopted a programme of compulsory transference of Arabs from one territory to another in the interest of closer settlement." He added that there had been no protest against this and it was apparently approved of by everybody. "If it is a right policy in Libya", said Snell, "I cannot see why it is a wrong policy if adopted in Palestine." <sup>(3)</sup>

Viscount Samuel, who a year and a half earlier in his speech to the Lords had come out strongly against the partition plan and the transfer of the Arab population, now made a glancing reference to the population transfer. Samuel, speaking of his visit to Palestine in the previous spring, said of the Peel Commission's proposals, "With regard to frontiers, to enclaves, to transfer of populations, customs barriers, defence, finance, public security, this plan was revealed as nothing less than a monstrosity. It could not stand up to close examination." <sup>(4)</sup>

The final speaker to mention population transfer was Viscount Swinton. As a past Colonial Secretary, he had for four years been responsible for the administration of Palestine. Swinton did not agree with a previous speaker (Lord Lothian), that Jew and Arab would not work together and that it was therefore necessary to make two enclaves "with the Jew separate in one and the Arab separate in the other." He felt that this was an almost impossible undertaking adding that "when the Royal Commission attempted it, they only found a solution on the basis of saying 250,000 Arabs will either pass into the Jewish State or be transferred out of it - and where on earth they were to be transferred, it passes the wit of man to understand." <sup>(5)</sup>

The British Government then attempted to convene a Jewish-Arab Conference in London early in 1939. However at this Conference, no agreement was reached - the Arab delegates refused even to meet with the Jewish delegates. Two months later, the British Government published a White Paper - the harshest of all their White Papers on Palestine - which severely limited future Jewish immigration into Palestine and effectively put an end at the time, to any hope of establishing a Jewish Home in Palestine.

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<sup>1</sup> / Parliamentary Debates, Commons, vol.341, 24 November 1938, col.2057.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., col.2078.

<sup>3</sup> / Parliamentary Debates, Lords, vol.111, 8 December 1938, col.414.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., col.421.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., col.452.

## SECTION 4

### THE RESOLUTION OF THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY

#### **The Resolution**

Towards the end of April 1944, one year before the end of the Second World War, the National Executive of the British Labour Party published its 1943-4 Report, which contained a long section entitled "The International Post-War Settlement" <sup>(1)</sup> dealing with many subjects, including Palestine.

The paragraph on Palestine contained three main themes. The first was unlimited Jewish immigration into Palestine. "But there is surely neither no hope nor meaning in a Jewish National Home," the Report argued, "unless we are prepared to let Jews, if they wish, enter this tiny land in such numbers as to become a majority." According to the Report, the case for unlimited immigration in the aftermath of the Nazi atrocities against the Jews of Europe was irresistible.

Five years earlier, the British Government has issued the MacDonald White Paper, which limited Jewish immigration to Palestine for the next five years to seventy-five thousand people. In addition, almost every country in the world closed their gates to the Jews thus trapping them in Nazi-occupied Europe.

The second theme was the encouragement to be offered to the Arabs to leave Palestine. "Here too, in Palestine surely is a case, on human grounds and to promote a stable settlement, for transfer of population. Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out, as the Jews move in. Let them be compensated handsomely for their land and let their settlement elsewhere be carefully organised and generously financed."

The third and final theme dealt with the extension of the boundaries of Palestine. "The Arabs have many wide territories of their own; they must not claim to exclude the Jews from this small area of Palestine, less than the size of Wales. Indeed we should re-examine also the possibility of extending the present Palestinian boundaries, by agreement with Egypt, Syria or Transjordan." <sup>(2)</sup>

#### **How the Palestine Paragraph was Formulated**

The author of this report, Hugh Dalton, was born in 1887 and educated at Eton, King's College Cambridge and the London School of Economics. After unsuccessfully contesting a number of Parliamentary seats between 1922-4, he was elected as a Labour member in 1924. In 1931, he was defeated but was re-elected in 1935. In 1940, he was made a member of the Privy Council - a body consisting of several hundred distinguished men drawn from all walks of life whose function is to give private advice to the Sovereign. Dalton was also a member of the Parliamentary Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party intermittently from 1925 and a member of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party from 1926.

Already in May 1943, Dalton was involved in the "Post-War Aims of the British Labour

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<sup>1</sup> / The International Post-War Settlement, (London, 1944) ; Report of the Forty-third Annual Conference of the Labour Party, London, (London, 1944), pp.4-9.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.7 ; Ibid., p.9.



Party" <sup>(1)</sup> and he sent such a memorandum (presumably written by him) to Philip Noel-Baker. This memorandum did not mention Palestine but he does cautiously come out in favour of population transfer. <sup>(2)</sup>

About September 1943, Dalton's colleagues in his Party's National Executive Committee commissioned him to write a report on "Labour and the International Post-War Settlement", which was to be submitted at the Labour Party Annual Conference to be held in 1944. On 22 September, he wrote in his diary, "I pledge myself to make the first draft of my Heads of proposals for a post-war settlement in time for the next meeting of this [International] Sub-Committee." <sup>(3)</sup> Three weeks later, his diary entry reads. "Returning to the office [from a party], I dictate until 1.20 a.m. on L.P.'s [Labour Party's] Post-War Settlement." <sup>(4)</sup> A few days later he reported, "... my own sketch for International Post-War Settlement, which I improve a good deal." <sup>(5)</sup> Also in his memoirs, <sup>(6)</sup> he reported that at that period, he was working on a draft of this report.

This nine page typed document, which is undated, is preceded by a one page explanatory page. In his own handwriting he added at the top of this page "First draft. Dictated after midnight on a busy day!" Dalton explained, "I have here set out some ideas of the principles and outline of Post-War Settlement.... I, therefore, suggest that the attached paper should first be considered by the International Sub-Committee of the National Executive, and that we should then have a discussion at Mr. Dallas' Allied Socialist Committee, to which I might make a statement on broad general lines, in order to ascertain our friends' reactions." <sup>(7)</sup>

Palestine is not mentioned in this draft. However, at the end of this paper he adds in his own handwriting, "Add on Colonies [illegible - India(?)] & Palestine." <sup>(8)</sup> He did, however include in this draft the question of population transfer, "... all Germans left outside the post-war German frontiers should 'go home to the Reich.' It will indeed be in their own interest to do so.... There should be no special minority treaties this time. (If two families don't get on, there is a better chance of peace, if they live in separate houses than if they have to share the same house, the same kitchen and the same lavatory.)" <sup>(9)</sup>

A few days later, Dalton wrote to William Forster informing him that he was working on "the first rough outline" of this draft document. He added that his timetable was to have it "endorsed by the Annual Conference [of the Labour Party] next Whitson [mid-1944]; and to publish it, with full Executive backing, say two or three months beforehand, - to allow for exposition and discussion at Regional Party Conferences and elsewhere." <sup>(10)</sup>

On 6 and 7 November, Dalton wrote, "Spend a lot of time on my Labour Party draft on Post War International Settlement. Each time that I spend time with it, I think that I improve it a good deal, but I am anxious not to spend too long improving it, but to put up something, in simple terms, to make a basis for general discussion at the International Sub-Committee." <sup>(11)</sup>

This draft is dated 12 November. It consisted of seven typewritten pages and was considerably different from his first draft. In an accompanying page, he pointed out that "This is not a Draft of a Declaration to be published. It is only a sketch, in rough outline and in simple terms, for the preliminary consideration of my colleagues, of some of the principles which, I suggest, should govern the International Post-War Settlement." <sup>(12)</sup>

It was in this draft that he first introduced a paragraph on Palestine. On the transfer of

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<sup>1</sup> / Clark to Preston, 8 May 1943, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10 (28)).

<sup>2</sup> / Memorandum, Post-War Aims of the British Labour Party, [n.d.] (1943), (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10).

<sup>3</sup> / Hugh Dalton, Diary, 22 September 1943, p.3, (LSE).

<sup>4</sup> / *ibid.*, 13 October 1943, p.2, (LSE).

<sup>5</sup> / *Ibid.*, 16 & 17 October 1943, p.4, (LSE).

<sup>6</sup> / Hugh Dalton, Memoirs, vol.2, 1931 - 1945, The Fateful Years, (London, 1957), p.419.

<sup>7</sup> / Memorandum, Post-War Settlement, first draft, [n.d.], Explanatory Page, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10 (36))

<sup>8</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.9, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10 (41)).

<sup>9</sup> / *Ibid.*, pp.6-7, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10 (39-40)).

<sup>10</sup> / Dalton to Forster, 17 October 1943, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10 (32)).

<sup>11</sup> / Dalton, Diary, 6 & 7 November 1943, (LSE).

<sup>12</sup> / Memorandum, Post-War Settlement, 12 November 1943, Explanatory Page, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10 (42)).

the Arabs from Palestine he wrote, "Here too surely is a case for transfer of population. Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out, as the Jews move in. Let them be compensated handsomely and let their settlement elsewhere be carefully attended to." (1)

In this draft, Dalton also intensified his comments on population transfer in general. "The transfer of population between Turkey and Greece was an outstanding success. This is a precedent to be followed. It settled this question once for all, with no hang-over. So would it be in other cases." (2)

On 16 November a meeting of the International Sub-Committee took place at which Dalton "circulated a rough outline sketch of the principles which he suggested should govern the international post-war settlement." He made a statement to this Sub-Committee who then approved "the general lines upon which he was approaching the problem." They asked him to submit "a draft statement based upon these principles" for their consideration and discussion. (3)

He commented in his diary that at this meeting his draft was "extremely well received, much better in some quarters than I had expected." With regards to William Gillies, the Secretary of the British Labour Party's International Department, Dalton wrote: "Poor little Gillies is terrified of my Palestine paragraph, and thinks this should be referred to a separate committee. I say this is all nonsense." (4)

However at the same meeting, Harold Laski, a member of the National Executive of the Labour Party, gave his "complete approval." Dalton commented: "He is deeply touched by my Palestine paragraph .... He, like most of the others, are quite prepared for the transfer of population." (5) In a later diary entry Dalton wrote that Laski "had embarrassed and surprised me at the first meeting by saying how wonderful he thought it all was, and nearly weeping over my Palestine paragraph, on which he afterwards wrote me a most emotional and effusive letter." (6) [Harold Joseph Laski, a British left-wing socialist and political theorist, had been a Professor at the London School of Economics since 1926, and since 1936 a member of the National Executive of the British Labour Party, where he represented the intelligentsia of the left. The Nazi persecutions had turned his attention to the Jewish problem and he began to take a deep interest in the Zionist struggle.]

The Jewish Agency obviously had "inside connections" since at a meeting of their Executive in London held just two days later, a report of the proceedings of this International Sub-Committee was delivered (possibly by Lavy Bakstansky, Secretary of the British Zionist Federation, who had recently met with J. Middleton, the Secretary of the Labour Party). They were told that at the Labour Party meeting "Dalton had taken a leading part; he had drawn up a memorandum on future work for the Labour Conference, of which one paragraph dealt with Palestine and suggested that Palestine should be given to the Jews, and the Arabs compulsorily transferred to Transjordan." (7)

One can immediately here see the difference between the draft submitted by Dalton and the version reported to the Jewish Agency in connection with transfer. The former uses the word "encouraged", the latter "compulsorily." It is possible that Dalton originally intended to use the word "compulsorily" but after consultations with the Jewish Agency toned down his language to "encouraged." Support for this comes from the fact that three months later Weizmann informed a Jewish Agency meeting that he "had suggested that the word 'voluntarily' should be added to the transfer." (8) Whether Weizmann made this suggestion on ideological grounds or on tactical grounds in order to increase the report's chances of

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1 / Ibid., p.7. (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10 (49)).

2 / Ibid., p.5. (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10 (47)).

3 / Minutes, International Sub-Committee of the National Executive Committee of the British Labour Party (henceforth Minutes, Int. Sub-Committee), 16 November 1943, p.1, (British Labour Party Archives).

4 / Dalton, Diary, 16 November 1943, pp.1-2, (LSE); Ben Pimlott, ed., The Second World War Diary of Hugh Dalton 1940-45 (henceforth Pimlott, Dalton Diary), (London, 1986), p.672.

5 / Ibid.; Ibid., p.673.

6 / Dalton, Diary, 8 February 1944, op. cit., p.1; Dalton, Diary, 5 April 1944, p.4, (LSE); Pimlott, Dalton Diary, p.732.

7 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 18 November 1943, (CZA Z4/302/28i).

8 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 16 February 1944, p.3, (CZA Z4/302/28ii).

acceptance by the Labour Party, cannot be ascertained from these minutes.

An additional support for Dalton's first using (or intending to use) the word "compulsorily" comes from his general comments on population transfer, in which he praised the Greek-Turkish population transfer, which was compulsory, as an "outstanding success" and said it should be used as a precedent.

What connection had Dalton with the Zionist question? His knowledge of Zionism was first acquired whilst he was serving as one of the deputies to Arthur Henderson, British Foreign Secretary in the second Labour Government nearly fifteen years earlier. Over the years, he had established contact with various Zionist leaders and as Under-Secretary for Industrial Affairs had corresponded with Weizmann on the manufacture of synthetic rubber.<sup>(1)</sup>

Dalton wrote that at the time of composing the paragraph dealing with Palestine, he was not in close contact with the Zionists, although over a long period he would see Weizmann from time to time and Lewis Namier occasionally. Moreover, some of Dalton's own pupils at the London School of Economics had been and still were keen Zionists.<sup>(2)</sup> Despite all these Zionist connections, Dalton did not consult them when composing the Palestine paragraph.

At that period, the head of the Political Bureau of the Jewish Agency in London was Berl Locker, a Labour Zionist leader who had organised the Poale Zion Party in the Austrian Empire before the First World War and had later run the world office of Poale Zion in The Hague. Locker was totally at home within the British Labour Party and was therefore particularly offended at not being consulted.

In an interview that he gave in 1960, the Labour Party resolution of 1944 came up and Locker stated that the proposal to encourage Arab emigration appeared without prior consultation with him, adding that the Labour Party Executive usually consulted him on Zionist matters. He told the interviewer that he had said to Harold Laski, "You know, I do not approve of this. Why didn't you consult me?" Laski had replied, "Are we forbidden to publish anything without you?" to which Locker had answered, "Of course it's not forbidden. You are permitted to do so, but it would have been more sensible had you consulted me. Since you did not do so it is not well-planned." Laski had asked, "Why isn't it well-planned?" to which Locker had replied, "This isn't well-planned because it is not practicable. It is indeed just, it is like a population exchange, but the Arabs won't agree to it and they will interpret it the wrong way."<sup>(3)</sup>

We can see from this interview that Locker did not consider the transfer of the Arab population to be in any way wrong either ethically or ideologically. On the contrary, Locker described it as "indeed just". [Later we shall see that he described it as "a very just idea".] His opposition to publishing this transfer proposal was on tactical grounds.

After the first meeting of the International Sub-Committee, Dalton had written that the next step was to meet with Allied Socialists and get their reactions and after that make a draft, suitable for publication, for the International Sub-Committee.<sup>(4)</sup> A meeting with the Allied Socialists was thus convened for 10 December 1943 at St. Ermin's Hotel in London at which it was "proposed to have a general discussion on the terms of the International Post-War Settlement." A list of questions to be put to the participants was included.<sup>(5)</sup> None of them included Palestine nor population transfer in general. On reporting on this meeting, Dalton wrote in his diary, "They [the Allied Socialists] don't add much, but they oppose nothing of importance in my plan, which I don't positively disclose to them, only asking them questions."<sup>(6)</sup>

In the light of his November meeting with the International Sub-Committee and the

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<sup>1</sup> / Joseph Gorny, *The British Labour Movement and Zionism 1917 - 1948*, (London, 1983), p.179.

<sup>2</sup> / Dalton, *Memoirs*, op. cit., p.426.

<sup>3</sup> / Berl Locker, Interview no.5, 9 October 1960, p.6. (Mapai, file 8 - 30).

<sup>4</sup> / Dalton, *Diary*, 16 November 1943, p.2, (LSE).

<sup>5</sup> / Gillies to Colleagues [Allied Socialists], 27 November 1943, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10 (51)).

<sup>6</sup> / Dalton, *Diary*, 10 December 1943, p.8 (LSE); Pimlott, *Dalton Diary*, p.679.

Allied Socialists, Dalton brought out a further draft on 11 January 1944. <sup>(1)</sup> [Although in his accompanying note to this draft, Dalton refers to "last month's [i.e. December] discussion" at the International Sub-Committee, this subject was not discussed at the December meetings, <sup>(2)</sup> and Dalton intended the November meeting.]

In this sixteen page typed (double-spaced) draft, the Palestine paragraph is almost unchanged. He now refers to the "German plan to kill all Jews in Europe." With regard to the transfer of Arabs, he makes a few minor changes and writes; "Here too surely in Palestine is a case, on human grounds and to promote a stable settlement, for transfer of population. Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out, as the Jews move in. Let them be compensated handsomely for their land and let their settlement elsewhere be carefully organised and generously financed." <sup>(3)</sup> Here he adds two reasons for the transfer and regarding its mechanics writes it has to be "carefully organised and generously financed."

The International Sub-Committee then at three of its meetings discussed Dalton's draft. In the first meeting held in January 1944, <sup>(4)</sup> the first half of the draft was discussed. <sup>(5)</sup> A Special Meeting, lasting an hour and-a-half was then held on 8 February <sup>(6)</sup> at which the second half, which included the Palestine paragraph, was discussed. <sup>(7)</sup> In his diary he then observed: "It goes wonderfully well and there is really no opposition." Laski "was again most friendly and wrote me afterwards a letter, very emotional, thanking me for my paragraph on Palestine." <sup>(8)</sup> Dalton was then left to redraft and felt that it was not necessary to bring it before the Labour Party Executive until their March meeting. <sup>(9)</sup> In his diary entry for 4 -5 March, he writes, "I sleep a lot and finish my redraft of 'International Post-War Settlement'." <sup>(10)</sup>

At a third meeting held on 14 March consideration of the draft was completed and it was "agreed that the Memorandum, as approved, should be submitted for consideration and approval of the National Executive Committee at their next meeting." <sup>(11)</sup> In his diary, Dalton comments, "I finally see my Post-War International Settlement document through the International Sub-Committee]. Only small amendments are suggested." He adds that "the two likeliest critics, come in late when we have finished this item." <sup>(12)</sup>

Dalton's draft document on "International Post-War Settlement" (which included this Palestine paragraph), was considered at a number of meetings of the International Sub-Committee of the Labour Party's National Executive. The minutes of these meetings are very brief indeed and show no specific mention of discussion on the Palestine section of Dalton's draft document, (or indeed of any section). The archivist of the Labour Party confirms that "this does not mean to say that the issue of Palestine was not discussed at any of the meetings." <sup>(13)</sup>

As we have seen, the members of the Jewish Agency Executive in London had, as early as November 1943, been informed of the contents of this Palestine paragraph and early in 1944, Weizmann had proposed a change in wording which Dalton had accepted. At a meeting of this Executive held on 17 February, Rabbi Yehudah Leib Fishman (Maimon), a leader of the "Mizrachi" Religious Zionists, asked when this resolution would come up for consideration by the Labour Party. Weizmann replied that it would come up in June but Locker "would be able to give additional information." Locker then warned the meeting that this resolution "was

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<sup>1</sup> / Memorandum, International Post-War Settlement, 11 January 1944, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10).

<sup>2</sup> / Private Communication from Labour Party Archivist, 15 January 2003.

<sup>3</sup> / Memorandum, International Post-War Settlement, 11 January 1944, p.15, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> / Minutes, Int. Sub-Committee, 18 January 1944, p.2 (British Labour Party Archives).

<sup>5</sup> / Dalton, Diary, 18 January 1944, pp.5-6, (LSE).

<sup>6</sup> / Minutes, Int. Sub-Committee, 8 February 1944, (British Labour Party Archives).

<sup>7</sup> / Dalton, Diary, 8 February 1944, p.1, (LSE).

<sup>8</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> / Ibid., 4 & 5 March 1944, p.2, (LSE); Pimlott, Dalton Diary, p.718.

<sup>11</sup> / Minutes, Int. Sub-Committee, 14 March 1944, p.1, (British Labour Party Archives).

<sup>12</sup> / Dalton, Diary, 14 March 1944, p.2, (LSE).

<sup>13</sup> / Private Communication from Labour Party Archivist, London, 11 April 1985.

absolutely secret." However "he had seen the text" and he gave the meeting the contents of the Palestine paragraph. He said that "it was important because it was unthinkable that the Resolution had been accepted without the agreement of the Cabinet Ministers." (1)

Nearly three weeks later, Weizmann informed the Executive that he had dined with Dalton who had told him "that he had drafted a resolution which he thought would satisfy" the Zionists. Dalton was confident that the Labour Executive would pass it. (2) On this meeting, Dalton wrote in his diary that he had dined with Weizmann and Bakstansky at the R.A.C. [Royal Automobile Club]. At this meeting, "I all but tell them that I have drafted a very hot paragraph for the Labour Party on post-war Palestine. I hint as much on leaving." (3)

In his memoirs Dalton explained that he tried to think out the whole Palestine problem afresh in the light of its urgency and the horror of the Hitlerite atrocities. These circumstances seemed to him to have destroyed the case for limited immigration into Palestine. He felt that sufficient capital and intelligent planning coupled with "the diverse and distinguished talents and the driving energy and the fanatical faith of the Jews" could turn Palestine into "a most successful, populous and predominantly Jewish State."

At first Dalton thought that an Arab minority might wish to remain in Palestine they would provide the Arabs with a bright and prosperous future. "Most of the Palestinian Arabs, and their descendants, would surely be much happier in these States than in a Palestine into which so strong a Jewish stream would soon be pouring." Dalton considered that Britain, as the Mandatory Power, should take the lead in carrying out "a major operation" immediately after the War. The timing would then be perfect since Britain's moral influence and military power would be at their height. "There must be large shifts of population of Jews into Palestine and Arabs out of it," continued Dalton, "We must put massive resources, in finance and in technical advice, behind these shifts, so that material development, for the benefit of all concerned, might follow quickly. This would be a unique moment, I judged, when the pulse of history could quicken, and a determined and imaginative leadership could telescope into a few years changes which otherwise would drag along slowly and painfully, through centuries." (4)

In a later volume of his memoirs, looking back on the formulation of this paragraph, Dalton wrote, "This declaration was, perhaps more sharply etched than previous Labour Party declarations on Palestine, and pulled out some implications more abruptly. But there was no discontinuity in our declarations." To prove his point, Dalton quoted the Labour Party's opposition to Malcolm MacDonald's White Paper of 1939 and to the 1940 Land Regulations. (5)

Following the March meeting of the International Sub-Committee, Dalton's document was sent to the printers to be ready for the next National Executive meeting. It had been planned to distribute galley proofs of the printed document on 22 March. However the night before, the printers were blitzed. It was therefore necessary to have a special National Executive meeting two weeks later. On this Dalton commented in his diary, "This is rather a pity, for it is likely to be more closely examined than it might have been today, run through with other items." (6)

The meeting of the National Executive took place on 5 April, the galley proofs having been previously circulated to the members. A general discussion was held, at which the document "was examined paragraph by paragraph in some detail." They then resolved "that members who desired to send in suggestions for amendment should communicate direct with Mr. Hugh Dalton, that he should revise the document and report the revised version to the International Sub-Committee for consideration, and that that Sub-Committee be empowered

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1 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 17 February 1944, pp.1-2, (CZA Z4/302/28ii).

2 / Ibid., 9 March 1944, (CZA Z4/302/28ii).

3 / Dalton, Diary, 8 March 1944, p.6, (LSE); Pimlott, Dalton Diary, p.720.

4 / Dalton, Memoirs, op. cit., pp.426-7.

5 / Hugh Dalton, Memoirs, vol.3, 1945 - 1960, High Tide and After, (London, 1962), p.146.

6 / Dalton, Diary, 22 March 1944, p.3, (LSE); Pimlott, Dalton Diary, p.725.

to give final approval and to arrange for issue to the press and to Affiliated Organisations."<sup>(1)</sup>

Dalton commented in his diary on a "remarkable" meeting of the National Executive of the Labour Party that had taken place that afternoon to consider his draft document. He noted that some members had "obviously pre-arranged an attempt at sabotage." A motion to have this document referred back to the International Sub-Committee was narrowly defeated. Dalton was particularly annoyed with certain members of the National Executive, whom he described as a "cowardly lot," who had co-operated with him in producing the document in the International Sub-Committee and never challenging it there, now opposing it at the National Executive.<sup>(2)</sup> One of the members of this National Executive, Jimmy Walker, who had been absent from this meeting due to an operation, wrote Dalton a letter afterwards, fully endorsing his comments regarding the members who tried to sabotage the declaration.<sup>(3)</sup>

Dalton welcomed the delay caused by sending a revised draft to the International Sub-Committee for final approval. On this he wrote that "it will not now be possible to get this document out much more than a month before the Conference. This, I think, will suit me all right."<sup>(4)</sup> Dalton realised that the more time people had to study his document, the more chance there would be of defeating it.

Amendments to Dalton's document were proposed by Noel-Baker<sup>(5)</sup> and Laski.<sup>(6)</sup> None of Noel-Baker's amendments were on the transfer of Arabs. He did make a small change in the Palestine paragraph - to change the word "German" to "Nazi" in "calculated plan to kill all Jews in Europe," since it was a Nazi plan.<sup>(7)</sup> Laski also proposed such a change of wording to be throughout the document.<sup>(8)</sup> Only the first two pages of Laski's first letter are extant,<sup>(9)</sup> so we don't know whether he made any comments on the Palestine paragraph.

Dalton put in his revised document "all reasonable points raised at the Executive discussion" and at least some of the points made by and Noel Baker and Laski.<sup>(10)</sup>

On 18 April, the International Sub-Committee reconsidered the draft and "unanimously agreed that the draft as amended should be submitted to the Annual Conference as a policy document, that it should have first place in the Annual Report of the National Executive Committee... and that it should be issued to the press and the Movement as soon as ever possible."<sup>(11)</sup> It was published the following week-end.<sup>(12)</sup> When one compares the Palestine paragraph in the published text of April 1944 with the draft of January 1944, one sees a few small differences. The phrase "throwing open Libya or Eritrea to Jewish settlement, as satellites or colonies to Palestine", was deleted; "Syria" was added to "Egypt and Transjordan" for the extension of the "present Palestinian boundaries."

These changes were very likely suggested at the National Executive Meeting. This is also the view of the historian Andrew Sargent,<sup>(13)</sup> although Ben Pimlott, Dalton's biographer wrote that this deletion was made by the International Sub-Committee.<sup>(14)</sup>

However, there are only minor tinkering between the first draft on the transfer of Arabs from Palestine and the final version, indicating that neither the International Sub-Committee or the National Executive had any strong objection to Dalton's proposals on this

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes, National Executive Committee of British Labour Party, 5 April 1944, (British Labour Party Archives).

<sup>2</sup> / Dalton, Diary, 5 April 1944, pp.4-5, (LSE); Pimlott, Dalton Diary, pp.732-33.

<sup>3</sup> / Walker to Dalton, 17 April 1944, p.1, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10 (80)).

<sup>4</sup> / Dalton, Diary, 5 April 1944, p.5, op. cit.; Pimlott, Dalton Diary, p.733

<sup>5</sup> / Noel Baker to Dalton, 8 April 1944, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10).

<sup>6</sup> / Laski to Dalton, 27 March 1944, 8 April 1944, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10).

<sup>7</sup> / Noel Baker to Dalton, 8 April 1944, p.7, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> / Laski to Dalton, 27 March 1944, p.1, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> / Private Communication from Photocopying Department LSE, 17 February 2003.

<sup>10</sup> / Dalton to Gillies, 12 April 1944, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10); Dalton to Noel Baker, 12 April 1944, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10); Dalton to Laski, 12 April 1944, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10).

<sup>11</sup> / Minutes, Int. Sub-Committee, 18 April 1944, p.1, (British Labour Party Archives).

<sup>12</sup> / Dalton, Memoirs, vol.2, op. cit., p.423.

<sup>13</sup> / Andrew Sargent, The British Labour Party and Palestine, 1917-1949, Ph.D Thesis, Nottingham University, England, 1980, p.260.

<sup>14</sup> / Ben Pimlott, Hugh Dalton, (London, 1985), p.390.

subject.

Zionist leaders were at pains to stress that the Labour Party had written this Palestine paragraph without any direct Jewish pressure. In his diary entry for 25 May, Dalton wrote that Locker had come to see him and "is naturally, very pleased with our Palestine paragraph, particularly as we have put it in, as he says, without any pressure from the Jewish Agency." <sup>(1)</sup>

The same point was made by Shertok to a meeting of the Mapai Central Committee. But he then added, "Far be it from me to belittle our work and our efforts. It is obvious that had we been less active and not had workers in England, the Labour Party itself would not have formulated such a policy. But there is a distinction between general results of work and persuasion, and the direct result of a specific suggestion on our part. There was no suggestion from us to the working committee of the Labour Party that they should insert this paragraph into the Report." <sup>(2)</sup>

In the same vein, Weizmann wrote in his autobiography, that he and his colleagues had constantly pressed their case and that in 1943 and 1944, he had discussed the question of the Jewish National Home with some of the leading members of the Labour Party. <sup>(3)</sup>

In the spring of 1944, Shertok had been in England. On his return to Palestine, he reported to the Jewish Agency Executive and on the following day to the Mapai Central Committee. He told these bodies that one of the new phenomena which he encountered in England was an enthusiasm for population transfer, not as a result of Jewish initiative but of non-Jewish logic. <sup>(4)</sup> The Labour Party had concluded that there were two possibilities for Palestine - to do nothing or to give it to the Jews. In the latter case one would have to give them the entire country "and thus it will be necessary to remove the Arabs." Shertok explained that reports of this reasoning had reached the Zionists from various sources including Dalton and Philip Noel-Baker. <sup>(5)</sup>

Shertok then reported to both the Jewish Agency Executive and the Mapai Central Committee that a member of the British Government who was proficient in foreign affairs, and was considered to be a candidate for Foreign Minister was given the task of compiling the section of the Party's annual report which dealt with foreign affairs. It was the work of an individual and "without anyone putting the idea in his head, he inserted at the end of the section on foreign affairs the paragraph on Palestine." Shertok said that according to Dalton the British Labour Party had had a fixed and standard policy on Palestine which obligated the establishment of a Jewish National Home in accordance with the Balfour Declaration, but had never had the boldness to think out the logical conclusions from this policy. The time had come to follow these conclusions to a logical end, namely that Palestine must be a Jewish State. If it is "too small to meet the requirements of the Jewish people, we must think of changing its borders by means of annexing areas from the surrounding states. We must also discuss the question of transferring the Arabs from Palestine to other countries and we must also speak of allotting additional territory in north Africa." <sup>(6)</sup> To the Mapai Central Committee, Shertok added, "With regard to transfer, we had very serious doubts... not necessarily aroused by the content of this paragraph." <sup>(7)</sup> However, we shall see later that Shertok would accept transfer of the Arabs under certain conditions.

Dalton also discussed his draft document with Oliver Stanley, a Conservative member of Parliament for over two decades, who had held various Government Ministries in the 1930s and was in 1944 Colonial Secretary. Of his meeting with Stanley, Dalton wrote in his diary, "Oliver Stanley comes to see me to say how very disturbing is our Palestine paragraph in I.P.W.S. [International Post-War Settlement]. It is, he says, 'Zionism plus plus'. It is tacked

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<sup>1</sup> / Dalton, Diary, 25 May 1944, p.1, (LSE); Pimlott, Dalton Diary, p.749.

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes, Mapai Central Committee, (henceforth Minutes Mapai), 8 May 1944, p.15, (Mapai, file 23/44).

<sup>3</sup> / Weizmann, Trial and Error, op. cit., p.535.

<sup>4</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., vol.39/1, no.44, 7 May 1944, p.10, (CZA); Minutes, Mapai, 8 May 1944, p.16.

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes Mapai, 8 May 1944, p.16.

<sup>6</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., 7 May 1944, op. cit., p.11; Minutes Mapai, 8 May 1944, p.15.

<sup>7</sup> / Minutes Mapai, 8 May 1944, p.16.

on, he feels, rather unnaturally, to a long and helpful statement on Europe. It will not, he hopes, be much played up in our propaganda. I say that I don't think it will. But I remind him that the Labour Party has always taken a pro-Jewish line in Parliamentary debates for many years." (1)

In contrast, Mary Sutherland, the Chief Woman Officer of the Labour Party and a Justice of the Peace, wrote to Dalton saying "how much I like the statement on International Reconstruction [Post-War Settlement] to which you must have given much time and thought." She made no reservation whatsoever on the Palestine paragraph. She went on to ask for a copy of this document so that she could include an article in the next issue of "The Labour Woman." (2)

It had been intended to submit this document for endorsement to the Labour Party's Annual Conference due to be held in May. However, on 16 May it was announced that the Conference would be indefinitely postponed following a special appeal by the Government, some weeks before D-day, to avoid mass travelling. The Conference was finally held that December.

### **The Attitude of Clement Attlee to Transfer**

The leader of the British Labour Party at that period was Clement Attlee. What was his attitude to the transfer of Arabs from Palestine?

As previously described, in November 1939 a meeting had taken place at the House of Commons between Major Attlee, Tom Williams, Weizmann and other Zionist leaders. At this meeting, Weizmann put the Zionist case and taking the Peel Report as his starting point, he spoke of the idea of a Jewish State and the transfer of population. "We must have some territorial basis there, and that would mean an improved Peel scheme, possibly Palestine west of the Jordan, with some transfer of a part at least of the Arab population."

The notes on the conversation, which were written by Moshe Shertok continue, "Major Attlee nodded assent when transfer of population was mentioned. He added however. Are you not putting all your eggs in one basket? There are after all, other baskets." To this Locker replied that the Zionists only had one basket. (3)

Commenting on this meeting, Gorny in his book "The British Labour Movement and Zionism" noted that Shertok mentioned no similar assent by Attlee when Weizmann mentioned a Jewish State. Here Gorny suggested that "Attlee was, of course opposed to the concept of a Jewish State, but may have believed that transfer of population would create the possibility of a political entity shared by the two peoples living in Palestine." Gorny added that international experience had shown that transfer of population was linked to the establishment of separate national states. He suggested that "if Attlee did, in fact, approve of the idea of population transfer, he was recognizing something which he had never before admitted, namely that there was a connection between the Jewish plight and Palestine." (4)

Harold Wilson, a later leader of the Labour Party and British Prime Minister between the years 1964-70 and 1974-6, made a far less cautious assessment of Attlee's views on a Jewish State and population transfer. "Attlee was, in fact, fully committed to an independent state for the Jews in Palestine - even to the extent of expelling some of the Arabs." He added that Attlee as the Party Leader was one one of the principal signatories of the National Executive Committee's Annual Report of 1944 which included this Palestine paragraph. (5),

### **Reactions to the Resolution**

On 26 April, soon after publication of the Labour Party's Report, a well attended meeting under the auspices of the Poale Zion (Zionist Socialist Party) was held in Conway Hall, London, to commemorate the first anniversary of the Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto.

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1 / Dalton, Diary, 26 April 1944, p.2, (LSE); Pimlott, Dalton Diary, p.739.

2 / Sutherland to Dalton, 14 April 1944, (LSE, Dalton Papers, 7/10 (48)).

3 / Note of Conversation with Attlee and Williams, 30 November 1939, pp.2-3, (WA).

4 / Gorny, British Labour Movement and Zionism, op. cit., p.164.

5 / Harold Wilson, The Chariot of Israel, (London, 1981), p.125.



This meeting was addressed by Camille Huysmans, President of the Labour and Socialist International, (and later Prime Minister of Belgium), who supported the demand for a Jewish State. "Never have I more enthusiastically agreed with a report of the Labour Party of this country than this year, particularly with the resolution dealing with Palestine for the next conference. I hope it will be adopted." <sup>(1)</sup>

In an Editorial under the heading "Labour and the Peace", the London daily newspaper "The Times" came out against the transfer of Arabs. "The proposals for the elimination of minority problems by vast shifts of population are altogether too light-hearted especially in the intractable case of Palestine." The plight of the millions of homeless victims of Germany's aggression, continued the Editorial writer, "does not dispose of the much greater difficulty of uprooting great national groups from the soil where they have dwelt for centuries." <sup>(2)</sup>

Percy Cudlipp, Editor of the British newspaper the "Daily Herald" also gave a negative reaction to this Palestine paragraph. On 5 May, Dalton lunched with him and their conversation included the International Post-War Settlement. Dalton told Cudlipp how he came to compose it. As Dalton entered in his diary, "He [Cudlipp] is frankly frightened of my Palestine paragraph. He has more sympathy with Arabs than Jews. He asks, rather absurdly, why the Jews shouldn't all go to the British Empire and the U.S.A. Why need they go to Palestine?" <sup>(3)</sup>

As was to be expected, there were negative reactions from Arab sources in Palestine. Protest meetings were held, letters and telegrams were sent and Editorials in Arab newspapers were written, all condemning this Labour Party Resolution.

On 28 April, twenty-two "learned men, landowners and elders" from the Acre area in Northern Palestine sent a letter of protest to the High Commissioner. After asserting that Palestine was an Arab country with a long history of Arab settlement they wrote that "the fortunes of the world will not induce the Arabs to leave this country, thus the suggestion of the Labour Party, in so far as the Arabs are concerned, is valueless in that the decision will simply remain on papers." They compared the Labour Party's plan "for the eviction of the Arabs" from Palestine with the aggression of the Nazis against Jews in Europe. They said that the other Arab countries belonged to their inhabitants "and they are hardly sufficient for them." This was a very strange statement in view of the fact that several independent surveys had shown that many Arab countries such as Iraq were underpopulated and crying out for an increase in population. The letter concluded with the signatories expressing surprise that such a suggestion should emanate from a party belonging to a Government which subscribed to the Atlantic Charter. <sup>(4)</sup>

Also on 28 April, the Central Committee of the Palestine Arab Party held a meeting in Jerusalem at which a protest over the British Labour Party's Resolution was registered. <sup>(5)</sup> This Party was dominated by the Husseini section in Palestine, among whom were many relatives of Haj Amin, the Mufti of Jerusalem, who was an ally of Hitler. About ten days later, the Palestine Arab Party sent identical telegrams to the British Prime Minister, British Foreign Secretary and the British Colonial Secretary, <sup>(6)</sup> saying that they had learnt with "deep regret and great astonishment" of the proposals regarding Palestine which had been introduced by the Labour Party Executive. "The proposals signify executive's complete ignorance of facts and circumstances (of the) Palestine problem." These proposals were said to endanger the "most sacred rights of innocent people inhabiting its homeland and challenge and threaten interests (in the) entire Arab and Moslem world whose opinion concerning Palestine (is) well known." The Executive's attitude was said to be contrary to Labour and

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<sup>1</sup> / "Poale Zion Commemorate Battle of Warsaw Ghetto", Daily News Bulletin, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, (London), vol.xxv, no.100, 28 April 1944, p.2.

<sup>2</sup> / Editorial, "Labour and the Peace", The Times, (London), 24 April 1944, p.5.

<sup>3</sup> / Hugh Dalton, Diary 5 May 1944, pp.4-5, (LSE); Pimlott, Dalton Diary, pp.740-41.

<sup>4</sup> / Citizens of Acre to High Commissioner, 28 April 1944, (PRO FO 371/40136 E 3780).

<sup>5</sup> / Palestine Post, (Jerusalem), 30 April 1944, p.3.

<sup>6</sup> / Minutes, Colonial Office, 13 May 1944, (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130)

democratic principles, to the Atlantic Charter and to repeated promises given to the Arabs by Great Britain. The telegram concluded, "We vehemently protest against and strongly object to those proposals and demand their neglect and withdrawal." <sup>(1)</sup>

Foreign Office officials wrote comments in their internal minutes regarding these telegrams. One such comment was that a similar telegram had "not apparently [been sent] to any members of the Labour Party. I should like to circulate copies to Labour Ministers, but I suppose we cannot do that." <sup>(2)</sup> Another official wrote, "I think this protest should be sent to the Secretary of the Labour Party, as the proposals contained in the statement of policy issued by the Executive of the Labour Party are only tentative and will come up for discussion at the Conference of the Party which is to be held at the end of the month. I think it would be useful for the views of the Palestine Arabs to be made known to the Labour Party Executive before the proposals are finally approved." <sup>(3)</sup> A further official wrote that "we had better ask the CO [Colonial Office] to take the necessary action if they see no objection." <sup>(4)</sup>

This indeed was done and the Foreign Office sent a copy of the telegram to the Colonial Office suggesting that the views of the Palestine Arab Party be made known to the Labour Party Executive by the Colonial Office before the proposals were finally approved. <sup>(5)</sup> The Colonial Office replied that since a similar telegram had been sent to the Secretary of the Labour Party, "you will no doubt agree that it is not necessary to take any further action in the matter." <sup>(6)</sup> Likewise, a Colonial Office official in an internal minute wrote that the Colonial Secretary "does not think that any action on his part is required." <sup>(7)</sup>

A further batch of protests addressed or forwarded to the High Commissioner followed. These were from:

1. Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, the leader of the National Defence Party.

Nashashibi described the Labour Party resolution as aggressive and provocative and that the Arabs would "never betray their history by allowing their country to go or be passed to non-Arabs." He concluded that "in Palestine there is no room for two peoples. The Arabs who are for 14 centuries the inhabitants of the country, and the Jews who are simply imported incomers and intruders during the period of the last 25 years. Should one people leave for the other to remain, naturally it is the Jews who must pack and go, the HOME of which they have been in search can be found in some other parts of the world." <sup>(8)</sup>

2. Arab Mayors of Palestine.

In a letter, they wrote that on 5 May 1944, the Second Conference of the Arab Mayors of Palestine took place in Jaffa. At this Conference, the participants strongly condemned "the reckless resolutions which were made by the Committee of the British Labour Party, and the mean intrigues which are being secretly woven in order to do harm to the Arabs of Palestine and to deprive them of their natural rights." <sup>(9)</sup>

3. Central Committee of the National Bloc.

They sent a copy of a three and a half page resolution which they had adopted on 30 April 1944. After a long historical introduction, as seen in their eyes, their resolution continued, "the National Bloc observes with astonishment that there exists in the ranks of the British Labour Party in the Parliament of the honourable British Nation a group of members who have no limit to their imagination and fail to face facts, as may be seen from a [transfer] proposal.... The Arabs alone have the right to determine the Palestine case (both by right and by justice)." <sup>(10)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Telegram, Palestine Arab Party to British Foreign Secretary, 8 May 1944, (PRO FO 371/40135 E 2703).

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes, Foreign Office, 9 May 1944, (PRO FO 371/40135 E 2703).

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., 12 May 1944, (PRO FO 371/40135 E 2703).

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., 18 May 1944, (PRO FO 371/40135 E 2703).

<sup>5</sup> / Baxter, Foreign Office to Boyd, Colonial Office, 22 May 1944, (PRO FO 371/40135 E 2703).

<sup>6</sup> / Eastwood (?), Colonial Office to Baxter, Foreign Office, 30 May 1944, (PRO FO 371/40135 E 2703).

<sup>7</sup> / Minutes, Colonial Office, 16 May 1944, (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130).

<sup>8</sup> / Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, National Defence Party to High Commissioner, 9 May 1944, (Enclosure I), (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130).

<sup>9</sup> / Arab Mayors of Palestine to High Commissioner, 5 May 1944, (Enclosure II), (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130).

<sup>10</sup> / Resolution of Central Committee of the National Bloc adopted 30 April 1944, (Enclosure III), (PRO CO 733/463

#### 4. The Moslem Society, Haifa.

Their protest took the form of a telegram in which they claimed that the Labour Party resolution was “inconsistent with the natural and legal rights of the Arabs of Palestine, the original owners of the country.”<sup>(1)</sup>

#### 5. Certain advocates and merchants of Jaffa.

Their memorandum claimed that the resolution was derived from “the Hitlerite principles which aim at the extermination of nations (peoples) and promote race differentiation.” They continued, “Many of the Jews who entered Palestine after the inception of the Hitlerite regime in Germany impatiently await the time when Hitlerism would be defeated so that they may return to their original homeland. That being the case, the Executive Committee of the British Labour Party should assist those people to leave Palestine rather than assist the Arabs to evacuate their country.”<sup>(2)</sup>

#### 6. Certain sheikhs and merchants and other persons of Jaffa.

A large gathering of various citizens of Jaffa met together and formulated a protest. They argued that the Labour Party was not entitled to make such a resolution and that “Palestine is the property of its Arab inhabitants. Territorial and National rights cannot be expropriated or devised.”<sup>(3)</sup>

In summary, we can see from these protests, that the Arabs held that Palestine was exclusively theirs and that the transfer of Jews from Palestine was quite legitimate!

Captain Shaw, who was an officer administering the Government of Palestine, forwarded these six protest documents to Oliver Stanley, the Colonial Secretary adding that he had “no comments to offer upon these representations and I recommend that I may be authorised formally to acknowledge them.”<sup>(4)</sup>

In an internal minute of the Colonial Office, written about two weeks later, the official writes, “The High Commissioner has no comments to offer on these representations [protests] and, indeed, there is little that could be said in reply to them.” The official realised that protests were not at an end and thus added, “Further protests of a similar character will no doubt reach us in due course.” This minute concludes that the High Commissioner was authorised to acknowledge them “when we have ascertained from 10 Downing Street that the Prime Minister has no special reply to make.”<sup>(5)</sup> It would seem that he indeed had no comment. About a month later, a reply was sent to the High Commissioner by the Colonial Secretary requesting that “formal acknowledgment may be conveyed to the senders [of the protests].”<sup>(6)</sup>

There was also an (undated) protest sent to the High Commissioner by the Mukhtars of Gaza sub-district. They then added, “The Arabs will not stop sacrificing money and men to maintain their father-land for ever.”<sup>(7)</sup>

Arab reaction to the Labour Party resolution was not limited to letters of protests. It caused unrest amongst the Arabs. In a telegram sent by the High Commissioner to the Colonial Office on 29 May, he wrote, “Feeling among the Arabs has been sharply stimulated during the past month ... in particular, by the reported resolution of the British Labour Party that Arabs should be induced to move out of Palestine to make room for Jews. There was... [a] noticeable increase in Party activity. Reactions to the resolution have been widespread and bitter.”<sup>(8)</sup>

The Arab newspapers in Palestine also came out in opposition to the Labour Party Resolution. An Editorial in the Arab newspaper "Filastin" advocated the establishment of a

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<sup>1</sup> / Telegram Moslem Society, Haifa to Colonial Secretary, 11 May 1944, (Enclosure IV), (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130).

<sup>2</sup> / Advocates and merchants of Jaffa to British Prime Minister, 30 April 1944, (Enclosure V), (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130).

<sup>3</sup> / Sheikhs and merchants and other persons of Jaffa to High Commissioner, 5 May 1944, (Enclosure VI), (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130).

<sup>4</sup> / Shaw to Colonial Secretary, 19 May 1944, (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130).

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes, Colonial Office, 2 June 1944, (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130).

<sup>6</sup> / Colonial Secretary to High Commissioner, 6 July 1944, (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130).

<sup>7</sup> / Mukhtars of Gaza sub-District to High Commissioner, [n.d.], (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130).

<sup>8</sup> / Extract of telegram from High Commissioner, 29 May 1944, (PRO CO 733/463 75872/130).

strong Arab Socialist Party in order "to convince the British Labour Party that their ideas about Palestine are wrong." (1).

The same newspaper suggested that since the Labour Party identified itself with the socialist ideals of democracy and the defence of the "four freedoms", it was very strange that this Party should involve itself with the problems of Palestine and "not find a solution other than that of the Arabs leaving their country and Palestine being enlarged to the size of Wales at the expense of the neighbouring countries, in order that the Jews be enabled to live in peace and prosperity." The writer added that possibly the members of the Labour Party were not well-versed in the realities of the situation in Palestine, since in spite of the extremism of the Zionist leaders, they had not demanded the migration of the Arabs from Palestine and the annexation of Arab lands; they were satisfied with the demand for equal numbers. How then did the Labour Party come to make such a radical proposal? (2)

The Arabic paper "Al-Difaa" made similar comments in its main Editorial. "We know of its (the Labour Party's) sympathy for the Jews but we did not expect it to demand more than the Jews request. The Labour Party has harmed the principles of socialism." The Editorial writer hoped that the Party would reject the proposal of its Executive Committee - otherwise it would be a crime that would be recorded in history. (3)

Arab protests did not emanate exclusively from Palestine. A few months later, the Egyptian Prime Minister, Nahas Pasha, informed his Parliament that he had sent a letter of protest to the British Labour Party. "We cannot but protest most vigorously against a scheme designed to make Palestine purely a Jewish State. For the first time the party has declared its political aims of ousting Arabs from their native land." (4)

The telegram sent by the Palestine Arab Party, prompted Arthur Greenwood, Acting Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, to write an article in the journal "Jewish Labour" in order to clarify the meaning of the phrase "Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out" of Palestine, as used in the Labour Party Resolution.

[Incidentally, in his interview given in 1960, Locker stated that he, himself wrote that article and then took it to Greenwood who was one of the Labour leaders closest to Zionism. Greenwood read it and said, "It's a jolly good article" to which Locker replied, "Are you prepared to sign it?" Greenwood answered, "Why not?" and signed it. It thus appeared under Greenwood's name both in "Jewish Labour" (5) and in the American paper "Jewish Frontier". (6)]

The article explained "that the statement speaks of encouragement and agreement, not of any sort of compulsion." The Labour Party wanted to give the maximum possible help to the Jewish people but this should not be considered as a lack of friendship for the Arab people. The transfer or population could enable the Arab people to strengthen their hitherto sparsely populated countries such as Iraq with the inflow of kinsfolk from Palestine. This, said the "Jewish Labour" article could be advantageous to the Arab cause, especially were it to be financed by the United Nations, and quoted from the International Post-War Settlement document on transfer in the post-war world, "The organised transfer of population in the immediate post-war period may be one of the foundations of better international relations in a later phase." (7)

A month before publishing this article, Arthur Greenwood had made a statement on the Labour Party Resolution to a May Day meeting held in London under the auspices of Poale Zion. After speaking about the history of the positive attitude of the Labour Party towards a Jewish National Home, Greenwood is reported to have said, "The document speaks of a voluntary transfer and suggests that the Arabs might be compensated." He saw "no reason for

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1 / Zionist Review, (London), vol.iv, no.18 (new series), 5 May 1944, p.2.

2 / "Arab Newspapers on the Proposal of the British Labour Party", Hamashkif, (Tel-Aviv), 26 April 1944, p.90.

3 / Ibid.

4 / "Palestine as Jewish State. Nahas Pasha's Protest", The Times, (London), 11 August 1944, p.3.

5 / Locker, Interview, op. cit., p.7.

6 / Arthur Greenwood, "British Labor and the Jewish Problem", Jewish Frontier, (New York), vol.xi, no.7(114), June 1944, pp.22-23.

7 / Arthur Greenwood, "British Labour and the Jewish Problem", Jewish Labour, (London), June 1944, p.2.

a compulsory transfer of Arabs from a land which they have learned to love and which has given them economic security which they never knew before and may never know again. Therefore any movement out of the Arabs would be a movement of people who wished to go." (1)

Nearly a year later, Locker was to write that despite the explanatory article of June 1944 in "Jewish Labour", "the campaign of misrepresentation combined with warnings, long worn threadbare through repetition, against provoking the indignation and active intervention of the whole Arab and Moslem world" did not stop. (2) In fact it was the "Jewish Labour" article which provoked Awni Abdul Hadi, leader of the Istiqlal Party in Palestine, to write Greenwood a letter pointing out that the "settlement of the Jewish problem at the expense of the Arabs is not consistent with the Anglo-Arab friendship which you profess." Hadi said that such a settlement would "doom more than a million Arabs in Palestine" and would forever sever Palestine from its sister Arab countries. He claimed that "the Arabs are fully determined, to actually die rather than forfeit their natural rights in Palestine." (3)

Strong protests regarding the transfer of Arabs was almost certainly responsible for the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on Imperial Questions discussing this matter at a meeting held in a room in the Houses of Parliament on 10 May 1944. This "Committee resolved to draw the attention of the Executive Committee to the unfortunate implications" of this resolution. It pointed out that "the suggestion that the Arabs should 'move out' of Palestine must cause the greatest uneasiness to the Jews no less than to the Arabs." The Committee went on to suggest "that the policy should be reconsidered before it is submitted to the [Annual] Conference." (4)

One of the Chairman at this Advisory Committee meeting was Leonard Woolf, who we shall soon see, a few months later brought out a booklet which was very critical of the Labour Party's transfer proposal for the Arabs of Palestine. Also present at this meeting was Norman Bentwich, who began the meeting giving the Committee "some facts about the position in Palestine." (5) The minutes do not elaborate and so from them we cannot say whether he mentioned the transfer proposal. As we shall soon see, according to William Gillies, the Secretary of the British Labour Party's International Department, Bentwich did express his criticism, and it is likely that it was at this meeting.

About a week later this suggestion of the Advisory Committee came up before the National Executive who resolved "that the matter be referred to the International Sub-Committee." (6)

On 20 June, the International Sub-Committee met and "agreed to let the [Palestine] paragraph stand as it is, as the terms of the paragraph as drafted already makes it clear that any transfer of the Arab population would be of a voluntary character, and no compulsion was contemplated." (7) On this meeting, Dalton wrote in his diary, "We decide to ignore the suggestions from various quarters that we should go back on our proposal for voluntary emigration of Arabs from Palestine." (8)

In his 1960 interview, Locker stated that William Gillies had suddenly contacted him - "I don't remember if it was by way of letter or by telephone" - and said, "We are getting protests from all sides. What are we going to do?" Locker replied, "Had you consulted with me, I would have advised you not to include it." However, Locker advised against deletion of the transfer proposal at so late a stage, since such a deletion would suggest the Labour Party's disassociation from the ideas expressed therein. (9)

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1 / Schneier Levenberg, *The Jews and Palestine, A Study in Labour Zionism*, (London, 1945), p.215.

2 / Berl Locker, "British Labour's Palestine Policy", *Jewish Labour*, (London), May 1945, p.12.

3 / Hadi to Greenwood, 23 June 1944, (PRO FO 371/40135 E 2703).

4 / Minutes, Advisory Committee on Imperial Questions, British Labour Party International Department, 10 May 1944, (British Labour Party Archives).

5 / Ibid.

6 / Minutes, National Executive Committee of British Labour Party, 16 May 1944, (British Labour Party Archives).

7 / Minutes, Int. Sub-Committee, 20 June 1944, p.2, (British Labour Party Archives).

8 / Hugh Dalton, *Diary*, 20 June 1944, p.1, (LSE).

9 / Locker, *Interview*, op. cit., pp.6-7.

The date of this contact with Gillies is not stated but from a letter written to him by Locker, dated 15 May, we may assume that it took place in early May. This letter included the warning against withdrawal of the transfer clause from the Resolution since "its removal might be interpreted as an admission that the Labour Party's proposal involves an injustice to the Arabs." <sup>(1)</sup>

Locker began this letter, the intention of which was to explain the Jewish Agency's views on this subject, by quoting from Ben-Gurion's "Biltmore Statement" (discussed later). He then referred to Norman Bentwich's new book "Judaea Lives Again". Bentwich, an English Zionist and lawyer, was Professor of International Relations at the Hebrew University and in the past had been Attorney-General of the Mandatory Government of Palestine.

Bentwich considered that it might be possible to facilitate a mass immigration of Jews from Europe to Palestine "by making provision for the transfer of such part of the Arab population as wish to live in an Arab State to neighbouring Arab territories." He stressed that there could be "no question of a forced movement." The solution would have to be based on negotiation, and voluntary agreement and would have to include "constructive measures of agrarian settlement for the benefit of the migrating Arabs among their own kin." Under such conditions only, Bentwich considered that "transfer of population might be a means of solving the national conflict." <sup>(2)</sup>

It is worth mentioning here that Bentwich shared the views of the Brit Shalom group, a group which advocated Arab-Jewish rapprochement and a bi-national state. Yet this did not stop him from advocating a voluntary transfer of Arabs as "a means of solving the national conflict." It is very possible that Locker quoted Bentwich's book in this letter, since he had (according to Gillies) been very critical of this point in the Labour Party's resolution. Andrew Sargent describes this move of Locker's as "shrewd." <sup>(3)</sup>

Locker's letter continued, "The idea of transfer is not merely a random conjecture." Many Arab and British authorities had expressed the view that a pre-requisite for the development of the natural resources of the Arab countries was immigration. <sup>(4)</sup>

Ten days later, Locker went to see Dalton. The latter wrote in his diary that at this meeting Locker "argues against our giving way - which we have no intention of doing - to the suggestion that we should amend the reference to 'encouraging' Arabs to move out as Jews move in. He agrees that it is quite clear that 'encouragement' in this context does not mean 'compulsion'. I ask him to send me any further points on this." <sup>(5)</sup>

About two weeks later, Locker sent a letter to Dalton in which he stressed the advantages that could accrue from such an Arab transfer. "From a purely political point of view, if a transfer of a considerable number of Arabs could take place by mutual agreement and in an atmosphere of friendship and good will, it would certainly simplify relations and work for a definite settlement." <sup>(6)</sup>

In his interview, Locker referred to an unspecified contact (probably the meeting of 25 May) with Dalton on the criticisms surrounding the reference to transfer. Dalton had said to Locker, "I was the author of this thing. What should I do?" Locker had replied, "Mr. Dalton. this is a very just idea. But as things stand, the Arabs won't accept it and they will, of course, interpret it in the wrong way. My view is that you should leave it but the man who will introduce it shall say, we don't mean expulsion, we mean a sort of exchange of population by mutual agreement." <sup>(7)</sup> (One should mention that there is no evidence that the Chairman at the Conference gave such an explanation.)

As we can see that at about the same time as the various Committees and sub-Committees of the Labour Party were re-studying this Palestine Resolution, there were a

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<sup>1</sup> / Locker to Gillies, 15 May 1944, (CZA A263/19).

<sup>2</sup> / Norman Bentwich, *Judaea Lives Again*, (London, 1944), p.160.

<sup>3</sup> / Sargent, thesis, op. cit., p.265.

<sup>4</sup> / Locker to Gillies, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> / Dalton, Diary, 25 May 1944, (LSE); Pimlott, Dalton Diary, p.749.

<sup>6</sup> / Locker to Dalton, 7 June 1944, (LSE, Dalton papers 7/10 (84)).

<sup>7</sup> / Locker, Interview, op. cit., p.7.

number of contacts between Dalton, Gillies and Locker. Was there any connection or was the timing just by chance? The former is almost certainly the case. The Zionists were almost certainly worried that the Labour Party might scrap entirely this very pro-Palestine Resolution and they therefore got to work to thwart such a reversal.

A proof for such a connection comes from an undated note sent by Gillies to Dalton: "I understand that the recommendation of the Imperial Advisory Committee ... was strongly influenced by the criticism of Prof. N. Bentwich ... I think that the paragraph cannot be redrafted at this stage. This is also the opinion of Berl Locker who, as far as we are concerned, expresses the view of the Trade Union and Socialist Movement in Palestine. It is his opinion that when the Report is presented, the speaker should emphasise that no compulsion is contemplated and that any transfer of Arabs from Palestine should be voluntary. Locker thinks that the phrase that Arabs should be encouraged to move out as the Jews move in is unfortunate. It calls for an emphatic, clear statement that no measures of compulsion will be used under any circumstances." <sup>(1)</sup> [As we have already seen, to a "different audience," Locker described the transfer as "a very just idea."]

Misrepresentation was not limited to outsiders and even a few Labour Members of Parliament joined in the attack. One of these was Richard Stokes, a member who managed to combine extreme pacifism and internationalism, with a barely-concealed anti-Jewish bias. In a pamphlet entitled "Labour and the Post-War Settlement", Stokes wondered why Palestine had "found such a prominent place in the Party policy." He felt that the policy outlined in the pamphlet was a contradiction of the principles enunciated for the benefit of the occupants of the Colonial Empire. "Zionism is a controversial matter even amongst the Jews," continued Stokes, "Is the Labour Party as a whole to be committed to being pro-Zionist and anti-Arab. The suggestion that the Arabs should be cleared out of Palestine is a dangerous one, and will be resisted by the teeming millions of India and the Middle East." The introduction to this document stated that the Parliamentary Peace Aims Group, a group of exclusively Labour members of the Lords and Commons, was responsible for this leaflet. <sup>(2)</sup>

As a result of this pamphlet, a Jewish Labour Member of Parliament, Sidney Silverman, resigned from this Parliamentary Peace Aims Group, of which he was one of the founders. In his letter of resignation, which he forwarded to Rhys Davies, the Chairman of the Group, Silverman wrote that the Jewish people had had no national freedom for two millenia; that millions had been slaughtered; that European Jewish communities had been destroyed leaving the survivors no future except in Palestine, and that the Arab peasantry in Palestine had only benefited by the Jewish pioneering work. He continued, "No one has suggested any transfer of population except by consent. The Arab peoples have five independent kingdoms of their own. I feel sure that the 'teeming millions of India' will lose nothing by the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine or gain anything by its failure; their future, too, lies in achieving political and economic freedom for themselves."

With regard to the actual production of the pamphlet, Silverman commented that a draft was neither submitted to a meeting of the group nor was it circulated to its members. It had never been formally approved and he suspected that this passage had been "introduced by a single member to cover his own personal view with Group authority." However this did not prevent the circulation of this pamphlet to Members of Parliament and to constituent bodies of the Labour Party. <sup>(3)</sup>

In September 1944, Leonard Woolf, Chairman of the Fabian International Bureau, and a Jew, published a booklet for this Bureau entitled "The International Post-War Settlement". <sup>(4)</sup> This booklet contained "a suggested policy for Labour and the Labour Party in regard to the international post-war settlement." It was pointed out that the views expressed in this booklet were solely those of its author and not the collective views of the Fabian Society.

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<sup>1</sup> / Note for Hugh Dalton and George Dallas from Gillies, [n.d.], (British Labour Party Archives, ID/CORR/PAL/5/12ii).

<sup>2</sup> / Quoted by Locker, Jewish Labour, May 1945, op. cit., p.12.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid.; «Why I Resigned», Zionist Review, (London), 13 October 1944, p.5.

<sup>4</sup> / Leonard Woolf, The International Post-War Settlement, Fabian Publications Research Series, no.85, (London, 1944).

Originally this booklet was to have appeared in the name of the Fabian Society but they refused permission for this and hence it appeared under the author's private name. <sup>(1)</sup>

Under a paragraph headed "Palestine", Woolf wrote, "The proposal in the Labour Party's document that the Arabs might be 'encouraged' to transfer themselves elsewhere is a good example of the folly of believing that spectacular settlements are desirable and feasible. This is not the way to effect a reconciliation between Arabs and Jews which will enable them to live together in the same and in different states." He then put forward his own suggestions which involved an agreement between the Allied Nations on a constitution for Palestine, giving effect to the international pledges given to both Jews and Arabs and safeguarding their rights and liberties. <sup>(2)</sup> Locker described these suggestions as "neither convincing or even clear." <sup>(3)</sup>

We can thus see that Woolf did not approve of the Labour Party's proposal for the transfer of the Arab population. When viewed in perspective, the paragraph on Palestine in Woolf's booklet, represented only about one third of a page in a twenty- one page document - a document whose author was critical of almost all and everything!

More specifically, a section of Woolf's booklet dealt with the proposed transfer of population in Europe after the termination of the war. Woolf was strongly opposed to such transfers and considered that they could only be implemented "by the use of power and force" and that "they spring from the same kind of political philosophy as that of the Nazis." He even described transfer of population as a "barbarism" which the Nazis reintroduced into Europe. <sup>(4)</sup>

However when considering the post-war frontiers with Poland and Czecho-Slovakia, he recommended that they be set in such a way that these two countries obtained both economic and strategic security, "but that transfers of territory and population are reduced to a minimum." <sup>(5)</sup> From this we can see that even Woolf, who felt that the transfer of population was reminiscent of Nazi policy, realised that "a minimum" of population transfer was sometimes necessary.

In passing, one might mention that both Ben-Horin <sup>(6)</sup> and Schechtman, <sup>(7)</sup> writing in the 1940s observed that the transfer of population was associated in many minds with the transfers conducted by Hitler in Europe and that the whole concept of transferring population was widely felt to be a spiritual child of Nazi totalitarianism. Both authors immediately added that this was incorrect and that population transfers had taken place well before the Hitler era, in many cases proving most beneficial.

Another hostile reaction to the Palestine paragraph in the Labour Party document came just a few weeks before the Labour Party Conference. This was in the form of a letter from a Labour Member of Parliament, Philips Price, which was published in the left-wing British daily newspaper the "Daily Herald". In this letter, Price said that he hoped that the Party Conference would "unhesitatingly refer back the section dealing with Palestine." The term "refer back" is a euphemism for reject! He felt that it was "almost inconceivable" that the responsible leadership of the Labour Party could display such "callous ignorance". Price said that it was "proposed to transfer the whole Arab population from their homes, where they have been for over 1000 years, to settle, presumably, somewhere in the Arabian desert." <sup>(8)</sup>

The phrase "Arabian desert" was a fallacy. It is true, that the Labour Party proposal did not mention a destination for the transferred Arabs. However there were many fertile underpopulated areas in the Arab countries, particularly in Iraq, and this was the destination which had been suggested by Arthur Greenwood, Acting Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, several months earlier. Was not Price aware of this when he wrote his letter to the

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., vol.40/1, no.8, 20 October 1944, p.25, (CZA).

<sup>2</sup> / Woolf, International Post-War Settlement, op. cit., p.19.

<sup>3</sup> / Locker, Jewish Labour, May 1945, op. cit., p.12.

<sup>4</sup> / Woolf, International Post-War Settlement, op. cit., pp.16-17.

<sup>5</sup> / Ibid., p.17.

<sup>6</sup> / Ben-Horin, The Middle East, op. cit., p.225.

<sup>7</sup> / Joseph Schechtman, Postwar Population Transfers in Europe 1945 - 1955, (Pennsylvania, 1962), p.389.

<sup>8</sup> / Philips Price, Letters to the Editor, Daily Herald, (London), 29 November 1944, p.2.



newspaper? He claimed that the effect of this transfer suggestion in the Labour Party Report had been to make "Moslem opinion throughout the East regard the British Labour Party as an enemy." Finally, Price said that the Executive had no right to commit their Party to the "extreme nationalist aspirations of a section only of the Jews." (1)

Opposition to transfer also came from another Labour Member of Parliament, Arthur Creech-Jones. Creech-Jones, an old and faithful friend of Zionism was at that time, Parliamentary Private Secretary to Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service. In October 1944, at a Jewish Agency Executive Meeting in Jerusalem, Shertok reported that Creech-Jones opposed the transfer clause, since it makes a mockery of the Zionist claim that there had never been a settlement movement operating with such justice and consideration towards the indigenous residents as the Zionists had shown. Creech-Jones argued that the transfer clause in Dalton's resolution made it clear that Jewish settlement was impossible as long as the Arabs continued to reside in Palestine, hence necessitating removal of the Arabs and causing them the greatest injustice. (2)

In contrast, Shertok reported on a talk that he had had with a member of the Fabian Research Institute. Shertok did not identify this member but said that he was "a man moderate in his attitude" towards Zionism. This man had defended the population transfer proposal, adding that "it would be necessary to transfer - such things are not exceptional." (3)

### Zionist Reactions

In mid-May 1944, a news item appeared in a bulletin of the "Jewish Telegraphic Agency" headed "Jewish Commonwealth can be established without Transfer of Arabs". The bulletin continued, "The establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine can be achieved without the need for even one Arab to emigrate from Palestine it was stated by Mr. Moshe Shertok, head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, according to a Jerusalem report received here today (London May 15th). Mr. Shertok, the report says, pointed out that the British Labour Party's suggestion that some Arabs might be transferred from Palestine was 'inconsistent with the Zionist programme'." (4)

This was Shertok's public pronouncement on the question of transfer. However, to closed sessions of the Jewish Agency Executive and the Mapai Central Committee, both held only a week before the appearance of the J.T.A. news report, Shertok voiced rather different views, when reporting on a meeting held with Philip Noel-Baker in London.

Noel-Baker, a member of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party (and at a future date a recipient of the Nobel Prize for Peace) had asked Shertok, "Why is it impossible to transfer Arabs from Palestine? We will give them one hundred million pounds to settle elsewhere." Shertok reported that he had explained that although this resettlement "might be possible in the final stages," transfer should not be advocated as a prior condition to solving the Middle East dilemma. If the overall solution were to be linked with the transfer of the Arabs, this transfer would be regarded as an indispensable condition for settling the Palestine problem. This might result in the suggestion that without transfer of Arabs, it would be impossible to absorb further Jews in the country. As a transfer of Arabs would be very difficult, "as difficult as dividing the Red Sea," it would be easy for the British to arrive at the conclusion that Palestine could not absorb any further Jewish immigrants and thus absolve themselves of any obligation to change the immigration restrictions. (5)

We therefore see that Shertok's insistence on delaying the transfer of Arabs from Palestine until the "final stage" was a tactical move to lessen the likelihood of a continuation of the restrictions on Jewish immigration into Palestine.

On 10 May 1944, the Journalists Association held its Annual General Meeting at the

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1 / Ibid.

2 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., 20 October 1944, op. cit., pp.25-26.

3 / Ibid., 7 May 1944, op. cit., p.10.

4 / "Jewish Commonwealth can be established without transfer of Arabs", Daily News Bulletin, Jewish Telegraphic Agency, (London), vol.xxv, no.115, 16 May 1944, p.2.

5 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., 7 May 1944, op. cit., p.10; Minutes Mapai, 8 May 1944, pp.16-17.

Museum Hall in Tel-Aviv, at which Ben-Gurion was the principal speaker. When references were made to the British Labour Party's proposals for Palestine, he stated that the Zionists had had no part in its formulation. Ben-Gurion said that it was an internal matter for the British Labour Party and depended on that Party's interpretation of the Balfour Declaration. He added that it was the first time that such a resolution on Palestine had been formulated entirely by the British Labour Party.

As stated earlier, after publication of the British Labour Party's resolution, there had been a number of protests from Arab sources. Answering these protests, Ben-Gurion stated, "It is obvious that the allusion is to a transfer of population by consent." <sup>(1)</sup> He then reiterated his statement regarding transfer made during his address at the Extraordinary Zionist Conference held at the Biltmore Hotel.

It was not possible to hold Zionist Congresses during either World War. However, in May 1942, about six hundred delegates representing the main Zionist groups in New York, had met in the Biltmore Hotel to discuss and reformulate the aims of the Zionist movement. The programme adopted, reflected the more militant thinking of the American Zionists. In fact, after Biltmore, Meir Ya'ari of Hashomer Hazair was apprehensive that the maximalists were preparing to transfer large numbers of Arabs from Palestine in order to vacate the country for Jews. He considered such transfers to be both impractical and unethical. <sup>(2)</sup>

With regard to the question of transfer, Ben-Gurion declared at the Biltmore Hotel, "In several quarters the idea of transfer is advanced as the most ideal settlement of the Palestine problem. Let us once and for all understand that to enable Palestine to absorb all the Jews who may be expected to need a new home in the post-war period, there is no economic need for any transfer whatsoever. In post-war Europe, a re-settlement of population may be necessary and inevitable."

Ben-Gurion then referred to the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey and continued, "Syria and Iraq may also have an interest, economically as well as politically, in strengthening their position vis-a-vis their Turkish and Persian neighbors by transferring new Arab settlers to the country and the only source of such settlers is Palestine. But this is a purely internal Arab problem, in which we may help if asked by the Arabs, but in which we neither can, nor ought to take any initiative." Ben-Gurion concluded that Arab transfer was not a pre-requisite condition for large Jewish settlement and that plans should be made for the rebuilding of Palestine on the assumption that there would be a million Arabs in the country whose rights and needs would have to be taken into consideration. <sup>(3)</sup>

One might mention that in the year following Biltmore, Ben-Gurion in a closed meeting once again came out in favour of transfer. He said, "Were there someone to take them [Arabs of Palestine] ... but our blabbering sabotages it ... and if we speak aloud about it, it will only do harm." <sup>(4)</sup> [This statement by Ben-Gurion is quoted to have been said at a meeting of the Mapai Central Council on 25 November 1943. However no meeting of that Council took place on that date; there is therefore an error in transcribing the forum or the date.]

Ben-Gurion had first heard of the British Labour Party's proposals on Palestine on 6 May 1944 and on the following day he put forward his views on these proposals to a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem. Shertok had just delivered his report to the Executive and the members were discussing it.

Ben-Gurion said that the sections in the Labour Party's proposals dealing with the setting up of a Jewish State and enlarging its borders were very acceptable. However the transfer of population "could be problematic." He told the meeting that had the Labour Party consulted him as to a suitable programme for Palestine, it would not have entered his head to suggest transfer. Had they asked him whether to include it in their Report, he would not have advised it, since recommending transfer could be harmful on two counts.

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<sup>1</sup> / Palestine Post, (Jerusalem), 11 May 1944, p.3; Davar, (Tel-Aviv), 11 May 1944, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> / Dothan, *The Struggle for Eretz-Israel*, op. cit., p.231.

<sup>3</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, "Test of Fulfillment", *Jewish Frontier*, (New York), vol.ix, no.6 (90), June 1942, p.13.

<sup>4</sup> / Quoted by Menachem Kedem, "Weizmann, Philby Plan and the Hoskins Mission during the Period of the Second World War", *Kivunim*, (Jerusalem), vol.9, November 1980, p.63 fn.8.

Firstly, as Shertok had already suggested, there was the danger that the world would get the impression that there was no room in Palestine for the Jews without the removal of the Arabs. Since such a removal would be exceedingly difficult, it would follow that further Jewish immigration would not be permitted. Secondly, "it would stand the Arabs on their hind-legs." As we see Ben-Gurion's reasoning is mainly based on tactical considerations, rather than on ideological grounds.

However, Ben-Gurion said that since this transfer proposal had already been made by the Labour Party, there was no point in its being deleted. It could still cause the Zionists harm, but less so than had it been proposed by Jews. "As against this," went on Ben-Gurion, "it is just as well that there is a programme formulated by non-Jews," which, should negotiations with the Arabs materialise, would give the Zionists a bargaining counter.

"Zionism is the transfer of Jews," argued Ben-Gurion. "The transfer of Arabs is easier than any other transfer since there are Arab States in the area. There is no Jewish State - it is impossible to send the Jews (from Palestine) elsewhere and it is clear that if they send the Arabs (to one of the Arab States in the area), there will be an improvement in their living standards."

Ben-Gurion suggested that possibly the Labour Party Congress would delete the clause on transfer and if so the Zionists would be satisfied with the first part of the proposal. However, Ben-Gurion concluded, "It seems to me that we need not be sorry that the word 'transfer' was used by non-Jews." (1) [In a similar vein, the historian Anita Shapira wrote that "it is possible to assume with a high degree of probability that if one of the Great Powers had volunteered to carry out a transfer of the Arabs of Palestine, very few of the Zionist leaders would have opposed such a move." (2)]

David Senator, who had been a member of "Brit Shalom" disagreed with Ben-Gurion who saw this transfer proposal as a proposal made by non-Jews. "It is correct that the British Labour Party proposed it," went on Senator, "but there is not one Arab nor even one non-Arab who will believe that we did not know about this or that we were not involved in this... The psychological effect will not be as Mr. Ben-Gurion portrays it. Even the (British) Labour Party will think that this is the Jewish view and this will free them from political responsibility." (3)

Isaac Gruenbaum, a General Zionist and Director of the Labour Department of the Jewish Agency was of the opinion that there were Arabs who favoured increasing the population of Iraq by means of transfer. "The duty of Jews," said Gruenbaum, "was sometimes to wake non-Jews up to things which they did not yet perceive." If, for example, Christians in Iraq lived under better conditions than the Arabs in Palestine, then the Arabs would migrate from Palestine to Iraq. "What do we fear from this word (transfer)? It has, as it were, some illusory force," said Gruenbaum. "Were it possible, for example, to produce artificially (in Palestine) conditions such as those existing in Iraq, which would attract the Arabs from Palestine to migrate to Iraq, I would not regard it as any injustice or crime, and I do not know why so many of us are afraid of this." (4)

Similar views were expressed by Eliahu Dobkin of the Mapai Party. He pointed out that the question of transfer had never been considered as a matter of lack of space, but as a "solution to the question of minorities." Dobkin continued, " We assume that in Palestine, there will be a majority of Jews. There will then also be a large minority (of Arabs) which it will be necessary to remove." The Mapai member referred to the Greco-Turkish population exchange as an example of a solution to minority problems. "There is no place for our internal inhibitions, they are not justified," said Dobkin. "If there is authority to decide on the question of transfer in Transylvania or other places in Europe, there will be authority to decide on this question here." (5)

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1 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., 7 May 1944, op. cit., pp.17-19.

2 / Anita Shapira, *Land and Power*, trans. William Templar, (New York, 1992), pp.285-86.

3 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., 7 May 1944, op. cit., p.24.

4 / *Ibid.*, p.22.

5 / *Ibid.*, p.25.

Eliezer Kaplan requested that the members of the Executive not exchange arguments on this transfer proposal since that would start the Yishuv arguing. <sup>(1)</sup> To this request, Dov Joseph agreed, adding that he was "not sorry that the British have declared publicly for this. First of all, the Arabs will know that the English consider that it is possible to remove them from Palestine, if there is no room for both of us - and will perhaps change their tune." <sup>(2)</sup>

From all this, we see that the members of the Jewish Agency Executive were prepared, in a closed meeting, to admit that they were pleased with the Labour Party's proposal for transfer of the Arabs from Palestine. In public, however, the Zionist leaders were not so open in their comments.

Weizmann, himself, wrote in his autobiography (intended for general publication), "I remember that my Labour Zionist friends were, like myself, greatly concerned about this (Labour Party transfer) proposal. We had never contemplated the removal of the Arabs, and the British Labourites, in their pro-Zionist enthusiasm, went far beyond our intentions." <sup>(3)</sup> (our emphasis). However, as we have seen earlier in this work, during the thirties, Weizmann had had several private meetings - the minutes of which were always marked "secret" - in which he had proposed, or had given strong support to proposals to remove the Arabs from Palestine!

The Labour Party proposal put the Zionist movement in an embarrassing situation. As Shertok reported to the Mapai Central Committee, "They did not consult us on this point and now the question before us is, are we going to dissociate ourselves from it or not?" <sup>(4)</sup> Gorny holds that after the talks with Dalton and the public explanations on the meaning of transfer, the Zionists "came to the conclusion that it would be wise to derive the maximum political advantage from the extreme pro-Zionist volte-face of the Labour Party." <sup>(5)</sup>

In a letter written by Dalton to Herbert Morrison in late October 1944, the former maintained that the Zionist leaders were in fact very satisfied with this Palestine paragraph. "As you know," wrote Dalton, "I keep in touch with Weizmann and his friends and have been pushing their barrow for them through the National Executive and into a paragraph, with which they were delighted, in the Executive's Declaration on the Post-War International Settlement." <sup>(6)</sup>

As we saw earlier, in his meeting with the leaders of the British Labour Party towards the end of 1939, Weizmann demanded both an unpartitioned Palestine and transfer of Arabs. His views as at October 1944 had not changed in this matter. He was "delighted" with Dalton's resolution which called for transfer of Arabs and at the same time was very worried about a possible partition of Palestine. This we know from Dalton's letter which then continues: "Weizmann came to see me this week, much perturbed by a story that Partition was again being seriously considered 'and at the highest level'. He admitted that, at a certain point in the past [presumably he is referring to 1937] he had been prepared to consider Partition, but he was entirely against it now." <sup>(7)</sup>

Support for Dalton's assessment that the Zionist leaders were delighted with his Palestine resolution comes from a letter written by the American Zionist leader Stephen Wise to John Hayes Holmes in 1945. In it Wise said, "Less than a year ago ... the Labor Party government adopted a resolution ... insisting that there must be an exchange of populations, thus going beyond where we dared to go, though not beyond where we wished to go." <sup>(8)</sup>

### The Correspondence Columns in the "Tribune"

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.26.

<sup>3</sup> / Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, op. cit., p.535.

<sup>4</sup> / Minutes Mapai, 8 May 1944, p.17.

<sup>5</sup> / Gorny, *British Labour Movement and Zionism*, op. cit., p.183.

<sup>6</sup> / Dalton to Morrison, 28 October 1944, (LSE, Dalton papers 8/1 (100)).

<sup>7</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> / Wise to Holmes, 24 September 1945, (American Jewish Historical Society, Stephen S. Wise papers, box 54) ; *The Personal Letters of Stephen Wise*, ed. Justine Wise Polier and James Waterman Wise, (Boston, 1956), p.269.

During May 1944, there were a series of letters on the correspondence page of the "Tribune", the weekly paper of the British Labour Party, from Jewish correspondents. The first letter and the only one opposing transfer was from a Hashomer Hazair representative in London, Artur Ben Israel. As we have seen earlier in this work, in 1937, at the twentieth Zionist Congress, it was the Hashomer Hazair delegates who had come out strongly against the Peel Report recommendation to transfer the Arabs from the proposed Jewish State. They were naturally also very much opposed to the Labour Party's proposal of "encouraging" the Arabs to leave Palestine.

In his letter Ben Israel wrote, "We do not believe, however, that the British Labour Party has done the Zionist Movement a service in recommending that the Arabs should be encouraged to move out as the Jews move in. Not only are we opposed to such schemes of transfer as a solution to national and social questions in general, but we are all more emphatically against such proposals in connection with Palestine... The Socialist Zionist Movement therefore has no interest whatsoever in proposing a policy of transfer, neither has it an interest in depriving the Arab people of their natural and political aspirations." He then explained the Hashomer Hazair scheme for a Bi-National (Jewish-Arab) administration in Palestine. <sup>(1)</sup>

A correspondent replying to this letter pointed out that the majority of the Socialist Zionist Movement members disapproved of the bi-national idea and that Ben Israel spoke only for Hashomer Hazair, a group which had polled about one-fifth of the votes in the last elections to the Conference of the Jewish Labour Federation in Palestine. With regard to the transfer question he continued, "Zionism, it is true, always believed and still believes that the Jewish Homeland can be rebuilt without displacing or transferring a single Arab. The Labour Party Executive, wisely, did not urge transfer as indispensable and did not speak of compulsion." The writer then quoted from the text of the Labour Party Resolution, indicating that the proposed transfer was "on human grounds and to promote a stable settlement." He concluded that one was no worse a Socialist for believing in utilising the solution of population transfer "as a cure for some thorny national problems." <sup>(2)</sup>

Another correspondent, Baruch Ben Shalom, was critical of those who opposed the transfer of Arabs pointing out that nearly half of the Arabs in Palestine had come from the surrounding Arab countries during the course of the past twenty years in order to take advantage of the ever-expanding industrial and agricultural opportunities in Palestine. Ben Shalom then asked, "Could not similar industrial and agricultural expansions in these undeveloped but potentially rich and fertile countries 'encourage' the Arabs to emigrate to them from Palestine? Is there anything reactionary in such a suggestion? Only a touchy mentality would think so." <sup>(3)</sup>

Probably the most vehemently pro-transfer letter printed in the "Tribune" came from Frederick Jellinek who wrote, "A rejection in principle of 'voluntary transfer' of Arabs would in practice amount to a sort of prohibition of emigration. Apart from the fact that this would constitute an undue restriction of civil rights, it would be absurd if Jewish bodies would resort to such a policy." Jellinek felt that since the public associated transfer of population with force, the expression "voluntary transfer" was open to misrepresentation. He said that it seemed "grotesque that Zionist bodies should come into the open and should try to contradict and to counteract the respective Palestine resolution of the British Labour Party."

Jellinek said that this resolution was the first and sole act of real practical help offered to the Jewish and Zionist causes since 1933. "Certainly one is entitled to say that there is no realistic sense whatsoever in Zionism or Zionist bodies resisting an eventual transfer of Arabs from Palestine, if such a measure can be carried out in an amiable way and with peaceful means."

After quoting facts and figures relating to the territories and populations of the Arab countries and Palestine respectively, Jellinek concluded, "Even a person entirely unacquainted

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<sup>1</sup> / Artur Ben Israel, Letters to the Editor, Tribune, (London), 5 May 1944.

<sup>2</sup> / Ephraim Broido, Letters to the Editor, Tribune, (London), 26 May 1944, p.13.

<sup>3</sup> / Baruch Ben Shalom, Letters to the Editor, Tribune, (London), 19 May 1944, p.14.

with geopolitical facts must gather that that transfer which has been suggested by the British Labour Party is feasible as well as just." (1)

### **Editorial Reactions in the Jewish Press**

In an Editorial which appeared immediately after publication of the Labour Party's Report, "The Jewish Chronicle" said that the proposal to allow unlimited immigration into Palestine was clear, precise, direct and "both wise and just". In reference to the population transfer proposal, the Editorial writer said, "A similar spirit of sane realism marks the report's references to the treatment of national minorities. It clearly envisages the necessity for the sake of peace of transferring in certain cases those minorities left outside their own national territory who are not willing to become in fact loyal subjects of the country where they dwell." (2)

A further Editorial published a month later in "The Jewish Chronicle" under the heading "Assisted Passages for Arabs", was one of the few sources to attribute the Arab connection with Palestine correctly, namely that most of the Arabs had entered Palestine during the last century in order to benefit from Zionist development of the country. In this Editorial, "The Jewish Chronicle" again came out strongly in favour of the Labour Party's proposal for transfer of the Arabs. After quoting the appropriate section of the Report, it continued, "Here was a clear cut practical proposal, the first that has ever been formally made in the name of an important political party, and, that party too, the second strongest in the country, judged by its Parliamentary representation."

The Editorial writer was very critical of the Zionist groups and individuals who resisted the proposal and said, "Very regrettably certain Zionist reactions were as unfavourable as they were instantaneous." He described Hashomer Hazair as "a small but fanatical party of unco'guid socialists" who "rushed in with more than youthful impetuosity and declared that on no account would it have anything to do with the Labour suggestion." The Editorial suggested that Hashomer Hazair's difficulty in accepting this proposal stemmed from their "rigid application of doctrinaire Socialist principles in sharp contrast with the constructive ideas of the more experienced British Labour Party."

Shertok was the next to feel the wrath of the Editorial writer of "The Jewish Chronicle". If Shertok's statement that no Arab need emigrate "is to be understood as originating in a fear that any talk about Arab transference might be mischievously employed", then it could be regarded as understandable, "though the absence in the condensed report of the speech of any word of appreciation to the Labour Party for its practical and wise proposal strikes an ungracious and tactless note."

About ten days earlier, in a statement to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Shertok had described the Labour Party's transfer proposal as "inconsistent with the Zionist programme." "This must be dismissed as baseless", said "The Jewish Chronicle" Editorial writer, "The Zionist plan was formulated without any idea of Arab transference, and those who drew it up did not envisage any such necessity... It is difficult to understand therefore how the policy of transference can be pronounced as 'inconsistent' with it."

The writer continued, "The real objection to any voluntary emigration scheme for Arabs, as to all progressive steps in these areas, would come not from the Palestinian masses, but from the Arab ruling cliques and political leaders in Palestine and the neighbouring Arab lands" who would do so for their own selfish ends.

The Editorial concluded, "Viewed in the light of the vast problems that will confront the rebuilders of our stricken civilisation... the question of providing some sort of voluntary and well-financed migration scheme for a few Arabs in Palestine dwindles to a very small compass; and in the hands of the right leaders to comparative triviality." (3)

The "Zionist Review" Editorial described the Labour Party's plan as "a bold and courageous plan for the solution of the Palestine problem." The Editorial writer then pointed

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<sup>1</sup> / Frederick Jellinek, Letters to the Editor, Tribune, (London), 19 May 1944, p.14.

<sup>2</sup> / Editorial, "Post-War as Labour sees it", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 28 April 1944, p.10.

<sup>3</sup> / Editorial, "Assisted Passages for Arabs", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 26 May 1944, p.10.

out that although the Peel Commission proposals of 1937 proposed transfer of the Arabs, as far as the British Labour movement was concerned, the idea of transfer was a new one. It pointed out that the Labour Party's document rightly spoke about "encouragement of transfer by appropriate arrangements for settlement in Arab territories, and not of any compulsion. Zionists have always looked upon this problem as one in which the under-populated Arab countries may be primarily interested." The Editorial concluded by pointing out that the transfer of Arabs from Palestine was not a pre-requisite of large-scale Jewish immigration "though no doubt it is true that it might simplify Arab-Jewish relations and thereby contribute to a stabler political settlement." (1)

The following week a letter was published in the "Zionist Review", in which the correspondent claimed that plans for voluntary transfer of the Arab population "run counter to the declared policy of the Jewish Agency." (2) The Editor replied that "The Report on the 'International Post-War Settlement' is a document prepared by the Executive of the Labour Party, which is, of course, solely responsible for its contents... The Labour Party aims at a radical solution of the Jewish problem... It is quite clear from the document that there cannot be any question of compulsory transfer. The Labour Party is opposed to it, so is the Zionist Movement." After quoting an extract from Ben-Gurion's Biltmore statement, the Editor repeated his statement of the previous week that transfer would be advantageous to the under-populated Arab countries and simplify Arab-Jewish relations. The Editor concluded, "The Jewish people is deeply grateful to British Labour for the vigorous stand they have taken on behalf of the Jewish Homeland in Palestine." (3)

Another British Zionist paper, "The New Judaea" also showed a positive reaction to the Labour Party's transfer proposal. After reviewing the Labour Party's policy regarding the organised transfer of populations in the intermediate post-war period, the Editorial continued, "We are not here concerned with the merits or demands of this policy. But we note that it reflects bold thinking, based on what may be a pessimistic, but certainly is a realistic, appraisal of the post-war situation. It is in this spirit of realism that the Labour Party Report approaches the problems of the Jews in Palestine." (4)

A completely opposite view was taken by the Editorial writer of "The Jewish Standard", the organ of the British Revisionist Party. He described the transfer clause in the Labour Party resolution as "a particularly unpleasant deviation from the logic and justice of History." Whilst hastening to add that "the intentions of those who formulated the resolution are honest and sincere, and that their friendly attitude towards the Jewish People is greatly appreciated," he felt that "far from helping Zionist aspirations, this scheme must arouse unnecessary prejudice." Whereas the voluntary transfer of the Arabs of Palestine would "present no great difficulty," such a transfer was not necessary, and to raise this issue now would only "stir up prejudice against Zionism, giving a welcome propaganda slogan to the Arab potentates and their business partners abroad." (5)

This, however, was not the unanimous opinion of the Revisionists. Two years earlier, their American Convention passed a resolution regarding Arab transfer. It began by stating that there was enough room in "Palestine on both sides of the Jordan" for both its present population and potential Jewish immigrants, and that Palestine would afford "full equality of rights" for the Arabs. The resolution then continued that "should certain parts of the Arab population of Palestine not be willing to live in a Jewish State, opportunity should be given to them to have the choice of option for citizenship in an Arab State, and to transfer their domicile and wealth to that state." Such transfer would have to be carried out in an organised manner, by agreement with the respective Arab States and the payment of full compensation for immovable property. (6) Furthermore, at the annual convention of the New Zionist

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1 / Editorial, "A policy for Palestine", *Zionist Review*, (London), vol.iv, no.17 (new series), 28 April 1944, p.1.

2 / Hans Capell, Letters to the Editor, *Zionist Review*, (London), vol.iv, no.18 (new series), 5 May 1944, p.6.

3 / Editorial comment to letter of Hans Capell, *Zionist Review*, (London), vol.iv, no.18 (new series), 5 May 1944, p.6.

4 / Editorial, "Frontiers of the Jewish State", *The New Judaea*, (London), vol.xv, no.12, September 1944, p.186.

5 / Editorial, "A Red Herring", *The Jewish Standard*, (London), fifth year, no.3, 28 April 1944, p.4.

6 / *Zionews*, (New York), vol.4, no.5, 6 March 1942, p.11.

Organization of America, held at the Hotel Pennsylvania in June 1944, a resolution was adopted, warmly endorsing the British Labour Party resolution. <sup>(1)</sup>

Praise for this resolution in the U.S.A. was not limited to the New Zionist Organization, but also came from American Zionist leaders. <sup>(2)</sup>

The American Jewish press also commented on the proposal of the British Labour Party.

The journal "Opinion" edited by Stephen Wise wrote that this British Labour Party statement "is beyond praise. It reveals the most statesmanlike grasp not only of the Palestine problem but of the entire Jewish problem." A few lines later, the paper wrote: "There is equally deep wisdom in the encouragement offered by the statement to the Arabs 'to move out as the Jews move in'." <sup>(3)</sup>

In an Editorial, the newspaper "Palestine", the organ of the American Zionist Emergency Council, described the British Labour party policy as "more radical than that proposed by the Zionist movement". <sup>(4)</sup>

The newspaper "The New Palestine" "hailed" this statement with one proviso: "The British Labor Party goes in one point beyond what the Zionists of the world have ever either contemplated or desired, namely, that Arabs should be encouraged 'to move out as Jews move in'." <sup>(5)</sup> One might comment, that although this might be partially correct in the public pronouncements of "the Zionists of the world", it is certainly not accurate so far as their private statements are concerned!

Editorials also appeared in several Palestine newspapers of that period. A very positive Editorial entitled "A Wise Decision" appeared in "Ha'aretz" following the British Labour Party Conference. It began by praising the wise method that the British Labour Party had taken to deal with the Palestine problem. The Editorial writer said that this Resolution saw as its main objective making the Jews a majority in Palestine, although he did not specifically mention the transfer paragraph contained in the Resolution. He saw that the most important factor in this Resolution was the active part to be taken by Britain. The Editorial concluded by saying that friends of Zionism and of England will receive this "decision of the British Labour Party as an important contribution to resolve this hard and urgent problem." <sup>(6)</sup>

In complete contrast, an Editorial written seven months earlier, in the extreme left-wing paper "Al Hamishmar" was headed "A Damaging Suggestion" and came out strongly against the British Labour Party's proposal to transfer Arabs. It first praised past efforts of the British Labour Party towards Zionism. However, it then continued that it was very strange that its Resolution included "hints" on encouraging Arabs to leave Palestine. The Editorial writer argued that such a proposal was anti-Socialist and that Zionist policy does not advocate the transfer of Arabs. It concluded that "we reject any solution based on the transfer of Arabs from Palestine as a solution which is unjust, unnecessary and harmful to Zionism." <sup>(7)</sup>

The left wing paper "Davar" took a stand between the above two editorials, although it was closer to that of "Al Hamishmar." The Editorial writer pointed out that the British Labour Party had learned the objectives of Zionism from the Labour Zionists, but the methods for their attainment were their own and included methods never suggested by the Zionists - namely the transfer of Arabs, even with financial inducements. <sup>(8)</sup>

#### **Labour Party Conference 1944**

The Labour Party Conference was to have been held in May 1944. However, as stated earlier, the Conference had to be postponed until December due to a special appeal by the Government some weeks before D-day to avoid mass travelling.

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<sup>1</sup> / Medoff, thesis, p.280.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.279.

<sup>3</sup> / "Statesmanship re Palestine", Opinion, (New York), vol.xiv, no.8, June 1944, p.7.

<sup>4</sup> / Notes on the Palestine Situation, Palestine, (New York), May 1944, p.11.

<sup>5</sup> / "An Irresistible Case", The New Palestine, (New York), vol.xxxiv, no.16, 5 May 1944.

<sup>6</sup> / "A Wise Decision", Ha'aretz, (Tel Aviv), 15 December 1944, p.2.

<sup>7</sup> / "A Damaging Suggestion", Al Hamishmar, (Tel Aviv), 3 May 1944, p.4.

<sup>8</sup> / "Annual Conference", Davar, (Tel Aviv), 15 December 1944, p.1.



In preparation for this conference, in mid-November, a joint meeting of the Policy and International Sub-Committee took place. On the previous day, Dalton had worked to nearly midnight drafting out a resolution on International Post-War Settlement <sup>(1)</sup> which incorporated "welcoming" his Report on the subject. At the meeting, which was chaired by Dalton, "detailed consideration was given" to his draft resolution. Some "minor amendments" were made and it was then "unanimously approved, and publication authorised." <sup>(2)</sup> In his diary he commented on this meeting, "I find that no-one else has done anything and that my draft holds the field." He added that his "colleagues swallow it almost whole, with only a few small amendments." Noel-Baker "arrives, as usual, very late, and we have settled practically everything, his only suggestions being that we should refer, in relation to Palestine, to the old Mandate." <sup>(3)</sup>

The Annual Conference was held from 11 to 15 December 1944 at the Central Hall, in Westminster, London. In the absence of the Chairman, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, who was recuperating after an illness, Harold Laski, the Vice-Chairman was elected to preside over the Conference.

The morning session of Tuesday 12 December, was devoted mainly to International Post-War Settlement. Clement Attlee, Leader of the Party "moved the 'International Post-War Settlement' section of the Report and the following resolution of the National Executive: This Conference welcomes the Report of the National Executive Committee on the International Post-War Settlement, and pledges the Labour Party to continue its full support of the joint war effort of the United Nations..." <sup>(4)</sup>

As mentioned previously, in the period between publication of the National Executive Report in April and the Party Conference in December, objections to the transfer proposal had been raised in certain quarters including a few Labour Members of Parliament. Despite all this, in the discussion which followed Attlee's proposal of the motion at the Party Conference, the paragraph on Palestine was not mentioned. After the discussion, and a fifteen minute reply by Dalton, <sup>(5)</sup> the resolution of the National Executive, which included the Report on International Post-War Settlement, which in turn included the Palestine paragraph, was put to the vote and carried by an overwhelming majority. <sup>(6)</sup> The Palestine paragraph, including the proposal for the transfer of Arab population, thus became part of Labour Party policy.

Although carried by an overwhelming majority, the motion was not passed unanimously. In his interview of 1960, Locker was asked who voted against the resolution. He replied that there were some groups here and there but there members were not from the upper echelons. <sup>(7)</sup>

Due to the postponement of the Labour Party Conference from May to December, there was some uncertainty as to whether a vote would be taken on the International Post-War Settlement Report. In his diary, Dalton writes of a meeting he had towards the end of September with Locker and Shertok at which they voiced their appreciation of his efforts for Palestine. He advised them "to get a variety of organisations to put in resolutions for the Labour Party Conference supporting our declaration." <sup>(8)</sup> The purpose of submitting these resolutions was to ensure that Palestine would not remain unmentioned should no vote be taken on the International Post-War Settlement Report. A second suggestion made by Dalton at this meeting (although not mentioned in his diary) was for the Zionists to enter into a dialogue with the Soviet Union, not about the Labour Party Congress, but about the whole subject of Palestine and to "do everything in order to come to an agreement with the Russians as this

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<sup>1</sup> / Hugh Dalton, Diary, 13 November 1944, p.1, (LSE); Pimlott, Dalton Diary, pp.806-07.

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes, Policy and International Sub-Committees of the British Labour Party, 14 November 1944, p.1, (British Labour Party Archives).

<sup>3</sup> / Hugh Dalton, Diary, 14 November 1944, p.1, (LSE); Pimlott, Dalton Diary, p.807.

<sup>4</sup> / Report of the Forty-third Annual Conference of the Labour Party, op. cit., p.131.

<sup>5</sup> / Hugh Dalton, Diary, 12 December 1944, p.4, (LSE).

<sup>6</sup> / Report of the Forty-third Annual Conference of the Labour Party, op. cit., p.140.

<sup>7</sup> / Locker, Interview, op. cit., p.7.

<sup>8</sup> / Hugh Dalton, Diary, 26 September 1944, (LSE).

would be of great value." (1)

Locker reported to a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive in London that Dalton had explained that the Labour Party "had decided to take Palestine and India out of the bigger statement and make it the basis of special resolutions." (2) Hence the tactics Dalton was recommending were to make the subject of Palestine a material issue at the Labour Party Conference.

Three provincial groups, all from the North of England, namely, the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party, the Central Leeds District Labour Party, and the City of Leeds Labour Party, all submitted resolutions dealing with the subject of Palestine. All three resolutions retained the option of the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine, but emphasised that the Arabs should have the free choice to remain and share the benefits of Jewish colonisation or be helped to settle in the underpopulated neighbouring countries. (3)

Details of these resolutions are as follows:

(a) Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party:

The Liverpool Poale Zion formulated the resolution on Palestine and submitted it to the Executive Committee of the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party. This Executive Committee met on 13 October 1944 and according to its Minutes: "Letter Liverpool Branch Poale Zion and resolution for Annual Conference, Moved and Seconded, 'That the E.C. [Executive Committee] recommend that same be approved.' Agreed." (4)

A few days later on the evening of 19 October 1944 a Council meeting of the Liverpool Trades Council and Borough Labour Party was held. At that meeting this recommendation of the Executive from their meeting of 13 October was put before the Council. It read in part: "The conference welcomes the policy on Palestine enunciated in the National Executive's Statement on 'The International Post-War Settlement' that the Jews must be given the opportunity to become a majority in the country while safeguarding the full equality of the inhabitants. Those Arabs who may desire to settle in one of the neighbouring Arab States must be given assistance to do so." (5)

The Council discussed this recommendation and after some procedural wrangling, it was approved. (6)

About a month prior to this council meeting, the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party together with the Liverpool Jewish Labour Party organised a public meeting at the Picton Hall in Liverpool. The subject of the meeting was "Jews, Palestine and the Middle East" and the speakers were Harold Laski and Berl Locker. (7) A report of this meeting appeared in the following day's "Liverpool Daily Post" but it does not specifically mention the Labour Party's International Post-War Settlement document. (8)

(b) Central Leeds District Labour Party:

Its second paragraph reads: "The Conference is of the opinion that in a Jewish Commonwealth, based on full equality of rights and duties of all citizens without distinction of race or creed, the Arab population will, as hitherto, continue to derive great benefits from the general progress of the country brought about by the Jewish reconstruction work; should parts of the Arab population, however, desire to live in an Arab State, they should be helped to settle in one of the neighbouring underpopulated Arab Territories." (9)

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., 20 October 1944, op. cit., p.25.

<sup>2</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 18 December 1944, p.3, (CZA Z4/302/29).

<sup>3</sup> / "Labour Party Conference", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 15 December 1944, p.5.

<sup>4</sup> / Minutes, Executive Committee, Liverpool Trades Council and Borough Labour Party, 13 October 1944, (Liverpool Trades Council Archives, 331 TRA 21/4 Reel 9)

<sup>5</sup> / Minutes, Council Meeting of Liverpool Trades Council and Borough Labour Party, 19 October 1944, para.62, (Liverpool Trades Council Archives, 331 TRA 21/4 Reel 9); 1944 Conference Agenda, British Labour Party, p.27, Resolution 36, (British Labour Party Archives).

<sup>6</sup> / Minutes, Council Meeting of Liverpool Trades Council and Borough Labour Party, 19 October 1944, op. cit., para.63-64.

<sup>7</sup> / Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party and Liverpool Jewish Labour Party, Notice of Public Meeting to be held 10 September 1944, (Liverpool Trades Council Archives).

<sup>8</sup> / "Labour and Palestine", Liverpool Daily Post, 11 September 1944.

<sup>9</sup> / 1944 Conference Agenda, British Labour Party, p.27, Resolution 35, op. cit.

In an amendment to this resolution, the East Fulham District Labour Party proposed, amongst other things, to delete this paragraph. <sup>(1)</sup>

(c) City of Leeds Labour Party:

The third paragraph of their resolution reads: "The Conference believes that the time has come for this country in concert with the United Nations to promote and guarantee the establishment of Palestine as a free Jewish Commonwealth. This can be effected without hardship to the existing population, who can have the free choice of remaining and sharing in the benefits which Jewish colonisation brings in its wake or be assisted to participate in the development of the vast resources of undeveloped land in the neighbouring Arab countries." <sup>(2)</sup>

At a meeting of the Policy and International Sub-Committee of the British Labour Party, "it was agreed that the National Executive Committee should agree to support" this resolution of the City of Leeds Labour Party "if the delegate of the City of Leeds Labour Party agrees to the substitution of 'National Home for the Jewish People' for 'Free Jewish Commonwealth'..." <sup>(3)</sup>

It seems likely that the Zionists were actively involved in formulating this resolution, since Locker reported to a meeting of the Jewish Agency in London, that Gillies had called him and said "You must change the word 'commonwealth' as you are still a minority." <sup>(4)</sup>

A few days before the opening of the Conference, the "Zionist Review" reported that the "Conference Arrangements Committee has called together a meeting of all groups interested in the question of Palestine [presumably the above provincial groups]; it is hoped that an agreed formula will be arrived at for submission to the Conference." <sup>(5)</sup> Unfortunately the Minutes of this Committee are not extant. <sup>(6)</sup>

However, the bottom line to all these provincial branch resolutions, was, that since the document on International Post-War Settlement, which included the Palestine paragraph was put to a vote and overwhelmingly adopted, none of the sponsors of the resolutions from the three provincial groups felt that there was any reason to put their own resolutions on Palestine to the vote. The contingency which they had intended to prevent had not arisen.

Another provincial Labour group to support the Labour Party's document on International Post-War Settlement was Glasgow in Scotland, although they did not submit a resolution for the Annual Conference. A conference of Labour Organisations of Glasgow and the neighbouring districts dealing with "Jews, Palestine and Post War-Settlement" was held on 26 November 1944, under the auspices of the local Labour Party and the Poale Zion. It was addressed by Berl Locker. They unanimously adopted a resolution which "welcomed the policy on Palestine, proposed in the Labour Party Executive's Report on International Post-War Settlement, by which the Jews would be given the opportunity to become the majority in Palestine." <sup>(7)</sup>

The British Jewish press of that period reported that Poale Zion had also submitted a resolution for the Labour Party Conference. <sup>(8)</sup> The only resolution that has been traced was one submitted in March 1944, when, as at that date, the Annual Conference had been scheduled for May of that year. The Poale Zion resolution did not mention the transfer of Arabs. <sup>(9)</sup> However, it should be borne in mind that the Labour Party had not yet published its Report, which included the transfer proposal.

A few days after the Labour Party Annual Conference had adopted their document on International Post-War Settlement, the question of transfer came up (by chance and not by design) at a meeting of the Jewish Agency Executive in Jerusalem.

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1 / Ibid.

2 / Ibid., p.26, Resolution 34.

3 / Minutes, Policy and International Sub-Committees of the British Labour Party, 14 November 1944, op. cit., p.3.

4 / Minutes, J. A. Exec., London, 18 December 1944, p.3, op. cit.

5 / "Labour Party Annual Conference", Zionist Review, (London), 8 December 1944, p.3.

6 / Private Communication from Labour Party Archivist, 18 February 2003.

7 / "Labour's Support for Commonwealth", Zionist Review, (London), 1 December 1944, p.2.

8 / "Labour Party and Palestine", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 15 December 1944, p.5; "Labour Party Annual Conference", Zionist Review, 8 December 1944, op. cit., p.3.

9 / Text of Resolution submitted by Poale Zion, sent 10 March 1944, (CZA S25/81).

In the course of a speech to the Executive, David Senator, (who had been a member of the "Brit Shalom" organisation), stated that he does "not see in transfer of the Arabs from Palestine a moral question". He went on to argue that "when I weigh up the catastrophe of five million Jews against the transfer of a million Arabs, my conscience is clean and easy, and I will say that even far more drastic things are permitted." Senator however had doubts whether such a transfer was politically feasible.

Weizmann then interjected, "Who is speaking about transfer?" to which Senator replied, "The Labour Party." Weizmann said that this transfer proposal was submitted in spite of opposition from the Zionists. Transfer was unnecessary since "there was enough room in Palestine, even for future generations." Moshe Shapira of the Mizrahi Party commented that it was not such a bad thing that the Labour Party had suggested transfer. <sup>(1)</sup>

The Labour Party's paragraph on Palestine had been very thoroughly prepared. The document on International Post-War Settlement had been considered at a number of meetings of both the International Sub-Committee and the National Executive of the Labour Party before it was published in April 1944. The Annual Conference was postponed for eight months and during these eight months the Palestine paragraph, especially the phrase encouraging the Arabs to move out was subjected to criticism. The leadership and also the rank-and-file of the Labour Party had ample time to consider these criticisms and draw their conclusions. Yet they did not alter even one word of the Palestine paragraph - the phrase "Let the Arabs be encouraged to move out" remained absolutely unchanged - and at the Annual Conference it was passed with an overwhelming majority with no attempt at amendment by any delegate. Furthermore in April 1945, the National Executive of the Labour Party adopted a resolution, "The Committee reaffirms the policy adopted by the Annual Conference in December 1944, in regard to Palestine." <sup>(2)</sup>

This affirmation was reiterated at the 1945 Annual Conference which took place in the following month in Blackpool, two weeks after the termination of the war.

On the second day of this Conference at the session entitled "Let us face the future" - Declaration of Labour Policy, Maurice Rosette, a delegate of Poale-Zion Jewish Socialist Labour Party observed that "at the last Labour Party Conference held in December, the report on international affairs contained a clear and unequivocal statement on the party attitude to the Jewish question - a question of which delegates would do well to inform themselves." <sup>(3)</sup>

Hugh Dalton said that the National Executive had made its position on the question of the Jewish people "abundantly and repeatedly clear". He reminded the delegates that five months earlier the previous Annual Conference had "accepted and welcomed without even the challenge of a card vote, the document entitled 'The Post-War International Settlement'. That stands as the policy of this Movement and of this Party, and in that document there is a clear and definite statement regarding Palestine and the Jewish people." He then spoke about the holocaust and the resulting need for unrestricted Jewish immigration into Palestine. <sup>(4)</sup> We can clearly see from Dalton's statement that as at May 1945, Labour Party policy regarding transfer of the Arabs from Palestine had in no way changed.

### **Change in Labour Party Policy**

On 8 May 1945, the Second World War ended. Two months later, a General Election was held in Britain, resulting in a landslide victory for the Labour Party. Clement Attlee became Prime Minister and appointed Ernest Bevin to Foreign Secretary. When Bevin entered the Foreign Office, his senior civil servants advised against implementation of the Labour Party's proposals on Palestine - which advice Bevin accepted, retaining the White Paper and thus continuing the severe limitation on Jewish immigration into Palestine.

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<sup>1</sup> / Minutes, J. A. Exec., vol.40/2, no.33, 16 December 1944, pp.19-20, (CZA).

<sup>2</sup> / American Zionist Emergency Council, Book of Documents submitted to Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, (New York, 1946), p.212; "Future of Palestine, British Labour Party's call", *Zionist Review*, (London), 27 April 1945, p.2.

<sup>3</sup> / Report of Forty-fourth Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Blackpool, (London, 1945), p.100

<sup>4</sup> / *Ibid.*, p.103.

### **The Resolution of the British Common Wealth Party**

The British Common Wealth Party, a Socialist splinter group, was founded in 1942 with a policy based on Christian morality and not Marxian scientific socialism. Prior to the 1945 General Election, there were three Common Wealth members sitting in the British Parliament. In 1945, the Party published a report on international affairs, containing a section on Palestine, which while extremely sympathetic to Jewish aspirations, included two sentences advocating partition of Palestine. At their Conference held in Liverpool in 1945, the Hendon branch of the Party submitted an amendment deleting the reference to partition and inserting a more positive attitude towards the Jewish State, which was then accepted by the National Committee.

Included in the resolution passed by the Conference was a paragraph dealing with the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. "We do not favour the principle of compulsory emigration in any part of the world but we recommend that an international commission be appointed, including both Jewish and Arab representatives, whose task shall be to draw up a scheme involving as little displacement of the Arab population as possible and arranging for facilities for such Arab transfer as is necessary to adjacent territory." <sup>(1)</sup>

It appears from the wording of this resolution that "such Arab transfer as is necessary" might be a compulsory transfer. Hence although opposed in principle to compulsory emigration, the Party would have appeared to have recognised that the situation in Palestine was such as to necessitate extreme measures.

In the July 1945 General Election, the Common Wealth Party lost two of its three Parliamentary seats. It failed to contest any further elections.

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<sup>1</sup> / "Common Wealth Party Conference Support Jewish State", The Jewish Standard, (London), sixth year no.1, 13 April 1945, p.2; "Common Wealth Attitude on Palestine", The Jewish Chronicle, (London), 13 April 1945, p.8.

## SECTION 5

### PROPOSALS BY THE REVISIONISTS

#### **American Resettlement Committee**

Revisionism was a Zionist political movement which was founded and led by Vladimir Jabotinsky. Its platform was that the realisation of Zionism was the establishment of a Jewish state with a Jewish majority in the entire territory of Palestine, namely on both sides of the Jordan.

In the latter 1920s and 1930s, the Revisionists became the principal Zionist opposition party in the World Zionist Organisation. They opposed this Organisation's policy and leadership, and in 1935, they broke away and set up the New Zionist Organisation (NZO).

We have already seen how the Revisionists strongly opposed the Peel Commission's transfer proposal. However as we shall now see, in the 1940s, their attitude towards transfer underwent a complete change.

In early 1943, the American Resettlement Committee for Uprooted European Jewry was established, and Eliahu Ben-Horin was appointed its executive director. This committee was in fact an arm of the NZO - its address was that of the NZO headquarters in New York, and the NZO newspaper "Zionews" referred to the American Resettlement Committee as being "organized" by the NZO. <sup>(1)</sup>

Ben-Horin's first objective was to try and recruit former President Herbert Hoover as the committee's honorary president. To this end, he sent Hoover a twelve page memorandum, which was undated.

When was this memorandum sent to Hoover? According to historian Rafael Medoff it was in May 1943. <sup>(2)</sup> Support for this comes from a letter written by Hoover on 12 May, where it would seem that he had already received this memorandum. <sup>(3)</sup>

The memorandum began by talking about the dangers of anti-Semitism and that "any effort to reconstruct European Jewry at home would not only arouse a terrific wave of anti-Semitism, but would be practically impossible from an economic point of view." The only solution would be large-scale emigration from Europe. After writing at length about attempts at Jewish colonisation in Biro-Bidjan and the Dominican Republic, Ben-Horin concluded that his committee "is primarily intent on promoting the resettlement of uprooted European Jews in Palestine", listing a number of reasons to support his thesis. <sup>(4)</sup>

He then continued: "Should the Palestinian Arabs persist in their objection to and obstruction of Jewish settlement in Palestine, a sound plan for the transfer of the Palestinian Arabs to Iraq could be evolved, which would be highly beneficial to the country of Iraq, to the Arab settlers from Palestine, and to a final solution of the Palestinian and Jewish problems." Ben-Horin went on to quote from the book written by Hoover and Hugh Gibson regarding the

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<sup>1</sup> / "Resettlement Committee Launched", Zionews, (New York), vol.iv, nos.31-32, September-October 1943, p.3

<sup>2</sup> / Medoff, op. cit., p.455.

<sup>3</sup> / Hoover to Sokolsky, 12 May 1943, (HH PPI - Sokolsky, George).

<sup>4</sup> / Memorandum for the Hon. Herbert Hoover on the American Resettlement Committee for Uprooted European Jewry, [n.d.], pp.1-9, (HH PPI - Ben-Horin, Eliahu).

population transfer solution to solve problems arising from mixed populations. <sup>(1)</sup>

On 12 May 1943 Hoover wrote to George Sokolsky asking "wherein does this movement differ from the Zionist movement? It proposes just two things: to raise money to move refugees, and to move Arabs out of Palestine, neither of which can be done - in any event, until the war is over." He complained that the Jews did not accept his idea of resettlement in the highlands of Africa "as it does not meet their ideas of nationality." <sup>(2)</sup>

About a fortnight later, Hoover wrote to Ben-Horin declining the offer to serve on this committee. He felt that the time was not yet ripe and that "at the moment the different organizations seem to be busy trying to destroy each other." Since both what appears to be the top-copy <sup>(3)</sup> and also the carbon-copy <sup>(4)</sup> of this letter are in the Hoover archives and both have a line scratched through them, it would seem that this letter was never sent.

Meetings did however take place between Hoover and Ben-Horin on 2 June <sup>(5)</sup> and on 2 July. <sup>(6)</sup> Although we have no record of what transpired at them, it would be fair to assume that Ben-Horin tried to persuade Hoover to join the committee. There is also a letter to Ben-Horin dated 8 June, in which Hoover declined "to enter the picture" at that time, although he left open the possibility of being of service at a later date. <sup>(7)</sup>

Ben-Horin then tried but unsuccessfully to recruit Alf Landon, the former governor of Kansas, to be National Chairman of the committee. <sup>(8)</sup>

On 4 October 1943, this committee made its initial statement in an almost whole page advertisement in "The New York Times". <sup>(9)</sup> The advertisement was headed "The Jewish Problem Must Be Solved", "Palestine for the Jews, Iraq for the Arabs - And Peace in the Middle East."

The statement began by stating that the solution of the Jewish problem depended on the Christian world. Although many Christians had expressed sympathy with the suffering Jewish people, no public body had yet put forward a long-range constructive solution to the Jewish problem. It pointed out that the bulk of European Jewry could not be expected to take root again in their former countries. [Although news of a Holocaust was already known, its final toll was not yet to be even imagined.] Experience had shown that the only possible solution of the Jewish problem was resettlement in Palestine.

Whereas, according to the statement, the Jews were willing to live in peace and amity with the Arabs, some of the Arabs were not. Therefore as a solution to the conflict between Arabs and Jews, the committee suggested "an organized and voluntary transfer of the Palestinian Arabs to Iraq."

Under the sub-heading, "Jews to Palestine, Arabs to Iraq", the committee showed that Iraq badly needed an influx of Arab peasants and the Palestine Arab population were the only prospective immigrants.

They quoted the successful compulsory Greco-Turkish exchange of population, and then brought down the words of Herbert Hoover and Hugh Gibson on the "remedy of transfer of populations". The committee declared, "We do not hesitate to say that of all the transfers planned, the transfer of the uprooted Jews to Palestine and of the Palestinian Arabs to Iraq would serve the greatest humanitarian cause and would entail the least difficulty. By these far-reaching measures, the problems of Iraq, of the Palestinian Arabs and of European Jewry can be permanently and soundly solved."

The committee concluded by putting forward a six-point "Plan of Action". The paragraphs dealing with transfer of Arabs read as follows:

"4. To promote the creation of a new granary through the irrigation of the forsaken

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.9-10.

<sup>2</sup> / Hoover to Sokolsky, 12 May 1943, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> / Hoover to Ben-Horin, 25 May 1943, top-copy, (HH PPI - Ben-Horin, Eliahu).

<sup>4</sup> / Hoover to Ben-Horin, 25 May 1943, carbon-copy, (HH PPI - Ben-Horin, Eliahu).

<sup>5</sup> / Calendar, 2 June 1943, (HH Presidential Papers - Calendar).

<sup>6</sup> / Calendar, 2 July 1943, (HH Presidential Papers - Calendar).

<sup>7</sup> / Hoover to Ben-Horin, 8 June 1943, (HH PPI - Ben-Horin, Eliahu).

<sup>8</sup> / Medoff, op. cit., p.456 and fn.27, 28 ; Landon to Ben-Horin, 30 July 1943, (Jabotinsky Archives, 3/2/36p).

<sup>9</sup> / "The Jewish Problem Must be Solved", The New York Times, 4 October 1943, p.12.

lands of the Tigris and the Euphrates, providing a powerful inducement to the Arab peasants of Palestine and Transjordan to settle in Iraq.

5. To explore the financial, engineering and juridical aspects of the resettlement projects.

6. To help create the necessary agencies for the resettlement of the uprooted European Jews in Palestine, and of Palestinian Arabs in Iraq."

It should be noted from paragraph 4 of the "Plan of Action", that pronouncing the transfer of Arabs was to be from both (Western) Palestine and Transjordan, accorded with the Revisionist ideas for a Jewish State on both sides of the Jordan River. We also see that although they talk of "voluntary" transfer, they would provide a "powerful inducement" for such transfer.

This statement was endorsed by the members of the committee, who numbered well over one hundred and fifty, and comprised Jews and Gentiles from all walks of life - legislators, public officials, clergy, educators, authors, etc. Their names were all listed at the side of the advertisement. <sup>(1)</sup>

A few days later, a news item in "The New York Times" reported on a press conference held by two members of the executive of this committee. This conference marked the opening of a campaign "to encourage international cooperation in improving the rich agricultural lands of Iraq and the voluntary settlement there of the Palestinian Arab population, leaving Palestine for Jewish resettlement." <sup>(2)</sup>

The September-October edition of "Zionews", the Revisionist newspaper of America, reported in detail on this advertisement under the heading "Resettlement Committee Launched, Urges Arab-Jewish Exchange of Populations", and it also reproduced the entire text of the advertisement. <sup>(3)</sup>

An Editorial in the same edition of "Zionews" came out in strong support of the committee's plan for transfer. "The American Resettlement Committee offers a sound and far-reaching plan of action to solve not only the Jewish problem in Europe, but also, in large measure, the Arab problem." It pointed out that in fact it would be "a Jewish-Arab exchange of populations." The editorial writer felt sure that "the plan will gain support." After quoting various precedents for transfer, and persons such as Sir Norman Angell, Henry Morgenthau Sr, and Israel Zangwill who had in the past proposed transfer of Arabs, the writer concluded, "It was at the right moment that the American Resettlement Committee brought the project to the fore." <sup>(4)</sup>

In contrast, there was strong criticism of this advertisement in an article in the left-wing "Jewish Frontier". In an article under the heading "The Irresponsible Revisionists", Hayim Greenberg, referring to this "political advertisement", described the Revisionists as "specialists in 'strong language', intransigent slogans and phraseological extremism". Not only are they demanding "a greater Palestine within its historic frontiers, but Palestine without any Arabs."

He pointed out that although the advertisement took pains to describe this proposed transfer to be "voluntary", the authors brought as a historical example the Greco-Turkish population transfer which was in fact a "forced exchange".

Greenberg felt that there was no reason to suppose that "large numbers of Palestinian Arabs will desire to migrate to Iraq in the near future." Thus anyone speaking of such a transfer "even though he may describe such transfer as merely voluntary migration, is really proposing something which can only be done by use of force."

He also considered that this Revisionist proposal was "a very dangerous one", since if Palestine were so densely populated with Arabs that there was no room for Jewish settlers, then justice would demand that the Jews give up their claim and "seek a home in an

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> / "Palestine Plan Backed", The New York Times, 8 October 1943, p.6.

<sup>3</sup> / "Resettlement Committee Launched", Zionews, (New York), September-October 1943, op. cit., pp.3, 4, 6.

<sup>4</sup> / Editorial, "The American Resettlement Committee", Zionews, September-October 1943, op. cit., pp.10-11.



underpopulated and undeveloped region elsewhere." <sup>(1)</sup>

Three years later however, Greenberg when addressing the 22nd Zionist Congress at Basle, said one of ways of implementing the Biltmore resolution for a Jewish State in Palestine, would be to transfer the Arabs. He said, "I am speaking at present in a formal way, without evaluating this possibility - to transfer a large portion of the Arab population to another country, or other countries." He said that this would only be possible against the will of the transferred Arabs, since it was clear to anyone who had seen Palestine and its Arab population and had compared their living conditions with those in other Arab states. <sup>(2)</sup> In 1943, Greenberg was publicly censuring and ridiculing the Revisionist proposal of transfer; in 1946 he was putting it forward himself as a possible solution!

Another criticism to the Revisionist advertisement, although much more indirect, came from the President of the Zionist Organization of America, Dr. Israel Goldstein, in an article entitled "Zionist Discipline". Goldstein was critical of "secessionist splinters", stressing the Revisionists, who had broken away from the Zionist movement and, not being accountable to "any organized body of Jewish public opinion" could thus "engage in sensational tactics such as ... proposing the solution of the Palestine problem by the removal of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq." <sup>(3)</sup>

In an article written towards the end of 1945, the writer Hannah Arendt refers to the "transfer of all Palestine Arabs which is openly demanded by Revisionists." <sup>(4)</sup> Later in the same article, she states that the Revisionists "were the first to advocate the transfer of Palestine Arabs to Iraq." <sup>(5)</sup>

Although Arendt did not, give a source for these statements, she almost certainly took her information regarding openly demanding a transfer of the Arabs from this "New York Times" advertisement. Her comments regarding the Revisionists being the first to advocate such a transfer are certainly not accurate. However several of the proposals of transfer to Iraq which preceded the Revisionists were in secret documents, which, when Arendt wrote her article in 1945, were not available to her.

### **Lohamei Herut Israel (Lehi)**

At the beginning of the Second World War, the Revisionists made a truce with the British to suspend their actions for the duration of the War. As a result, in 1940, a group under the leadership of Abraham Stern, broke away from the main-stream Revisionists and established Lohamei Herut Israel (Lehi).

Soon after the formation of the Lehi movement in 1940, one of its commanders, Hanoch Kalay, had a meeting with his colleague Shalom Kluger, a veteran Revisionist Zionist who had attempted to formulate new principles for "Establishment Zionism". At this meeting Kluger showed Kalay some of the "principles" which he had formulated. Kalay also came across some notebooks with various Zionist ideologies, including the notebook entitled "Megillat Chibad" of the poet Yaakov Cohen. Contained in these notebooks were attempts to formulate ideological principles. Kalay showed these notebooks to Abraham Stern and the latter suggested that, with the aid of all this material, he formulate principles for the Lehi organisation. <sup>(6)</sup>

Kalay acted on Stern's suggestions and a document dated Tishri 5701 (October 1940) contains a draft of Kalay's proposals. Number 7 is headed "Foreign Policy" and contains a proposal for Arab transfer: "Solution of the Arab problem in the Kingdom of Israel by means of population transfer." <sup>(7)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Hayim Greenberg, "The Irresponsible Revisionists", Jewish Frontier, (New York), vol.x, no.11 (106), November 1943, pp.6-7.

<sup>2</sup> / Official Minutes of 22nd Zionist Congress (Basle 1946), (Jerusalem), pp.232-33.

<sup>3</sup> / "Zionist Discipline", The New Palestine, (New York), vol.xxxiv, no.9, 21 January 1944, p.205.

<sup>4</sup> / Hannah Arendt, "Zionism Reconsidered", The Menorah Journal, (New York), vol.xxxiii, no.2, Autumn 1945, p.164.

<sup>5</sup> /Ibid., p.167.

<sup>6</sup> / Evidence given by Hanoch Kalay to David Niv, p.4, (Jabotinsky Archives 12/1/346 P); David Niv, The Irgun Zvai Leumi, part 3, (Tel-Aviv, 1967), p.164.

<sup>7</sup> / Hanoch Kalay's Proposals for 'Principles of Renaissance', Tishri 5701 (October 1940), (Lehi Archives K-37).

Kalay handed the draft over to Stern, who then formulated the proposals in their final form in more powerful language. They were then debated at the Lehi headquarters and approved <sup>(1)</sup> and published in their newspaper "Bamahteret".

In their final form the subject of Arab transfer appeared as "Principle of Renaissance" Number 14: "Judgment of the Strangers: The solution of the problem of the strangers will be by the exchange of population." <sup>(2)</sup> As one can see, Stern was more cautious in his formulation and replaced the word "Arab" by "strangers" and "transfer" by "exchange". One can also observe that Lehi's attitude was quite clear and at that time did not follow the line of the mainstream Revisionists on the transfer issue.

Kalay remembers that Stern showed these Principles to Yaakov Cohen, who levelled criticisms on a number of the paragraphs. <sup>(3)</sup> The examples Kalay quoted did not include the paragraph regarding Arab transfer.

These Principles were then shown to the members of Lehi. Some received them with enthusiasm, others with indifference whilst others questioned them. <sup>(4)</sup> It was however made clear by the leadership that these Principles obligated all the members and that anyone who was not prepared to abide by them should leave the movement immediately. <sup>(5)</sup>

At a later date Dr. Israel Eldad wrote a long commentary on these Principles. On this Principle number 14 on population transfer, Eldad began by stating that different peoples had never been able to live in close proximity and if in the course of time they did not assimilate into each other, the end result would be conflict and war. For the non-Jews who lived in Palestine, the Torah had only one solution: to complete destruction - to allow not even one non-Jew to remain alive. Those who for some reason were not destroyed, fully assimilated into the Jewish people. Eldad then put it in a nutshell - "either destruction or assimilation".

With regard to the world scene, Eldad said that in places where it was impossible to use the method of destruction, such as in Central or Eastern Europe or the Balkans, there had been an attempt at assimilation of the various minorities, but after this had failed began the unsuccessful attempt of granting autonomy. The problem of minorities had remained after the First World War and was one of the causes of the Second World War.

In contrast to all this, Eldad pointed out that the relations between Turkey and Greece became friendly as a result of a population transfer between them. Places which did not utilise population transfer created for themselves an explosive situation and a lot of trouble.

He then spoke about the "problem" of Jews living in the Diaspora. Attempts to solve the "problem" by granting of equal rights had, according to Eldad, been unsuccessful. In Poland it had been suggested that the problem could only be solved by the Jews emigrating and in the Soviet Union it had been solved, on the face of it, by assimilation. He pointed out that the sole reason that he had brought up the Jewish problem was to show that a strange body in the midst of another people was explosive.

Eldad concluded by saying that the Jews of Palestine were not interested in the assimilation of strangers into their midst. They were interested in peaceful relations with the Arab people and would solve the question of the Arab tribes who had arrived in Palestine as a result of their wanderings, by population exchange with the hundreds of thousands of Jews who had lived in the Arab countries. He felt that such a solution was the only one, and was essential for a good and lasting peace between the Kingdom of Israel and the Arab kingdom - the alternative would be unending war. <sup>(6)</sup>

However in 1947, when Lehi submitted a memorandum to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), their approach to this question became much closer to Jabotinsky's published ideas on transfer of the late 1930s. According to the memorandum, the Jewish State would concern itself with the education and rights of its Arab population, whilst

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<sup>1</sup> / Evidence by Kalay, op. cit.; Niv, Irgun Zvai Leumi, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> / Lohamey Herut Israel Writings, 2nd ed., (Tel-Aviv, 1982), vol.1, cols.27-28.

<sup>3</sup> / Evidence by Kalay, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> / Evidence by Kalay, op. cit.; Niv, Irgun Zvai Leumi, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> / Niv, Irgun Zvai Leumi, op. cit., p.165.

<sup>6</sup> / Israel Eldad, Handwritten Commentary on 'Principles of Renaissance', pp.40-42, (Lehi Archives).

the Arab population would serve as a bridge of co-operation between the Jews and the neighbouring countries. We must understand that Lehi regarded Britain as the enemy and some of the Lehi members regarded the Arabs as potential allies in the struggle for national liberation.

Lehi's document then suggested that certain groups of Arabs might not want to live with the Jews for one reason or another. "If these Arabs would prefer to settle voluntarily in neighbouring countries which are under-populated, then the borders of Palestine will be open for them (to leave), just as the borders will be open for the hundreds of thousands of Jews who wish to enter from the countries of the Middle East." After quoting examples of population transfer that had taken place after the Second World War, the memorandum commented that "this remedy could also be beneficial in our country, if part of the population were to prefer to forgo willingly the living conditions of the developing Jewish State and to live in a purely Arab State." <sup>(1)</sup>

Following publication of this memorandum, an article appeared in "Kol Ha'am", the communist daily newspaper of Palestine, in which the author Esther Wilenska (who was later a communist member of the Knesset), was extremely critical of Lehi.

With regard to the very mildly worded transfer proposal which Lehi had submitted to UNSCOP, Wilenska first ridiculed the word "voluntarily" used by Lehi in its proposal. She thus concluded that there "arises the 'fear' that the Arabs will be forced to flee - (in [Lehi's] euphemistic language 'will prefer' [to leave])". Wilenska added that an analysis of this transfer proposal shows that it is not at all genuine, but it is made to make room for the hundreds of thousands of Jews who will arrive from the Arab countries. <sup>(2)</sup>

In answer to these criticisms, a spokesman of Lehi explained that the reason that the Poles fled from Russia was not because of any inequality but because there is a force attracting every person to live in a country amongst his own people. He also discounted the argument that the Arabs would have to move to make room for the Jews, since there was sufficient room in Palestine for the millions of Jews who would immigrate, without harming the Arabs already living there. <sup>(3)</sup>

Following the establishment of the State of Israel, Lehi established a political party called "The Fighters' List".. At the first meeting of its Council, which was held in July 1948, a political platform was adopted. Section 9 of this platform dealt with "minorities" and stated that it saw in the exchange of the Arab population of Palestine with the Jewish population of the Arab states, the best solution to solve the conflict between the Jewish and Arab peoples. Such a solution would eliminate deadly friction and improve neighbourly relations. The use of such transfer in the past in the world had proved beneficial. <sup>(4)</sup>

In March 1949, Lehi held a conference at which one of the delegates, Dr. Sabo, proposed transferring most of the Arabs and giving the rest rights in the same way as "our Forefathers destroyed the Canaanites and afterwards wrote 'and you shall love the stranger'." <sup>(5)</sup> In summing up Lehi's attitude towards transfer after the War of Independence, the historian Miriam Getter wrote that Lehi abandoned its approach of 1947, and once again came to regard the separation of Jew and Arab, even to the point of an exchange in populations, as the only way to avoid permanent strife. <sup>(6)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., vol.2, c.580-81.

<sup>2</sup> / Esther Wilenska, "L'darcom shel 'Lohamey Herut Israel' ", Kol Ha'am, (Tel-Aviv), 15 August 1947, p.2

<sup>3</sup> / Lohamey Herut Israel, op. cit., vol.2, col.709.

<sup>4</sup> / Joseph Heller, Lehi - Ideology and Politics, 1940-1949, vol.2, (Jerusalem, 1989), p.537.

<sup>5</sup> / Lehi Revealed, Minutes of the Conference of the Fighters for the Freedom of Israel, (March 1949), ed. Pinhas Ginossar, (Ramat Gan, 1985), p.67.

<sup>6</sup> / Miriam Getter, "The Arab Problem in the Ideology of Lehi", Hazionut, vol.iii, (Tel-Aviv), 1974, pp.437, 602.

## SECTION 6

### PLAN TO TRANSFER DRUZE FROM PALESTINE

The Druze are a religio-political community who inhabit parts of Syria, Lebanon and Israel. They are set apart from other groups by their adherence to a separate religion. Although this religion has its roots in a form of Islam, the Druze are not Moslems. As we shall now see, in 1939 there was a serious plan to transfer the Druze living in Palestine to a Druze area in Syria.

Following a three day visit by Abba Hushi to Damascus in mid--March 1939, he wrote a report on his visit. The first section of this report was headed "Transfer of the Druze from Palestine to Jebel Druze". Hushi reported that Sultan al-Atrash had assembled leaders of the Druze from Jebel Druze and as a result of an agreement with them suggested to the Zionists to purchase a dozen or so Druze villages in Palestine and transfer their Druze inhabitants to Jebel Druze. The Sultan was of the opinion that such a suggestion would be accepted by the Druze of Palestine and would be good for them. It would bring benefit to Jebel Druze, since the money they would receive from the Jews for their villages in Palestine would not only enable the Druze from Palestine to resettle but would also aid in the development of the Jebel Druze. As far as living-space was concerned, the area of the Jebel Druze would be sufficient for the 15,000 Druze who were then living in Palestine.

Hushi went on to say that the transfer would also bring great benefit to the Jews, both because of the quality of the land vacated by the transferees and because of its geographical and strategic location. "This transfer is likely ... to be an example and an important political fact in Palestine." (1)

In a diary note written on 26 March, Dov Joseph reported that he had had a long meeting with Abba Hushi, in which the latter reported on his meeting with the Sultan. Joseph wrote, "He [Hushi or the Sultan?] believes it may be possible to work out an arrangement whereby a number of Druze villages would emigrate en masse to the Jebel Druze and turn over their holdings to Jews." (2)

In early April, Ben-Gurion met with Hushi and the latter reported on his meeting with al-Atrash. Ben-Gurion concluded that from Hushi's report it was not clear whether "the transfer of Druze is practical and realistic, but we must not neglect this chance." He suggested that Hushi together with Dov Hoz should have a further meeting with al-Atrash and other Druze. Ben-Gurion was himself not idle in this matter, since he asked the Statistical Department of the Jewish Agency to assemble material on the Druze villages, and this they did. (3)

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<sup>1</sup> / Report of Abba Hushi on his Journey to Damascus, 14 - 17 March 1939, Negotiations with Sultan al-Atrash and his Representatives, (CZA S25/8221).

<sup>2</sup> / Dr. Dov Joseph, Diary Notes, 26 March 1939, p.5. (CZA S25/43).

<sup>3</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 9 April 1939, (BGA) ; Ben-Gurion, Memoirs, vol. 6, op. cit., p.225.

Hushi and Hoz had a further meeting with al-Atrash, but when the question of transfer was raised, al-Atrash gave the impression that he was hearing it for the first time and he expressed apprehensions. <sup>(1)</sup>

At the end of April, Weizmann wrote an enthusiastic letter to the American Zionist leader Solomon Goldman, stating that there was a possibility of acquiring a large tract of land from the Druze community in northern Palestine, and that the ten thousand Druze living on this land were prepared to migrate to the Jebel Druze in Syria.

With regard to this Druze migration, Weizmann wrote that it "would also create a significant precedent if 10,000 Arabs were to emigrate peacefully of their own volition, which no doubt would be followed by others." Earlier that year, President Roosevelt had proposed the transfer of large numbers of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq and suggested that the American Government would be prepared to loan one third of the required sum for such a transfer. Weizmann hoped that other Arabs would follow the example of the Druze in leaving Palestine and that "the President's suggestion of a large loan for the transmigration of Arabs from Palestine to Iraq would then become a realizable project." <sup>(2)</sup>

This proposal was also taken seriously by the Zionist establishment, and in early May, Eliahu Epstein using official Jewish Agency notepaper, wrote a confidential letter to Eliezer Kaplan, stating that he was enclosing "a memorandum on the Druze of Palestine and a plan for their transfer from Palestine to Jebel Druze." <sup>(3)</sup>

The second part of this memorandum was headed "Highly Confidential" and dealt with a plan for the transfer of the Druze from Palestine. In his introduction, Epstein pointed out that apart from the Jews there were four main parties involved in his plan, namely, the Druze of Palestine, the British authorities, the Druze of Jebel Druze, and the French authorities. Epstein went on to consider in turn the probable reactions of each of these four parties to the transfer proposal. <sup>(47)</sup>

**Druze of Palestine:** The Druze had lived in Palestine for three hundred years as a minority group. They had also lived in Jebel Druze, which at first they had considered to be a place of refuge, but as time progressed they saw in this region more and more a "national home". Links between the Druze of Palestine and their brethren in Jebel Druze had strengthened, and at the same time the Arabs of Palestine, whose policy was to assimilate minorities, especially Arab-speaking minorities, attempted to have complete domination over the Druze of Palestine. Epstein held that although theoretically the Druze would be in favour of transfer, he felt that in practice an argument was likely to break out within the Druze community - some would favour transfer whilst others would oppose it. In order that the transfer plan be successful, Epstein wrote that a prior condition was strict secrecy. If any word would get out prematurely, the Mufti would ensure that an argument would break out within the Druze community, thus preventing any possibility of the plan's realisation. <sup>(5)</sup>

**British authorities:** Epstein considered that the British authorities would oppose the transfer of the Druze for the following reasons. During the previous hundred years, the Druze were one of the factors for the influence of the British in Greater Syria. Since the first world war, the Druze community in Palestine had served as a link with the Druze living outside of Palestine. It was therefore difficult to imagine that the British would be prepared to sever this link, especially in the light of the international situation of 1939. In addition the Druze were loyal non-Jewish residents of Palestine. A further reason for British opposition would be that such a transfer and subsequent purchase of their lands by the Jews, would result in an increase in the Jewish population of the Galilee. <sup>(6)</sup>

**Druze of Jebel Druze:** Epstein saw this group as the most interested party in the transfer plan. From both the economic and the political aspects, such a plan would be beneficial to

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<sup>1</sup> / David Ben-Gurion, Handwritten Diary entry 29 April 1939, (BGA) ; *Ibid.*, p.280.

<sup>2</sup> / Weizmann to Goldman, 28 April 1939, (WA) ; Weizmann, *Letters*, vol.xix, op. cit., no.52, pp.54-55.

<sup>3</sup> / Epstein to Kaplan, 3 May 1939, (CZA S25/3523).

<sup>4</sup> / Epstein, "Comments on a Plan to Transfer Druze of Palestine to Jebel Druze", p.1, (CZA S25/6638).

<sup>5</sup> / *Ibid.*, pp.1-2.

<sup>6</sup> / *Ibid.*, pp.2-3.

them. He then went on at great length to prove his point, quoting statistical facts to substantiate his answer. <sup>(1)</sup>

French authorities: Jebel Druze is a region of Syria, and at that period, Syria was under a French Mandate. The attitude of the French authorities was thus of great relevance. Epstein considered that the question here was whether France, under the then prevailing international situation, would wish to strain even further her relations with the Syrian nationals by giving support to a plan so strongly opposed by the Syrians. A further reason for opposition was that by supporting this plan, the French would be openly making a connection, even indirectly, with the Zionists; this would arouse the ire of the French politicians for the Middle East, who were constantly worried about such a connection, especially in Syria. However, against all these objections, the French High Commissioner strongly supported strengthening the minorities in Syria. Epstein thus concluded that it was possible that this might tip the balance in favour of the transfer plan. In his opinion, nothing could be proposed before ascertaining the attitude of the French to such a plan. <sup>(2)</sup>

Epstein sent a copy of his memorandum to Zalman Lipschitz of the Palestine Land Development Company, and on the 25th of that month he answered saying that it seemed to him that Epstein's observations regarding the transfer of Druze from Palestine to Jebel Druze in general exhaust this issue in all its possible aspects. <sup>(3)</sup>

During this period Weizmann had a number of meetings with highly placed French officials in order to persuade them to accept the transfer plan. This we know from the diary of Moshe Shertok.

On 25 May, Shertok who was in London, spoke by telephone with Weizmann who was in Paris. Weizmann said that he was going to meet with the commanders of the French army and with members of the Quai d'Orsay, on the question of the Druze. <sup>(4)</sup> Three days later, Weizmann reported that he had met with Alexis Leger, Director-General of the French Foreign Office and discussed the Druze plan. According to Weizmann, Leger had been very sympathetic towards the plan and had promised to help. <sup>(5)</sup>

On 31 May, Weizmann met with the French Foreign Minister George Bonnet. Weizmann reported that Bonnet had described the plan for the Druze as "very logical", and had promised to write to the French High Commissioner in Syria on this matter. He added that Andre Meyer, the French Jewish banker, and Leon Blum, leader of the French Socialist party, would continue to keep watch on this matter in Paris. <sup>(6)</sup>

Four days later, Weizmann reported that within a group of the French army there is "great support for the Druze plan. In addition, the attitude of the heads of the Quai d'Orsay is positive." Shertok wrote that the conclusion from this was that if an order were to be given to the High Commissioner in Beirut, he would study with favour any practical plan brought before him. (It is not clear from this diary entry who in fact came to this conclusion.)

Shertok however was more pessimistic regarding the weight to be attached to the attitude of the French. In one of his telephone calls with Weizmann, Shertok told him "that the agreement of the French, in the event of it being obtained, does not solve the question at all. The question does not depend on the French, but on the Druze. The question is whether the Druze will agree to uproot themselves from their dwellings in Palestine and move to Syria." He added that the Druze were waiting for an invitation from Sultan al-Atrash who could not approach them until he was sure of French agreement. However, Weizmann's work on this subject had paved the way. <sup>(7)</sup>

An important reason that the Druze in Jebel Druze were interested in this plan, was that it improved their position materially. However, in the summer of 1939, a further factor

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<sup>1</sup> / Ibid., pp.3-5.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., p.5.

<sup>3</sup> / Lipschitz to Epstein, 25 May 1939, (CZA S25/6638).

<sup>4</sup> / Moshe Shertok, Handwritten Diary entry 25 May 1939, p.72, (CZA A245/10) ; Diaries of Sharett, vol.iv, op. cit., p.302.

<sup>5</sup> / Moshe Shertok, Handwritten Diary entry 28 May 1939, p.77, (CZA A245/10) ; Ibid., p.306.

<sup>6</sup> / Moshe Shertok, Handwritten Diary entry 31 May 1939, p.80, (CZA A245/10) ; Ibid., p.307.

<sup>7</sup> / Moshe Shertok, Handwritten Diary entry 4 June 1939, p.84, (CZA A245/10) ; Ibid., p.310.

which would have led to the same objective was in the air. This took the form of a plan by the French to get a loan, under favourable conditions, in order to develop the Jebel Druze. In a letter written by Epstein to Hushi on 27 July, he referred to this development proposal and was apprehensive that this would upset the transfer plan, and added that with the improvement of the material position of the Druze on Jebel Druze, their desire for their brethren to be transferred from Palestine would be less. Epstein however considered that the material factor was not the only one involved in the transfer plan, but it had to be taken into account. <sup>(1)</sup>

The Druze leader Yussuf Al-'Ismi was in constant correspondence with Abba Hushi. On 5 July, he wrote that he had invited some Druze from Palestine to visit him and they had accepted his invitation. During their conversation, he had introduced the subject of their bad living conditions in Palestine and the thus desirability of "their transfer to settle amongst us" in Jebel Druze. "They were enthusiastic about this idea and asked us to continue with this work, and added that on their part they would return to Palestine and send us lists of names of those who wanted to move and how many dunams of land were in their possession." When they had done this, they would pay another visit to Jebel Druze in order to begin to implement the transfer, after they would be promised that they would receive the full price for their properties and that they would receive it before they left Palestine. Al-'Ismi was confident that after such a start, success was guaranteed. <sup>(2)</sup>

Hushi had written to Al-'Ismi on 29 June (letter untraced), informing him that from the Zionist side there were no delays and everything was going straightforwardly. <sup>(3)</sup>

In early August, Al-'Ismi informed Hushi that he had after lengthy consultations, decided to write to the Druze in Palestine, whom he knew personally, inviting them to come to Jebel Druze. He had already written to over twenty people and some had already arrived. One of them had already returned to Palestine to bring a power of attorney from other villagers to sell their property and land. Al-'Ismi informed them that there is a very rich man who wanted to buy a whole village and that the first one to sell would get more money. He had also asked them not to reveal the plan to prevent failure. The Druze of Palestine were also promised facilities for settlement in Jebel Druze and a welcome by their brethren. <sup>(4)</sup>

At the beginning of August, Hushi reported to Weizmann on further meetings he had had with the leaders of the Druze in Jebel Druze and Palestine. He pointed out that the new political situation in Syria, namely the independence that the Jebel Druze had obtained, increased the possibilities for the transfer plan. This was because the Jebel Druze now needed an increase in population and money. Also at the same time the situation of the Druze in Palestine had got worse. A number of village-heads had been murdered by the gangs of Hag Amin el-Husseini. He went on to report that during the previous few days, a number of Sheiks had approached him "without any pressure from me" to sell 5000-8000 dunams of their land. The Druze had also managed to influence their religious leaders for the good of the transfer plan. Hushi was however worried whether the Zionist organisation had the required money and whether the British and French authorities would make problems. [How this letter continues is not known, since the remainder is missing!] <sup>(5)</sup>

In mid-December of that year, Hushi returned from a short visit to Syria and Lebanon. In Damascus, he met with al-Atrash's secretary, who informed him that al-Atrash was very upset that there was no progress in the purchasing of Druze villages in Palestine. Al-Atrash had already discussed with King Abdullah of Transjordan "the transfer of the Druze of Palestine to Druze villages within the borders of Transjordan" and he hoped that Abdullah would agree to them being annexed to Jebel Druze. <sup>(6)</sup>

A few months earlier, the Second World War had begun. Also the Arab rebellion of

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<sup>1</sup> / Epstein to Hushi, 27 July 1939, (CZA S25/5580).

<sup>2</sup> / Al-'Ismi to Hushi, 5 July 1939, (CZA S25/6638).

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> / Al-'Ismi to Hushi, 13 August 1939, (CZA S25/6638).

<sup>5</sup> / Hushi to Weizmann, [n.d.] (8 August 1939 ?), (CZA S25/6638).

<sup>6</sup> / Sasson to Joseph, 20 December 1939, p.4, (CZA S25/3140(1)).

1936-39 came to an end and there was relative calm in Palestine. This probably explains why nothing further seems to be documented on this plan, and it thus seems to have fizzled out.

In commenting on this plan, the historian Ian Black wrote: "It is difficult to assess what proportion of the Palestinian Druze displayed real interest in, or actually participated in the move to the Jebel, or to what extent Yussuf al-'Ismi's work was approved or authorised by the Druze of Palestine or the Jebel. It is, however, beyond any doubt that he was working in collaboration with Sultan Pasha and that both sides were seriously interested in the project. On the Zionist side at least, the personal involvement of Weizmann as well as Shertok and other senior officials of the Jewish Agency, at a time of intense and unprecedented crisis for the Zionist movement, testifies to the extreme importance attached to the plan." <sup>(1)</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> / Ian Black, *Zionism and the Arabs 1936 - 1939*, (New York, 1986), p.362.



## CONCLUSION

Numerous population transfers have been carried out during this century in many parts of the world. The ethical considerations underlying such transfers have been debated since the First World War.

Schechtman, in his study of "Postwar Population Transfers in Europe 1945 - 1955" writes, "Lessons of the immediate postwar era and the experience of the war years have brought many statesmen, scholars and writers to the conclusion that the ethnic sifting of the minorities is the most constructive answer to many of the territorial and minorities problems in several European danger zones." He quotes authorities who supported the necessity for population transfer in the interests of world peace and universal brotherhood. <sup>(1)</sup>

There are also other authorities quoted by Schechtman who emphatically reject any compulsory population exchange as a denial of individual rights, <sup>(2)</sup> while a third group of scholars and writers take a middle of the road stance. <sup>(3)</sup>

Of course, mass transfer of a population, or for that matter transfer of individuals is not an experiment to be undertaken lightly. However, as a former director of the Pan-European Union wrote of population transfer, "To cut the cancer from a sick body is not cruel, it is necessary." <sup>(4)</sup>

Very few people have had the courage to support publicly the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. Most leaders of the Zionist movement publicly opposed such transfers. However, a study of their confidential correspondence, private diaries and minutes of closed meetings, made available to the public under the "thirty year rule", reveals the true feelings of the Zionist leaders on the transfer question. We see from this classified material that Herzl, Ben-Gurion, Weizmann, Sharett and Ben-Zvi, to mention just a few, were really in favour of transferring the Arabs from Palestine. Attempts to hide transfer proposals made by past Zionist leaders has led to a "rewriting of history" and the censoring and amending of official documents!

Many non-Jews were also in favour of transfer and publicly proposed various transfer plans. These proponents of transfer, included two official bodies, namely the Peel Commission, which unanimously recommended transfer, compulsory if necessary, and the British Labour Party who resolved to "encourage" the Arabs to leave

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Were the non-Jews who made such proposals exclusively non-Jewish Zionists? Not at all. There were a number of anti-Zionists who felt that it was in the best interests of the Arabs of Palestine to be transferred out of a Jewish State. Thus, Harry St. John Philby was in

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<sup>1</sup> / Schechtman, Postwar Population Transfers in Europe 1945 - 1955, op. cit., p.390.

<sup>2</sup> / Ibid., pp.392-93.

<sup>3</sup> / Ibid., pp.393-94.

<sup>4</sup> / Ibid., pp.374-75.

favour of transfer, as were the prominent Arab, Mojli Amin and the rulers of Arab countries such as Iraq and possibly Saudi Arabia.

Many of those who opposed proposals for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine claimed that it was unethical to displace Arabs who had lived in the country for "very long periods" of time. Some of these opponents quoted these "very long periods" in terms of centuries, others thirteen hundred years, and still others claimed that the Arabs of Palestine were the descendents of the Biblical Canaanites. Historically, however, such statements have little or no basis. A booklet published by the "Israel Academic Committee on the Middle East" brings numerous references to show the complete desolation of Palestine in the mid-nineteenth century. According to their research, a substantial segment of the "so-called Arabs of Palestine" were "migrants from the surrounding lands - and even farther afield - who have arrived in the country in course of the last 100 - 150 years." <sup>(1)</sup>

Furthermore, a quantitative study by the German-Jewish jurist, Ernst Frankenstein, concluded that as at 1939, "75 per cent of the Arab population of Palestine are either immigrants themselves or descendents of persons who immigrated into Palestine during the last hundred years, for the most part after 1882." <sup>(2)</sup>

It is easy to dismiss population transfers as "racist" or "Nazi". This is, however, a historical error since successful population transfers were taking place well before the Nazi era. Even Leonard Woolf, who described population transfers as Nazi policy, admitted that sometimes such transfers were necessary. <sup>(3)</sup>

We have also seen that support for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine was not a prerogative of the right wing. In fact the opposite was usually found to be the case. The first published plan for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine was put forward by Nachman Syrkin, a founder of socialist Zionism. A number of members of "Brit Shalom", a group advocating a bi-national state in Palestine recommended the voluntary transfer of Arabs from Palestine. The Peel Report recommendation for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine, compulsory if necessary, was on the whole supported by the members of Mapai (Labour Zionists), whereas the Revisionists strongly opposed it. Finally, the proposal to encourage the Arabs to emigrate from Palestine was made by the British Labour Party and not by the British Conservative Party. It was only in the 1940s that the Revisionists (from America) came out in favour of transfer

. It is true that the extreme left wing party, Hashomer Hazair was consistently very vocal in its opposition to population transfer. However, "actions speak louder than words" and the actions of Hashomer Hazair in displacing Arabs in its own settlement programme, and the population transfers in mixed Mapai/Hashomer Hazair kibbutzim makes further comment superfluous!

In conclusion, we can say that in general, the various proposals for the transfer of the Arabs from Palestine were intended to remove the friction, either present or future, resulting from an Arab minority in a Jewish State and to enable each nation to live amongst its own people. It was considered, that after the initial trauma of transfer, both Arabs and Jews would live unmolested by each other in their own States and that each people would be able to develop the under-populated and under-developed areas of their respective States.

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<sup>1</sup> / Aumann, Land Ownership in Palestine 1880 - 1948, op. cit., passim.

<sup>2</sup> / Frankenstein, Justice for My People, op. cit., p.130.

<sup>3</sup> / Woolf, International Post-War Settlement, op. cit., p.17.

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**The End**