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**REVISIONIST ZIONISM IN AMERICA: THE CAMPAIGN TO WIN
AMERICAN PUBLIC SUPPORT 1939-1948**

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

REVISIONIST ZIONISM IN AMERICA: THE CAMPAIGN TO WIN PUBLIC SUPPORT 1939-1948

by

Joanna Maura Saidel
University of New Hampshire, December, 1994

Shortly before the outbreak of World War II, followers of the Zionist Revisionists went to the United States at the urging of their leader, Vladimir Jabotinsky. They established two groups which initially attempted to gain public support for the creation of a Jewish Army.

The New Zionist Organization of America, headed by Benzion Netanyahu, followed the Revisionist political party. Its campaign exposed the anti-Jewish position of the British in Palestine. It was effective in placing the Palestine problem on the world (rather than regional) agenda of the State Department.

The Irgun Delegation to the United States, headed by Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson), acted independently, in defiance of the Revisionist political party. While assisting in some rescue work for the underground Irgun Z'vai Leumi, the American delegation did work which was primarily political and educational.

Though independent of one another, the efforts of both groups

heightened public awareness of the extermination of European Jewry. They created a nationwide advertisement campaign which pressured the United States government through growing public support. They fought for a Jewish Army and later for statehood. They were the pioneers of the Jewish lobby in America.

The Irgun Delegation provided intelligence to the United States in World War II and aided in the rescue of American airmen. They also helped to forestall the pro-Arab policy of Franklin Roosevelt. His allegiance and promises to Ibn Saud resulted from wartime national security concerns which necessitated Saudi oil concessions and guarantees for an American air base at Dharan.

The Irgun Delegation to the United States and the New Zionist Organization of America have generally been overlooked, or incorrectly described, in American Jewish historiography. Personal interviews, F.B.I. files, and government documents confirms that they were two distinct, independent organizations having different philosophies and goals. They remained neutral toward one another until Hillel Kook called for a democratic (rather than Jewish) state in Palestine. This resulted in charges that the Irgun Delegation was anti-Zionist and in an open attack by the NZO. The antagonism which existed between the two groups was never totally resolved.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation traces the development of the Revisionist Zionist movement in America from 1939 to 1948. It begins with a survey of the history of Zionism, its meaning, origins, leaders, and development. Biblical, political, geopolitical, and socialist Zionism are discussed in this section, which provides background material for the second chapter, "Revisionist Zionism Comes to America."

Leaders of the Revisionist movement decided, in 1939, that it would be beneficial to their cause to campaign in America. It was believed that only there could enough influence be exerted to force the British to change their position on Palestine. Revisionists thought that, as British power waned, America would become the world leader and could, thereby, help the Zionist cause.

The two most important groups within the Revisionist movement to undertake this mission were the New Zionist Organization of America, an affiliate of the Revisionist political party, and the Irgun Delegation to the United States, which was sent by the Revisionist military arm, the Irgun Z'vai Leumi, in Palestine. While the former organization was political, philosophical and activist, the latter was also activist but had no attachment to the political party,

operating rather as a practical military organization, for the most part independently under various names. These included The Committee for a Jewish Army, The Hebrew Committee for National Liberation, and The American Friends for a Free Palestine. The leader of the New Zionist Organization was Benzion Netanyahu. The Irgun Delegation to the United States was headed by Hillel Kook, who was known in the United States as Peter Bergson.

Both groups came from the Jabotinsky school of thought which envisioned a Jewish national home in Palestine on both sides of the Jordan, with mass Jewish immigration and settlement. Jabotinsky was the head of the Revisionist party and also the head of the Irgun, although these were two independent organizations. While both groups came from the body of Revisionist Zionism neither believed that the Irgun Delegation to the United States was Revisionist in a political sense.

Jabotinsky visited America several times before 1939 but, despite his ever growing popularity in Eastern Europe, he failed to get support. American Jewry was firmly under the control of Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, and American Zionist leaders like Rabbi Steven Wise.

The first major campaign undertaken by both the New Zionist Organization and the Irgun Delegation was the drive to gain public

support for the creation of a Jewish Army. Both groups utilized similar methods to gain this support. Particularly, they applied the innovative practice of running full page political advertisements in newspapers throughout the country. They also held mass rallies, and applied intense efforts to gain the support of public officials, congressmen, and members of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. These were some of the first major Jewish lobbying efforts in the United States.

Chapter three, "The Campaign for a Jewish Army," discusses the methods and tactics employed by the groups. It also emphasizes the reasons why such an army would be important to America and its Allies, as well as the reasons why Britain opposed such a force.

The Zionists believed that the defense of Palestine and the "World Island" was crucial to the Allied success of the war. The creation of a Jewish Army would have immediate benefits for the Allies and long term benefits for the Zionists. Palestine was at the center of the "World Island," that is, at the crossroads to Asia, Africa, and Europe. It was the focal point of a major drive by the Axis powers. Not only could they win the war by taking this area (they were already in the Caucasus', the Baltic, the Pacific, Europe and North Africa) but by obtaining this area would capture the Suez Canal and gain access to Middle East oil fields. By establishing a force

of 200,000 dedicated Jewish opponents to Hitler who were familiar with the terrain, the British could afford to withdraw reinforcements, bring them home or station them elsewhere; and, by being in place (i.e. not needing to be transported to their destination) a Jewish army could play a vital part in the war effort.

There were also long term benefits for the Zionists which the British were well aware of and which ultimately prohibited the creation of the force. The Jews of Palestine would become a strong, armed fighting force able to defend themselves and to force the British out of Palestine at the end of the war. The Jewish Army would, in effect, become the Army of Israel. Although the Jewish Army effort did not succeed, despite years of campaigning, it did result in the creation of the Jewish Brigade.

Chapter four focuses on the American political response to the Bermuda Conference on Refugees and to the ad campaign publicized by the Irgun Delegation in reaction to this Conference. The Irgun Delegation called the conference a mockery and a sham. Their response to the it, though accurate, caused their organization and reputation to suffer greatly because of the inept timing of their dynamic ad campaign. Had they been a bit more patient and careful it could have been extremely successful. As it turned out they released a shocking full page ad before the official report on the

Conference was issued. Because the names of many important officials and congressmen were attached to this ad without their consent, those persons were greatly angered and decried the Irgun Delegation publicly and on the Senate floor. The group lost many sponsors, including Harry Truman, because of this error in planning.

The fifth chapter details the fight for a Jewish State. This section begins with the Hoskins Affair. Mr. Hoskins, aide to President Roosevelt, pressed for a joint Anglo-American declaration which would, in effect, stifle the Palestine question during the war and make a decision on Palestine depend upon Arab agreement. He advised that unless this was done there would be civil war which would endanger Allied war efforts. Only by a united Zionist lobbying effort was the Hoskins proposal overcome.

The ad campaign, letters to the President, rallies, and marches (such as the march of 400 Orthodox rabbis on Washington in October 1943) of the Irgun Delegation brought pressure to bear on the administration. Simultaneously, the New Zionist Organization continued to expose British aspirations in Palestine, to criticize that government's policy and to push for a nationwide boycott of British goods. At the same time it made important inroads into the U.S. government by its persistent well planned campaign.

Other Irgun Delegation efforts included the plan by Dr. Alex

Raphaeli to establish an off shore radio station to broadcast news about the Holocaust to Europe. This is an interesting story which shows some of the problems faced by the Irgun in their contacts with the U.S. government. Other problems with the government are also discussed, particularly the efforts of Cordell Hull to have the F.B.I. investigate Hillel Kook and his group. The F.B.I. did conduct an investigation of the Hebrew Committee for National Liberation and looked into the status of Kook, his organizations, and their right to solicit funds in America. The findings of these queries are found in this chapter.¹

This section also concentrates on the Irgun's activities in Palestine, particularly the murder of Lord Moyne and the bombing of the King David Hotel, both of which had international repercussions. It was by the relentless, determined but unpopular action of the Irgun and Lechi that the British were forced to abandon the Mandate and turn the Palestine problem over to the United Nations. The Irgun Delegation to the United States was responsible for participating in some of these missions and for funding certain operations such as the purchase of the ship, *Altalena*, which was loaded with arms by the Irgun and brought to Palestine, only to face a grim end.

The negative effects of these actions are also stated, including charges by Abba Eban that the actions of the underground resulted

¹ Chapter eight also contains material on the F.B.I. findings.

in the postponement of statehood (i.e. of a partition plan scheduled for December 1944). It is unlikely that his scenario would have materialized.

The chapter moots the position taken by the United States government regarding the formation of the Jewish state, articulates the pros and cons of supporting the plan, discusses a plan for cantonization and the rejection of the Morrison-Grady Plan, and examines the role which the Revisionist Zionists in America played in shaping the final destiny of the Jewish state

Chapter six, "Rescue and Partition," describes some of the practical work of the Irgun Delegation and the accomplishments it made in financing and purchasing rescue vessels. Menachem Begin became angry at the Irgun Delegation for this diversion of funds. He thought they should have been used at the front rather than for the purchase of a few vessels. The relations between the American and Palestinian branches of the Irgun deteriorated.

In January 1947 British Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin, stated his position on Palestine in a cabinet paper which he sent to Prime Minister Attlee. It said, "Without the Middle East and its oil. . . [I see] no hope of being able to achieve the standard of living at which we were aiming in Great Britain."² His plan was to have Palestine

² Years of Wrath, Days of Glory, Yitshak Ben Ami, New York: Shengold Publishers, Inc., 1983, p. 398.

replace Egypt as the headquarters for the Imperial Forces in the region. Thereby, the communications, oil supplies and the strategic geopositioning of the British would be maintained and protected.

However, on February 18th the Palestine question was turned over to the United Nations. There is speculation on the reasons why Britain let the Mandate go to the U.N. These are presented in this chapter. The debate over partition continued within the government and in Jewish circles until the U.N. vote on Palestine in November 1947.

The position of the U.S. State Department official, Loy Henderson, and his connection with Benzion Netanyahu are also discussed. Although Henderson was considered to be an opponent of Zionism, this chapter portrays a different picture of his position and of the changing views within the Department itself. While the State Department had been firmly opposed to Jewish statehood, Benzion Netanyahu's influence on Henderson may have paved the way to changes in State Department policy, particularly as the U.S. - Soviet conflict heated up.

Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson) continued to press for immediate action from the government to support a Jewish state (rather than partition) in Palestine. President Truman become increasingly irritated by the pressure which the Jews put upon him. "According

to the diaries of Henry Wallace, at a period of particular pressure he exclaimed at a cabinet meeting in mid-1946, "If Jesus Christ couldn't satisfy them here on earth, how the hell am I supposed to?" He added later, "I have no use for them and I don't care what happens to them."³

Following the decision to partition Palestine, Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson) continued to petition President Truman to arm the Jews so that American forces would not have to be sent to Palestine to quell the fighting.

Chapter 7, "Begin's Visit to the United States," demonstrates the problem the U.S. government had in deciding whether to allow an alleged terrorist onto American soil. This political and diplomatic problem was also influenced by the public debate on the subject. Despite recommendations that Begin be banned from the United States, there was support for the visit. Mr. Begin was the head of the strongest opposition party in Israel. His party was also rightist and anti-communist. It was possible that the party would become the controlling power in Israel in which case, if the United States did not grant him the visa, they would be excluding the future Prime Minister of Israel.

This is followed by a chapter about the extent and range of the

³ Spiegel, The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan. p. 20.

workings and contacts of the Irgun Delegation to the United States, and its connections with Reuben Hecht in Europe. The archives of Dr. Reuben Hecht are important to the study of Revisionist Zionism in America because they clearly show the place which the Irgun Delegation to America held in the overall scheme of Jewish efforts to save victims of the Holocaust. Hecht's papers

point to a major lacuna in the historiography of attempts made to rescue Jews from the Holocaust. The scholarly literature on the subject has been dominated by a tendency to emphasize the rescue efforts undertaken by the "establishment" Jewish and Zionist groups, such as the Jewish Agency, the Institute for Illegal Immigration, and the American Joint Distribution Committee, and not those of their rivals, the "dissident" organizations.⁴

Here the Irgun's association with the American Consul General in Switzerland, Samuel Edison Woods, is established. He and Hecht collaborated to rescue Allied airmen and to coordinate efforts to rescue Jews. The primary advantage of this relationship for the Irgun Delegation in America was that it provided a direct contact between the underground and the White House, rather than through the official intelligence center in Bern headed by the Zionist opponent, Allen Dulles.

Hecht evaluated the work of the Irgun Delegation to America in a very positive light. When Hecht was asked, during a war trial in

⁴ Introduction, Archives of the Holocaust, Hecht Archive-University of Haifa, p. ix.

1954, what he believed contributed to bring the most pressure on the United States to help the Jews he credited Hillel Kook's group, saying, "I think that the great pressure was carried out by the large advertising campaign in the press and the mass meetings of the "Hebrew Committee." ⁵

This chapter also demonstrates the continuing difficulties in trying to get help from the American government to bomb the railways and crematoria at Auschwitz. Hecht testified that Eisenhower and McClelland refused to take such action on the grounds that they were not fighting a Jewish war and that they did not want the Germans to think that the Americans perceived it as such.

Samuel Edison Woods helped to stop the British blockade of arms and immigration ships to Palestine. These contacts were also successful in getting intelligence concerning the planned Nazi invasion of England. Hecht and Woods helped to bring American pilots and captains of the Air Force, who were interned in Switzerland, to freedom and to prepare suggestions for psychological warfare against the Germans. Woods nominated Reuben Hecht for the American Medal of Freedom.

From evidence in this chapter it is possible to conceive that the long delayed charges against Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson) in the

⁵ Hecht Archive, p. 176.

United States (i.e. regarding his alien status) and the casual attitude toward him taken by the F.B.I. (their reluctance to investigate his activities and status) were, in reality, because he was seen as an asset to the American war effort.

Kook's fund raising work in America was essential to the rescue work of Reuben Hecht and William Perl. The Irgun Delegation partially funded the *S.S. Sakarya*, the *S.S. Pencho*, and other rescue missions. Kook and Hecht worked hand in hand.

The position of Reuben Hecht proved to be convenient for the Irgun Delegation in America in other ways. The Hebrew Committee for National Liberation needed, for their political work, money in France and other places. Reuben Hecht was essential to the movement of these funds. Hillel Kook arranged for him to be Consul in order to be able to bring gold from Switzerland to Paris, and to have a free travel possibility.

When asked, in 1982, what the major contribution of the Irgun and people like Hillel Kook made, and what deserved historical emphasis, Hecht replied, "I think that the battle of the Irgun, not I think, Churchill said it, that the Irgun was one of the reasons that the British left Palestine."⁶ Hecht also stated his belief in the importance and effectiveness of the propaganda of the Hebrew Committee in America.

⁶ Hecht Archive, p. 467.

Chapter nine of this study calls into question the motives for President Roosevelt's lack of efforts to help the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. It may be that Roosevelt was more interested in obtaining and retaining the loyalty of Ibn Saud, oil concessions and the rights to the Dharam air base than he was in assisting the abandoned Jews. His interests in Saudi Arabia were based on national security concerns. Oil was instrumental in fueling the war and the air base was a necessary stopover and fueling point for American war efforts in the Pacific. He may, therefore, have considered these to be overriding concerns. Ibn Saud was adamantly opposed to a Jewish state in Palestine. Agreements for oil and Dharam may have been contingent on Roosevelt's isolation from the Jewish problem.

The simultaneous development of a dual U.S.-Israeli, U.S.-Saudi defense policy was directly affected by Revisionist Zionist efforts in America. Had these efforts failed and had the Revisionists not pressed the Jewish issue by drawing major public attention to it the United States may have adopted a purely pro-Arab policy, guaranteeing access to oil and to strategic military positions without the complications of support for the Jewish State. The public outcry however, which resulted in part from the activities of the Revisionist Zionists and the Irgun Delegation in America, called attention early on (1939-1942) to the plight of the European Jews, later (1942-

1945) to the moral responsibility of the U.S. government to help save them, and, finally (1945-1948) urged the U.S. government to support and defend a Jewish State in the Near East. The defense of Israel by the U.S. government not only sustained the creation of a democracy in the region but in later years helped to balance the growing power of the Arab nations, to repulse Soviet aggression, and to maintain U.S. hegemony in the region.

The United States dual policy of support for both Jerusalem / Tel Aviv and Mecca / Riyadh would become the fulcrum of an ongoing balancing act to maintain peace in the region.

Chapter ten examines problems of terminology. Particularly, it faces the problem of who was a Revisionist and who was not. It presents the views of those involved and argues that, despite negation on both sides, the Irgun delegation were Revisionists, having come from the Revisionist Zionist school of thought. This does not, however, deny that they had no affiliation to the Revisionist political party, that they operated independently, and that they were essentially a military, not a political, organization. Each group sees itself as being the bearer of truth and as the most effective voice on the American scene, sometimes begrudgingly attributing credit to the other for unquestionable successes. They openly call each other liars and deceivers. The members of these two groups and those

interviewed from Labor and Lechi are all powerful characters, intelligent, with strong opinions. They have dedicated their lives to their beliefs and are not afraid to express their views. While each holds his own viewpoint to be the truth it seems that there is some truth to all of their views. Each, with one exception, seems to be correct in their view. Their combined work, though criticized by each other, was effective on a broad scale, in ultimately bringing forth the creation of the State. They succeeded in applying enough public pressure, by drawing attention to the plight of the Jews, to demand worldwide support for the Jewish State.

The antagonism which existed between the two groups was never totally resolved. American Revisionists alleged that the Irgun Delegation deviated from the leadership of Jabotinsky, (i.e. their decision to act independently in America, to act as a military rather than political entity, and to establish a democratic, rather than a Jewish State in Palestine.) The decision to support a democratic state was the determining factor in Benzion Netanyahu's decision to launch an attack on the Irgun Delegation. The democratic state idea belonged to Hillel Kook and was not supported by all members of the Irgun delegation. Dr. Alex Raphaeli and Yitshak Ben Ami opposed the idea. Because of Kook's position as leader of the delegation the idea was presented publicly as that of the whole group. This proved to be

a very contentious point.

The final chapter of this dissertation discusses the effects of the Irgun Delegation to the United States and the New Zionist Organization of America on U.S. public opinion and on American foreign policy. It argues that their work stirred and challenged the American public, forcing additional pressure on the government to help the Jews of Europe and later to support a Jewish state in Palestine. It also argues that the work of the Irgun Delegation may have been effective in forestalling an outright pro-Arab policy, while the work of the New Zionist Organization (NZO) exposed the British intentions in Palestine.

The activist role of both groups forced mainstream Zionists, who had isolated themselves, to reexamine their position and eventually drove them out of their silence, forcing them to adopt some of the policies of the NZO and Irgun delegation. Emboldened by the successes of these groups in America, it has been contended that Wise and Silver pressed President Truman and David Niles to resist the State Department and to stand solidly for the creation of a Jewish State. Wise and Silver did not acknowledge the work of Kook and the Irgun until the late 1940's. One may be certain however that the rabbis used to their advantage every opportunity which resulted from the work of this group.

The Irgun Delegation and the New Zionist Organization may have been the main forces to originate and stimulate a powerful Jewish lobby in America. They positively affected the creation of the only democracy in the Near East. Had the Zionists been more passive it is possible that a Jewish State in Palestine would not have resulted. Palestine would have remained in British hands or become an Arab entity.

In the final analysis the disunity within the Zionist ranks in America was actually beneficial to some degree. Their independence from each other gave them the liberty to take actions which they would otherwise have been unable to have excuses for. The violence could be condemned while the effects of that violence could give credibility to the idea of a de facto government in place in Palestine. Certainly violence tarnished the relationship between Jewish leaders and U.S. Government officials. This was temporary, however.

While most American Jews were afraid to risk the security which they felt in the United States by exhibiting loyalty to an ancient homeland, the Irgun Delegation and the New Zionist Organization did not harbor this fear. Their leaders were not American citizens. They could afford to take chances. Only when it was clear that a Jewish State would become a reality did the mainstream feel safe enough to openly endorse the groups' activities.

By then the War of Independence was being fought and support of American Jews was essential to press the government to aid the newborn State of Israel. Statehood gave added legitimacy to the Irgun. American leaders were suddenly faced with the possibility of an Irgun led government. Although this did not materialize immediately, the Revisionist factor has continued to play an important role in Israeli politics to the present day (i.e. the present Likud party). The Irgun was one of the only so-called terrorist groups that brought about a democracy rather than a leftist totalitarian regime. For this the world can be thankful.

CHAPTER 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

What is Zionism? How did it originate? Who were its leaders? What did it accomplish? The term Zionism comes from the root word Zion. Although the origin of the word is uncertain there is no doubt that Zion refers to a hill and fortress in Jerusalem. First used as the name of the Jebusite fortress on the southeast of Jerusalem, below the Ophel and the Temple Mount, Zion came to be known as the "City of David." Sometimes Zion referred to the Temple Mount alone. During the time of the Macabees the Mount was called the "Mountain of Zion." By the time of Josephus however, Zion included the upper city and the upper agora. The slight deviations in the exact definition of Zion were eclipsed by the generally accepted definition which has survived for centuries. This definition, which developed very early in Jewish history, made Zion synonymous with Jerusalem. It has, since the destruction of the First Temple, had a special meaning which reflected the yearning of the Jewish people for a homeland.

Some of the earliest references to the longing for Zion are cited in the Bible. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we

wept, when we remembered Zion,” writes the psalmist.¹

The Bible guaranteed the “Promised Land” to the children of Israel. This land was to extend from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates River.² However, as time passed, the transgressions of Israel caused God to sever them from their land and to disperse them to the ends of the earth.³

Zionism was born from the desire for, and the Biblical promise of, return to the land of Israel. Jerusalem was biblically designated as the eternal capital of Israel.⁴

The wanderings and persecutions of the Jewish people served to reinforce their desire for a homeland.⁵ Only recently did this longing for Zion acquire the name, Zionism, which became an official political movement.

Some of the earliest precursors of the modern Zionist movement were found in Europe. Napoleon Bonaparte proposed a Jewish State in Palestine, albeit for his own political reasons. He wanted the Jews to side with him against the Turks. The reward for this service was to be a Jewish State.⁶

¹ Psalms 137:1.

² Genesis 15:18.

³ Ezekiel 37:21.

⁴ Zechariah 8:2-8.

⁵ See Appendix A for list of expulsions

⁶ Napoleon Bonaparte from his Headquarters in Jerusalem, April 20, 1799, from The Rise of Israel: A Documentary Record from the Nineteenth Century to 1948, Hereafter referred to as R.O.I., vol. 1, document 1.

In nineteenth century Great Britain, there were also calls for a Jewish national homeland in Palestine by high ranking officials.⁷ This plan, in contrast to that of the French, envisioned cooperation with the Turks in the form of a Jewish protectorate of the Sultanate.⁸ The Ottoman government, however, failed to accept this proposal.⁹ Feeling that the request had been misunderstood another proposal was sent with the approval of Queen Victoria.¹⁰

This also failing, appeals were made by British officials for European assistance in the establishment of a homeland in Palestine for the Jews.¹¹ Jews throughout Europe were called upon by the Board of Deputies of British Jews to implement this proposal.¹² This paved the way for the emergence of Zionism in Europe.

Due to Palestine's strategic location at the crossroads of Asia and Africa, and its proximity to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, British support for the Jews became more geopolitical than humanitarian in nature.¹³ Various schemes for Jewish settlement under British supervision emerged. One was that the world owed the

⁷ F.O. 78/368 - No. 2, British Foreign Office, R.O.I. vol. 1, document 9.

⁸ F.O. 78/390 - No. 134, British Foreign Office, R.O.I., vol.1, Document 11.

⁹ Viscount Ponsonby to Viscount Palmerston -Enclosure No. 24, F.O. 195/185 - No. 19, British Foreign Office. R.O.I., document 13.

¹⁰ F.O. 78/427 -No. 33, British Foreign Office, R.O.I., vol. 1, document 15.

¹¹ Letters from Col. Charles H. Churchill to Moses Montefiore, June 14, 1841 and August 15, 1842, R.O.I., vol. 1, documents 17 & 18.

¹² R.O.I., document 19

¹³ Colonel Churchill, Mount Lebanon, a Ten Years Residence, from 1842-1852. London, 1853 (vol. i., pp. v-x), R.O.I., vol. 1, document 2.

Jews retribution for the atrocities committed against their people.¹⁴ Another advanced the idea that domination of Palestine would provide the shortest and safest lines of communication with British colonies in the Far East.¹⁵ A third proposed the development of the agriculture and natural resources of the region. While such schemes appeared throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the pogroms of Eastern Europe and Russia added to the urgency of these appeals.

This period marked the dawning, in Europe, of Zionism as a political movement. The movement rapidly gained momentum and, by the twentieth century, spread to America. The European precursors of modern Zionism were instrumental in planting the idea, in the minds of the oppressed Jews of Eastern Europe, that a Jewish state in Palestine was realistic and feasible. They ignited an emotional spark which exploded with intensity.

Among the most influential of these leaders were two Germans, Moses Hess,¹⁶ known as the father of Zionist Socialism, and Max Bodenheimer,¹⁷ founder of the Zionist organization in Germany. They,

¹⁴ See Colonel George Gawler's comments from a pamphlet entitled Tranquilization of Syria and the East, London, 1845, pp.30-31. R.O.I., vol. 1, document 22.

¹⁵ An address by Colonel George Gawler, January 25, 1853, Syria, and its near prospects. . . p. 49, R.O.I., vol. 1, document 23.

¹⁶ Hess' philosophy is expounded in Rome and Jerusalem (Paris 1860), translated by M. Waxman, New York, 1918.

¹⁷ See The Memoirs of Max I. Bodenheimer: Prelude to Israel, New York, London, 1963.

among others, laid the foundation for modern Zionism.

The term Zionism was coined by Nathan Birnbaum in the April 1, 1890 edition of his journal Selbstemanzipation. Birnbaum described Zionism in political and nationalistic terms as the “establishment of an organization of national - political Zionist party in juxtaposition to the practically oriented party that exists now.” He sought to replace the pure philanthropic approach which prevailed with a more vibrant nationalist movement. This definition of Zionism was generally accepted by the time of Theodore Herzl near the turn of the century.

By the early twentieth century (at the Eighth Zionist Congress in 1907) Chaim Weizmann coined the term “synthetic” Zionism, putting an end to the prolonged struggle between the two concepts within the Zionist movement (i.e. “political” and “practical” Zionism). Weizmann’s term defined Zionism as a symbiotic movement in which both approaches were necessary to insure success.

The religious concept of Zionism differed from the practical and political approaches. This ingredient was both a stimulus and an obstacle to the movement. Zionism leaned heavily on Messianic hopes from which it derived much of its ideological and emotional appeal. While some religious leaders urged Jews to return to Zion in fulfillment of Biblical prophecy others believed that man could not

bring about a Jewish messianic state but that only God could establish the true Israel. The Hibbat Zion (“Love of Zion”) movement, for example, which flourished in Jewish communities of Eastern Europe in the 19th century, contended that human endeavors to bring about a Messianic age would fail. Even today, a segment of the Israeli populace does not recognize the State of Israel.

Another problem that troubled and divided Zionists in the struggle between “practical” and “political” Zionists was the idea that Jewish nationalism could not be tolerated. However, the persecution, defamation, and the bloody pogroms in Eastern Europe overshadowed this concern. When, for example, in 1881, Czar Alexander II was assassinated, a wave of pogroms swept Russia and resulted in the belief among Jews that there was no future for Jews in Russia under the existing government. Some Jews turned to revolution, many to mass emigration, most became Zionists.

Jews such as Leon Pinsker believed that anti-Semitism was not limited to Russia but was an international phenomena. He called it Judophobia in an essay entitled Autoemancipation. Pinsker wrote that the nations of the earth feared the Jews because they were like a ghost which walked the earth without a habitation.¹⁸ He called Judeophobia an incurable, psychic aberration, a condition having the

¹⁸ Pinsker, Leon, Auto-Emancipation: An Appeal to his People by a Russian Jew, 1882. English translation by D. S. Blondheim in B. Netanyahu (ed.), Road to Freedom, New York, 1944, p. 18.

sole remedy of self - emancipation (i.e. by the creation of a national homeland).

Pinsker's views were reiterated in the late 1800's by a Viennese correspondent in Paris, Theodor Herzl. Unaware of Pinsker's Autoemancipation, Herzl wrote Der Judenstaat in which he expressed views nearly identical with those of the Russian, Pinsker. Herzl's nationalist spirit was awakened as he covered the famous Dreyfus Affair in Paris. His growing awareness of anti-Semitism led him to take a bold political stand. He organized the first Zionist world congresses, established a Zionist newspaper, Die Welt, and ran the growing movement almost single - handedly. The official program of the movement was a plan to secure for the Jewish people a publicly recognized, legally secured home in Palestine, to encourage the settlement of Palestine by Jewish agricultural workers, laborers and those pursuing other trades. The plan also called for the unification and organization of all Jewry into local and wider groups in accordance with the laws of their respective countries, and the strengthening of Jewish self-awareness and national consciousness. It also planned for initial steps to obtain the consent of the various governments necessary for the fulfillment of the aims of Zionism. ¹⁹

Herzl, who lived only forty four years, came to be known as the

¹⁹Laqueur, A History of Zionism, p. 106.

father of political Zionism. During his short life he founded the World Zionist Organization and began the work that resulted in the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

By World War I Zionism had become a mass movement and a major political force. It has been argued, contrary to the belief that Zionism developed as a reaction to the inability of Jews to assimilate into the gentile world, that, conversely, it was a reaction to the fear of assimilation of Jewry within Gentile society whereby Jews could retain their unique existence through the creation of a political state.²⁰

This nationalist sentiment was stimulated by the growth of racist nationalism within Christendom which objected to Jewish assimilation. Another important element destined to play a leading role in the Zionist movement was the religious sentiment of Orthodox Jewish groups which now saw in Jewish nationalism the only bulwark for the preservation of the Jewish faith.²¹

The first Jewish Supreme Court Justice, Louis D. Brandeis, became an ardent Zionist. He wrote, "Our task is to bring into Palestine, as rapidly as we can, as many persons as we can."²² Brandeis made Zionism credible by clearly declaring its compatibility with Americanism. Brandeis conceived of Zionism as essentially a

²⁰ Stevens, Richard P., American Zionism and U.S. Foreign Policy 1942-1947, p. xv .

²¹ Ibid.

²² L. D. Brandeis, Brandeis on Zionism, Statement made on July 14, 1920, to members of the American Delegation at the London Conference.

democratic movement.

The path of the Zionist in America, during this year of trial, has been relatively clear solely because the Zionist ideals, the highest Jewish ideals, are essentially the American ideals. Democracy is also a Zionist concept. Social justice is also a Zionist aim. Full and complete liberty is an essential of triumphant Zionism as it is the Jewish ideal of the twentieth century. As Americans, and as Jews battling for American ideals, we may look forward to the support of a great majority of the Jews of the United States.²³

Brandeis did not envision the accomplishment of this goal in the same way as other Zionists did. Some of those, including Joseph Trumpeldor, Vladimir Jabotinsky, David Ben-Gurion and Izhak Ben-Zvi, were of a more militant nature. During World War 1, they wanted to organize Jewish fighting units to assist the Allies. Their efforts resulted in the establishment of the Jewish Legion - the Zion Mule Corps, which fought at Gallipoli in 1915 and, in 1917, the Jewish battalions.

Between the first and second World Wars there was infighting within Zionist ranks. The spectrum of Zionism stretched from the far left Marxist, pro-communist, Ha-Shomer ha-Za'ir, to the Orthodox extremists of Agudat Yisrael which found Zionism to be too secular. The greatest problem during most of those years was the question of Jewish immigration, which was always strictly limited by the British

²³ Brandeis, Remarks delivered by Louis D. Brandeis before the Convention of the Federation of American Zionists held in Boston and Chelsea in June, 1915.

in reaction to Arab opposition and violent outbursts. The World Zionist Organization controlled the distribution of entry permits for new immigrants, up to the number permitted in any one year by the British. How these permits were divided became a cause for a fiery struggle, both among the various Zionist factions which accepted the discipline of the world body and especially with the Zionist Revisionists, who regarded themselves as discriminated against.

Who were the Revisionists and what did they do? Their full name was the Union of Zionists-Revisionists. They were later called the New Zionist Organization. Founded by Vladimir Jabotinsky the Revisionists maintained the maximalist Zionist political position. They were the strongest opposition group to the conciliatory policies of the mainstream Zionist movement led by Chaim Weizmann during the 1920's and 1930's. Weizmann's group accepted the British Mandate over Palestine and did not offer serious objection to their attempts to limit Jewish immigration. To the contrary Jabotinsky believed that this policy would result in the creation of an Arab state since, under such circumstances, the Arab population would increase disproportionately to that of the lesser populous Jews. Jabotinsky's plan to revise the Zionist policy came therefore to be known as Revisionism. His program called for active resistance to the British

line.

Jabotinsky was a dynamic individual who seems to have highly affected everyone whom he came in contact with. For example, Former Prime Minister Yitshak Shamir, who was a leader of the most extreme underground movement, Lechi, was greatly inspired by his mentor.

And you cannot make, have, any distinction between Jabotinsky and the movement. The Revisionist movement is, we can say, is a creation of Jabotinsky. He was the founder of this movement, the inspirator (sic), and the ideologue, from the beginning and it continues to be after his disappearance. And you cannot make any distinction because it was his movement . . . his movement. He was not only the leader, he was the, I would say, the incarnation of this movement. It's the Jabotinsky movement!²⁴

The central tenets of the Revisionist plan for Palestine included the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine on both sides of the Jordan, mass Jewish immigration and settlement, intensive agricultural cultivation of small plots, and mandatory arbitration of labor disputes, including the outlawing of strikes and lockouts during the initial period of statehood.²⁵

To combat Jabotinsky's growing popularity, Chaim Weizmann made a deal with the leftist Labor party in Palestine. In exchange for

²⁴ Interview with Yitshak Shamir by Joanna Saidel, Knesset, Jerusalem, Israel, June 2, 1993.

²⁵ Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 14, p. 129.

their support in the World Zionist Congress he agreed to give them most of the funds from the World Zionist Organization as well as the majority of immigration certificates allocated by the British for entry into Palestine. This measure would allow the Labor party to increase their numbers and power in Palestine by assuring that the majority of new immigrants would support their party. This agreement enabled Weizmann to maintain his control of the World Zionist Organization.

Animosity between Weizmann's supporters and those of Jabotinsky escalated and peaked in the famous Arlosoroff murder trial in which Revisionists were charged by the Laborites with the murder of the Socialist Zionist, Chaim Arlosoroff, who advocated a policy of peace and reconciliation with the Arab population in Palestine.²⁶

Failure to reach an understanding with Arab leaders led Arlosoroff to reconsider his previous contentions and to amend his solution to the Palestine problem.

After 1929, while still maintaining the need for a political agreement with the Arabs, he asserted that the Arab national movement was dominated by the forces of social reaction and political tyranny and blamed it for not having produced leaders like Sun Yat-sen or Gandhi. Arlosoroff favored cooperation on the municipal level, economic collaboration, the dispatch of Jewish students to Al Azhar and other Arab universities, and Zionist support for

²⁶ Walter Laqueur, A History of Zionism, New York: Schocken Books, 1989, p. 242.

Egyptian and Iraqi independence. But he was pessimistic with regard to the chances of an understanding with the Palestinian Arabs, for the simple reason that the Arabs were still convinced that they could defeat Zionism with violence.²⁷

This pessimism led to Arlosoroff's adoption of partition or cantonization as the only viable solution to the problem short of a Jewish seizure of power.

Arlosoroff became the head of the political department of the Jewish Agency. While walking along the Tel Aviv coast on June 16, 1933 he was shot. Revisionist leaders and others in Israel claim that he was murdered by two Arabs. This was supported by the legal confession of one Arab.²⁸ Revisionists contend that the blame was transferred to their party by Labor and the British in an attempt to discredit and vilify the Revisionist Party and to liquidate them politically, as public opinion would certainly mount against them, especially since Labor controlled the press. Because of this, Revisionists believed that no accurate reports of the trial were forthcoming. They decided to start their own daily newspaper. The editor of this paper was Benzion Netanyahu, whose father, Rabbi Nathan Mileikowsky, had been involved in helping to organize the public defense of the accused. He was instrumental in influencing

²⁷ Ibid, p. 258.

²⁸ Telephone conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, January 1995, from New York.

Rabbi Kook to come out openly in defense of the accused. The circumstances of the murder were never formally resolved.²⁹

Following this incident, a bitter propaganda campaign developed on both sides to discredit each other. The Rabbi, Hillel Kook (whose nephew later came to the United States as the leader of a delegation sent by the underground Irgun), sought reconciliation between the two groups by bringing Jabotinsky and Ben Gurion together in an attempt to reach an agreement and to focus their attention on a campaign against the British rather than against each other. An agreement was reached which had to be ratified by both parties. The Revisionists voted in favor of ratification. The Labor party however voted against it. Unable to make peace with Labor, Jabotinsky decided that the only alternative was to leave the World Zionist Organization.

In 1935 the Revisionists seceded from the World Zionist Organization and formed a new party called the New Zionist Organization (NZO). Vladimir Jabotinsky was elected president. The aim of the NZO was the same as the earlier Revisionist plan with an added emphasis on the “redemption of the Jewish people and its land, the revival of its state and language, and the implanting of the sacred treasures of Jewish tradition in Jewish life” through the creation of a Jewish majority on both sides of the Jordan and

²⁹ Conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, October 1993, Jerusalem.

liquidation of the Diaspora (i.e. emigration of all Jews to Palestine).

Shortly after Jabotinsky formed the New Zionist Organization new Arab riots broke out in Palestine. The Jews had to decide how to react to them. The leftists continued to rely on the British for their protection, but within the Revisionist movement a revolutionary section formed which demanded active resistance to the Arabs and to the British.³⁰ These activists formed two groups, the Irgun Z'vai Leumi (National Military Organization), and the group formed by Avraham Stern, which was known within the British camp as the "Stern Gang," and which came to be called Lechi (acronym for Fighters for the Freedom of Israel).

According to Benzion Netanyahu, who was later to become the head of the political department of the New Zionist Organization in America, the British issuance of the 1939 White Paper marked the climax of the anti-Zionist British drive which aimed at the formal liquidation of Zionism.³¹ Under the terms of the White Paper only 75,000 Jews would be allowed to enter Palestine (with a small additional number, annually), the Jews would be allowed to buy only a few more pieces of land, and that would be the end of it.³² This decision caused the revolutionary Revisionists to decide to attack the

³⁰ Conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, October 29, 1993, Jerusalem, Israel.

³¹ Telephone conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, January 23, 1995, from New York.

³² Conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, October 29, 1993, Jerusalem, Israel.

British rather than the Arabs.

By the late 1930's the New Zionist Organization became alarmed at the situation in Europe and created a ten - year plan to absorb a million and a half Jews in Palestine through clandestine shipments of Jews primarily from Eastern Europe.³³ There was impressive support for Jabotinsky there, "not just among the simple unsophisticated people willing to give their blessing to anyone promising them salvation; it was especially marked among the young generation and the intelligentsia. For, as the world situation deteriorated, there was growing impatience among all sections of the Jewish communities."³⁴

Though at odds with the British government Jabotinsky urged the Revisionists to abstain from their struggle against the British during World War II so that efforts could be concentrated on defeating the Nazis and on the formation of a Jewish Army to fight with the Allies. While most Revisionists accepted this idea the minority group, headed by Abraham Stern, rejected it. In September, 1938, his militant stand was endorsed in Warsaw at the world conference of Betar (an activist Zionist youth movement). Betar's leader, Menachem Begin, called for increased militancy.

We are standing on the threshold of the third phase of Zionism," Begin declared. "After 'Practical Zionism' and

³³ The Ten Year Plan for Palestine, London, 1938.

³⁴ Laqueur, A History of Zionism, p. 369.

'Political Zionism' the time has come for 'Military Zionism.' Eventually, military and political concepts will merge, but . . . if we create our military strength, the salvation of the diaspora will come. The world is indifferent . . . its conscience ignores what is happening to our people. The League of Nations is impotent. We cannot continue on this road. We want to fight! To win or die!³⁵

This rejection of a wartime truce with the British led to a split in the Irgun, in 1940, when the group led by Avraham Stern seceded from the Irgun following the death of Jabotinsky. The name of Stern's group was changed in 1942, following the murder of Stern, to Lohamei Herut Israel (i.e. Lechi).

While the Irgun suspended its aggression against the British until Menachem Begin took command in 1944, Stern continued his armed struggle during the war. He pursued the ideological principles which Jabotinsky had formulated. Those principles were articulated in Lechi's outline for national revival.³⁶

Those joining the Stern group are generally considered to have been a minority. That contention has been challenged by a member of the Irgun, Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson).

When the Irgun split in 1940 and Avraham Stern formed the Stern group of Lechi - (Lohamei Herut Yisrael - Israel Freedom Fighters) people think he took a minority of the people and that the Irgun got the majority. What really happened was that between two and five percent - nobody compiled statistics - went with Stern; between ten and

³⁵ Yitshak Ben Ami, Years of Wrath, Days of Glory, p. 193.

³⁶ See Appendix I for full text of Jabotinsky's National Revival Principles.

fifteen percent went with Raziel³⁷ in varying degrees of activity; and the rest went home just didn't do anything. Of the members of the command of the Irgun who were with me . . . nearly everybody except Raziel went with Stern. They lasted between a month or two then they went home. They ceased being active because Stern's beliefs were too extreme for some and Raziel's were too mild for the others. In a practical sense people did not feel like joining.³⁸

During this period of decision within the Zionist ranks Hillel Kook chose to remain with the Irgun.

The Irgun agreed in 1939 to cease preparations for conflict with the British and instead to collaborate with the British, to work with the British, except for Jabotinsky's followers. And I'm not mocking it. I was one of those who agreed and I still believe it was correct up till a certain time. Jabotinsky's proclamation was to the Jewish people to join, first of all and above all in the war against Nazi Germany; to join with the allies in the war, as a belligerent in the war.³⁹

Hillel Kook was to become the leader of the Irgun Delegation to the United States. His group, which was comprised of only a handful of individuals, came to America from Palestine to try to influence public opinion to favor the creation of a Jewish army, to help save the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, and to establish a Hebrew democratic state in Palestine. The role of this group in America during the 1940's is highly controversial. Their opponents have

³⁷ Raziel lead the Irgun before Menachem Begin.

³⁸ Interview of Hillel Kook by M. Kaufman, October 27, 1981, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Oral History Division, Tape Nos. 194, A, B, C. Interview page 8.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 7.

stated that their work accomplished nothing while supporters say that “this was the most significant Zionist voice that was present on the American scene at these times.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Interview with Yitshak Shamir by Joanna Saidel, Knessett. Jerusalem, Israel, June 2, 1993.

CHAPTER 2

REVISIONIST ZIONISM COMES TO AMERICA

The year, 1939, marked the entrance of both the New Zionist Organization and the Irgun Delegation to the United States onto the political scene in America. They came to gain public support for the fight for the creation of a Jewish Army in Palestine. It was believed that only the U.S. could exert the necessary pressure on Britain to make this plan a reality. Early attempts of the two organizations to merge proved a failure due to differences in philosophical and political ideals, as well as personality conflicts among the leadership of the two groups. Lack of support from the Roosevelt administration as well as opposition from mainstream Jewish organizations and their leaders (particularly the ardent Roosevelt follower, Rabbi Steven Wise) also hampered the efforts of the N. Z. O. and the Irgun Delegation in America.

By May of 1939 the fear of war was in the air. The leader of the New Zionist Organization of America, Benzion Netanyahu, left Palestine, where he had been editing a daily newspaper called The Jordan, and went to London to meet with Jabotinsky and his executive. Mr. Netanyahu presented his views, suggesting a major

campaign in the United States to gain public support there. Because of the poor reception which Jabotinsky had received earlier in America, the founder of the Revisionist party was reluctant to accept Netanyahu's ideas, but was so impressed by Netanyahu's literary work and optimistic confidence that he agreed to go along with Benzion. Both knew the enormous value of gaining American public support.¹

When Jabotinsky asked how Netanyahu proposed to finance the expenses of the delegation, he said that he did not know but that he would devise a plan by the following day. This he did. The next day Netanyahu gave Jabotinsky the names of ten wealthy individuals whom he had met in Israel and Egypt. Though not Revisionists, Netanyahu knew that they were not enemies of Revisionism. He asked Jabotinsky to write individual letters to each of these people. Netanyahu then planned to deliver the letters personally and ask each for a donation of one hundred British pounds. He told Jabotinsky that if these ten requests were successful he would then go to another ten, and another. Jabotinsky wrote the letters, Netanyahu delivered them and presented the purpose and case of the delegation. There was not one individual who refused to give him

¹ Personal conversations with Benzion Netanyahu, October 29, 1993, in Jerusalem, and telephone conversation January 23, 1995 from New York.

the money.²

It was agreed that Jabotinsky would not go immediately to America but that Netanyahu and a delegation chosen by him would precede their leader and prepare the groundwork. Netanyahu returned to Palestine to prepare for the mission.

In the meantime, on September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and World War II began. The following day Jabotinsky declared Germany the number one enemy of the Jewish people and proposed the formation of a Jewish Army which would mobilize Jews worldwide, "not just a few units or battalions of Jewish soldiers, but the nucleus of a true national army which would fight along side the allies."³ This body would number between one quarter and one half million men according to Jabotinsky's calculations. In December of 1939 a different proposal for the formation of a single Jewish Division of the British forces was put forth by Dr. Weizmann. Neither plan received much support in Britain. While little headway was made in London, it was decided to campaign in America for a Jewish Army.

Jabotinsky cabled Netanyahu and asked him to come to America. Netanyahu agreed but had problems leaving Palestine. The British there wanted to know why he was going to America.

² Ibid.

³ Yitshak Ben Ami, Years of Wrath, Days of Glory, p. 237.

Netanyahu procured a visa with the help of Dr. Magnes, the head of Hebrew University, who was opposed to him politically, but who nevertheless gave his assistance. Netanyahu told him that the trip to America was to complete his doctoral dissertation, which was in fact his secondary motive. He did not tell Magnes about his political interests in the United States. After an examination by the police, Netanyahu, who was on a British list of suspicious persons, was finally allowed to go.⁴

Netanyahu arrived at Ellis Island at the beginning of April where he was met by the Zionist leader, Emanuel Neumann. He immediately met with Jabotinsky and formulated plans for their campaign.

The new approach which they chose to follow was masterminded by Mr. Netanyahu who vehemently believed their efforts should focus on exposing the Jewish struggle against the British and their intentions in Palestine. While he wanted the British to win the war, he was against their policy in Palestine. The campaign was to be totally anti - British. Although some of the delegation agreed with Netanyahu's reasoning they felt that the timing was impractical because of the war. They thought such a campaign would be premature and that it would encumber their

⁴Personal interview with Benzion Netanyahu, October 29, 1993, Jerusalem.

work. Netanyahu was deeply dissatisfied.⁵ Jabotinsky considered both views carefully and finally agreed to begin the campaign.⁶

In 1940, Jabotinsky addressed small gatherings, lecturing on Russian literature and other topics which, although he was an expert in these fields, had little to do with the Jewish struggle. Disappointed by the poor attendance he received in the States (he was used to a full to overflowing house when he spoke in Europe) Jabotinsky became disillusioned. Meanwhile Netanyahu continued to press Jabotinsky and his delegation to campaign for a Jewish army. Finally Jabotinsky agreed. Again the problem of financing the project arose. Having no money available, an innovative advertisement campaign was conceived and embarked upon, on credit, and succeeded in fully funding the operations of the organization.

The focus of the Jabotinsky - Netanyahu campaign was initially to gain support for a Jewish Army. The overall plan however was to combat the British with a nationwide campaign which would expose their anti - Zionist policy and would turn public opinion against them. They arranged for speakers to address mass meetings. One of their main supporters was the famous Colonel John Henry Patterson who commanded the Jewish Legion during the first world war. Jabotinsky

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Telephone conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, January 23, 1995, from New York.

spoke at some of these meetings. One of the most effective was a mass rally at the Manhattan Center on June 19, 1940. This success, which had a big press following, seemed to bring Jabotinsky back to life. Their campaign gained momentum across the country during the late spring. It slowed down briefly during the hot summer months and was scheduled to resume at the end of summer.

The Irgun Delegation to the United States also began its activities during this period. Though an offshoot of the Revisionist movement this group was not part of the Revisionist party. The delegation was composed of Hillel Kook (known as Peter Bergson in America), Dr. Alex Raphaeli, Yitshak Ben Ami, Shmuel Merlin, and Aryeh Ben-Eliezer.

You cannot say that this was a Revisionist movement. It was a very special movement, I would say, that was created by Hillel Kook and his friends . There have been others, they have been sent to the United States by the Irgun. And the Irgun was, we can say, a certain affiliation of the Revisionist movement. They have been sent to America, Hillel Kook and his friends as delegates of shlihim, that you call in Hebrew, it means envoys, by the Irgun. And in this framework of the Irgun, Hillel Kook and his friends have founded the group that was very active . . . in the public world, in the media.⁷

They too met with Jabotinsky and made plans to work with him to gain support in America. Although both the New Zionist

⁷ Telephone interview with Yitshak Shamir from Tel Aviv, by Joanna Saidel, June 2, 1993.

Organization and the Irgun delegation had the same leader, Jabotinsky, they were not united in their work. Each had a different focus and a different philosophy.

In August, 1940, Jabotinsky died in New York. This event affected both groups. Seven days later Benzion Netanyahu, because of the division of opinion with regard to the campaign for a Jewish Army, disagreement on matters of policy, and other matters, and seeing the growing pessimism which developed among the remaining delegation, resigned.⁸

Shortly thereafter, Hillel Kook (Bergson) met with Netanyahu to see if they might merge in a common effort. Mr. Netanyahu was asked to join the executive of the Committee for a Jewish Army.⁹ He agreed to assist the delegation in every conceivable form provided they concentrate on the campaign for a Jewish Army which they hesitated to undertake, but agreed to when Van Passen joined and became the President of the Committee. Netanyahu then joined the Committee for a Jewish Army (not the Irgun Delegation).¹⁰ This unification was short - lived, however. Netanyahu stayed with Kook for only six months. He was disappointed that the delegation refused to focus their attack primarily on the British in the manner which he

⁸ Telephone conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, January 23, 1995, from New York.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

had envisioned.¹¹

There was a conflict of interests, philosophies and personalities, particularly between Hillel Kook and Mr. Netanyahu. A member of the Irgun Delegation, Dr. Alex Raphaeli, understood this personality conflict.

He (Benzion Netanyahu) was very much admired by me in any case. And with Benzion we worked, he even worked in our office for a little while. But he was a Revisionist and (this was) his mentality, He's a very gifted man, a professor, but we didn't feel that he has military spirit, military reaction in a situation where you need immediate action and where you have sometimes the courage to take a weapon and, etcetera, etcetera.¹²

When asked if there was much antagonism between the two men Dr. Raphaeli replied,

Very much. Listen. Listen. There are many, many jealousies. Compared with us he was a bit older. He was a professor. We were just youngsters relatively. . . I was at that time (a) Doctor. . . But most of the other colleagues were a bit younger than I and didn't have any education. He considered himself important. Suddenly he comes in a group which really behaved . . . in a military way. . . and he couldn't live with that. Number two, he considered himself intellectually, maybe, that's right, much more important than Hillel or any of the other colleagues. . . So I would say, the Revis(ionists). . . and I speak about people who are my friends. . . were. . . a relatively. . . small, very unimportant group . . . they did not do much, they were not successful. This was not the field of action suddenly to come and speak on television and on

¹¹ Personal interview with Benzion Netanyahu, October 29, 1993, Jerusalem.

¹² Telephone interview with Dr. Alex Raphaeli from Jerusalem by Joanna Saidel, June 15, 1993.

the radio or appear at a university facing, as we had, British ministers and discuss with them. They couldn't do that. So suddenly comes an unknown group of Israelis who, young, who don't even appear under their real names, who have their military names, were entirely different. And suddenly get that attention and people speak (with you) and you're invited (to important affairs) and you're busy and you're going to go around, and you're just saying what you feel. Naturally the people who worked here maybe wanted the same thing, don't feel comfortable. So there are psychological things which one can not discard.¹³

Yitshak Ben Ami also admits that there were problems between the New Zionist Organization and the Irgun Delegation, stating that despite their coordination of overt and covert activities there was constant infighting due to personality clashes, and debates over political and ideological questions.¹⁴ He believed that one of the main points of contention was the N.Z.O.'s platform (1938 Prague Convention) which called for the transfer of one million Jews to Palestine over the course of ten years. "We Irgun men knew that we did not have ten years to spare," writes Ben Ami.¹⁵

Mr. Netanyahu decided to leave the Irgun Delegation. He continued with his own campaign which proved to be highly effective in penetrating Congress and the administration.

These Zionists, (i.e. the Revisionist and the Irgun delegation),

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ben Ami, p. 199.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 228.

had two primary reasons for focusing on America in their quest for support. First, it was believed that if American opposition to the British White Paper of 1939 (which proposed turning all of Palestine over to the Arabs and nullification of the Balfour Declaration) could be developed then pressure could be exerted upon Britain to rescind it. During the initial stages of the war this was especially important as, at that stage, the United States was only a potential ally and the British were eager to maintain cordial relations with America. The second reason for increased Zionist interest in America was to supplant Great Britain with the U. S. as the main component of gentile support. It was correctly believed that the British Empire was on the decline and that America would fill the vacuum as British power diminished. Zionists felt that it was essential to have a good rapport with American leadership in case that power shift occurred.¹⁶

Hillel Kook (Bergson) had come to America for this undertaking with only with a handful of Palestinian Jews.

These Palestinians were not associated with the New Zionist Movement of America, which was the Revisionist Zionist body in the United States. Most of them, in fact, were secretly members of the Irgun (Irgun Zvai Leumi), a Jewish armed underground in Palestine. While these men constituted a tiny, American-based wing of the Irgun, they did not conduct underground activities in the United States. During the war they were almost completely isolated from

¹⁶ Alan R. Taylor, Prelude to Israel: An Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897-1947, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1959 p.74-75.

the Irgun in Palestine.¹⁷

While some, who have known the Irgun Delegation, say that this small group of individuals accomplished little, others contend that they had remarkable results.

They made a great work in America asking for the American support for the Israeli independence, for the creation of Israeli State in the land of Israel, for, they fought for the right of the Jewish people from all over the world to (come to) the land of Israel . . . they (the Irgun delegation) played a great role in the years of the second World War . . . this was the most significant Zionist voice that was present on the American scene at these times.¹⁸

Hillel Kook was descended from a notable rabbinical line. In the United States he adopted the name Peter Bergson in order to keep his political activities from reflecting on the name of his uncle, the former chief rabbi of Palestine, Abraham Isaac Kook,¹⁹ who believed that the return of Jews to the land of Israel “marked the beginning of divine redemption and that the Balfour Declaration of 1917 had ushered in a new era in the renewal of the Jewish people.”²⁰ He also believed, however, that the Zionist movements of his day (1865-1935) were too secular and needed spiritual infusion. This idea was

¹⁷Wyman, David. Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, p. 85.

¹⁸ Telephone interview with Yitshak Shamir from Tel Aviv by Joanna Saidel, June 2, 1993.

¹⁹ Wyman, p. 85.

²⁰ Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 10, p. 1183.

markedly in contrast with Hillel Kook's philosophy which was not religious.

A 1944 F.B.I. summary of Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson) portrayed him as follows.

Bergson is described as being single and thirty-four years of age. He is related to have been born in Lithuania, the son of Rabbi Dov Kook. It is related that he studied typography, at the Hebrew University, although he claims to be a journalist. He is said to be a British citizen. In 1929 he allegedly became involved in riots between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, and at that time was also alleged to have been engaged in an organization to advance the Jews against the Arabs in Palestine. He subsequently is reported to have become affiliated with a group advocating "Free Immigration to Palestine." With regard to this group, it has been alleged that its real purpose was to smuggle into Palestine people outside of the immigration quota. In the year 1936 Bergson reportedly left Palestine for London where headquarters for his group were established. Later the remark, "We have been responsible for 40,000 Jewish refugees having entered Palestine illegally from Europe during the past seven years" was attributed to Bergson. It is alleged that Bergson is not looked upon with favor by the British Government.²¹

The mainstream Zionists detested the Irgun and the Bergsonites, and were not fond of the New Zionist Organization, for a number of reasons. It was generally believed that the Irgun was too militant and that they bordered on being fascist; that their violent activities were detrimental to the Zionist cause and could "damage

²¹ Summary F.B.I. file on Peter Bergson, December 15, 1944 - from file #100-309132-1; 100-257656-4.

the moral stature of Zionism.” Jabotinsky’s break with the World Zionist discipline was both feared and resented.²² The New Zionist Organization was considered too anti-British, too aggressive, and a breaker of discipline. After two and a half years of campaigning however, the Zionist Organization found itself forced to adopt the ideas of the Revisionists whose outspoken behavior had changed the mood of public opinion in America.

Bergson’s group operated first as the American Friends for a Jewish Palestine. Their initial goal was to raise funds to relocate European refugees in Palestine and to buy arms for the Irgun. However, by 1940, the war had expanded, communications between American and Palestinian groups were cut off. The focus then shifted to the idea of a Jewish Army.²³

When the war broke out Jabotinsky decided to go to America to conduct a public campaign for the creation of a Jewish Army to join the war against Germany, and generally also in a sense to make propaganda for America to come a little closer, because there were many American volunteers in the Jewish Legion in World War I and he wanted to repeat the same thing on a bigger scale. Instead of the legion this time however, he spoke of a Jewish army representing the Jewish nation in the war.²⁴

To accomplish their goals the Revisionist Zionists and the Irgun

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Interview of Hillel Kook by M. Kaufman, Oct. 27, 1981, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Oral History Division, Tape. Nos. 194, A, B, C. Interview page 11.

Delegation attempted to win the support of the American public, Congress, and the Administration. They also sought the support of journalists, clergymen, public servants, and persons of standing and importance. The Zionist propaganda campaign was an ultimate success. As a result of it thirty-three state legislatures, the Congress of Industrial Organizations and the American Federation of Labor passed resolutions favoring Zionism. Later, both houses of Congress introduced similar resolutions, and in the 1944 election campaign the two major political parties adopted pro Zionist planks.²⁵

In 1939 the two strongest Jewish groups in America were the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Labor Committee. These groups were traditionally, sometimes fiercely, anti-Zionist. Zionists decided to attempt to make inroads into the American Jewish community. Some of their members and supporters included Haim Lubinsky, who was the ranking Irgun officer of the mission to the U.S., Robert Brisco, a member of the Irish Parliament, and John Patterson, former commander of the Zion Mule Corps and of the Jewish Legion during the first World War.

In 1939, the Kook (Bergson) group, Patterson, and Chaim Lubinsky, had founded "The American Friends for a Jewish Palestine" to raise funds to support the "illegal immigration" to Palestine. They

²⁵ Ibid, p. 76.

began with an effort to establish contacts. With the help of Rabbi Louis I. Newman, the Irgun delegation held meetings in several synagogues and private homes, espousing free immigration to Palestine for the Jews of Europe. Listening to Briscoe, Patterson, and Lubinsky, some individuals were moved to action. They contacted their rabbis and other leaders, asking about Kook's group. "Who are these people? they asked. Who is Jabotinsky? What is the Irgun? And the answer (of mainstream Jewish organizations) was always the same: "Don't touch them."²⁶

An extremely important contact was established with the help of Benzion Netanyahu. He suggested that Pierre Van Passen meet with the Kook group.²⁷ Netanyahu influenced him in this direction in the early days, before the rift developed between the two organizations.

Many mainstream Zionist leaders greatly admired Benzion Netanyahu's father, whose name was Rabbi Nathan Mileikowsky (he later changed it to Netanyahu). He was a very influential man and a great authoritative Yiddish speaker who was, for five years, one of the leading spokesman in America for Zionism. When Benzion came to America many leading American Zionist leaders wanted to meet

²⁶ Ben Ami, p. 215.

²⁷ Telephone conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, January 23, 1995, from New York.

with Mileikowsky's son, despite the fact that he had become a Revisionist. This opened doors for Netanyahu, who would years later become Professor of Judaic Studies at Cornell University. At one social gathering in the home of a man named Weisgal (who later founded the Weizmann Institute) Netanyahu met Joe Brainin, the son of the famous Hebrew author Reuben Brainin. Brainin turned out to be the agent of the celebrated Dutch author, Pierre Van Paassen. Netanyahu suggested that Brainin arrange a meeting between Van Paassen and Hillel Kook. This meeting was fixed and Van Paassen's affiliation with the Irgun Delegation proved to become one of the main assets of the Irgun campaign.

It was ironic that Brainin was rumored to be a Communist agent who was supporting the Zionist cause in order to encourage the Jews to campaign and fight against Hitler and the Nazis.²⁸ Netanyahu was unaware of these allegations at the time.²⁹

Van Passen was one of the most effective speakers for the Irgun Delegation. He spoke not only in favor of a Jewish Army but, under Netanyahu's influence, against the British policy and against Weizmann's Zionist policy which was characterized by compromise

²⁸ Conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, November 1, 1993, Jerusalem.

²⁹ Ibid.

and submission.³⁰

The New Zionist Organization's campaign for a Jewish Army and against British policy extended to an active campaign to secure political opinion in America. This was a very difficult task in those days. While the President of the United States had made favorable pronouncements toward the Jews, his policy, in fact, was anti-Zionist.

While Jabotinsky was still alive he had asked an influential supporter, Robert Briscoe (who later became mayor of Dublin, Ireland), to try to interest President Roosevelt in an emergency plan which proposed the removal of 2,000,000 Jews from central and eastern Europe. Briscoe was unable to obtain a hearing in the White House. It was believed within Zionist circles that "the key for helping the Jews of Europe lay in the hands of Franklin D. Roosevelt because the Allies would follow any forthright action the United States initiated."³¹

Franklin Roosevelt had endeared the Jewish population to himself for a number of reasons. These included his advocacy of old age pensions, the New Deal, and the appointment of an unprecedented number of Jews to high positions within his administration. The latter action caused Roosevelt to be labeled with

³⁰ For his entire speech see, "Israel, You Are Being Betrayed!" Zionews, October 1, 1942, p. 14 - 17.

³¹ Ben Ami, p. 281.

the pejorative term, "Jew Deal," by anti-Semitic elements.³²

In fact, Roosevelt did not prove to be faithful to his Jewish following. He gave in to British requests not to discuss Palestine at the Evian and the Bermuda conferences. He feared alienating either the British or the Arab leaders. Although he issued a number of pro-Zionist statements, particularly before the elections of 1944, Roosevelt promised Arab leaders that they would be consulted before any decision was reached concerning Palestine. The New Zionist Organization vigorously attacked the administration, turning to the Republican party for support.

Concerning rescue efforts to save Jewish victims of the Holocaust, Roosevelt has been severely criticized. The author, David Wyman, accused the President of abandoning the Jews. Wyman believes that there were a number of options available to Roosevelt which may have assisted the victims. Wyman made a twelve point list of things that Roosevelt might have done to help them.³³

These policies and suggestions, however, were never enacted for a number of reasons. The Roosevelt administration refused to acknowledge the severity of the situation which the Jews faced. "One reason for this was to avoid responsibility for taking special steps to save them. Such steps, if successful, would have confronted the

³² Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 14, p. 257.

³³ See Appendix K for list of Wyman's twelve points.

Allies with the difficult problem of finding places to put the rescued Jews.”³⁴

While the Roosevelt administration procrastinated, the New Zionist Organization and the Irgun Delegation continued their campaign to win American support. In December of 1942 the Irgun Delegation issued a “Proclamation of the Moral Rights of Stateless and Palestinian Jews” which stated that the Irgun would no longer passively witness the calculated extermination of the Jewish people by the Nazis.³⁵

This “Proclamation” was placed in a two page ad in The New York Times in December 1942. It was supposedly signed by more than 3,000 prominent Americans, and European exiles, including Herbert Hoover, and Senator Harry S. Truman. This advertisement took the Zionist campaign out of a strictly Jewish milieu and made the cause universal. The statement was also formulated “to counteract the inhibitions of Jewish leaders like Stephen S. Wise” who, Ben Ami writes, “was writing his “Dear Boss” notes to his idol, President Roosevelt” while, “ironically, we, the Zionist “extremists,” were the ones now calling for broad humanitarian rescue above all. Helping the Jews to survive was all that mattered now.”³⁶

³⁴ Wyman, p. 337.

³⁵ Ben Ami, p. 282.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 283.

Stephen Wise began his Zionist career in the late 1890's. In 1897 he was a founder of the New York Federation of Zionist Societies. In the following year he was instrumental in the foundation of the national Federation of American Zionists, serving as honorary secretary of that organization until 1904. From 1898 Wise served as American secretary of the world Zionist movement. He collaborated with Theodor Herzl, creating the Provisional Executive Committee for General Zionist Affairs in 1914 and later administering it.³⁷ Rabbi Wise assisted in framing the text of the Balfour Declaration of 1917, spoke in favor of Zionism at the 1918-19 Versailles Peace Conference, was vice-president of the Zionist Organization of America from 1918 to 1920 and its president from 1936 to 1938. Wise worked closely with David Ben-Gurion, Chaim Weizmann, and Abba Hillel Silver. Often he disagreed with them but sought unity in the movement.³⁸ As editor of Opinion, Rabbi Wise wrote about the reasons for his dedication to Zionism.³⁹

From 1921 until 1925 Wise was the vice president of the American Jewish Congress. After 1925 he served as honorary president until his death. He believed that the American Jewish Congress was called into being for two purposes.

³⁷ Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 16, p. 566.

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Wise, Stephen S., As I See It, Jewish Opinion Publishing Corporation, Marstin Press, Inc., New York, 1944.

. . . To bring about the establishment of the Jewish National Home in fulfillment of the ancient and unrenounced ideal of our fathers. This means a Jewish majority on both sides of the Jordan . . . in conformity with the vision and the program of Theodor Herzl. The second purpose was and is to safeguard rights of Jews in all lands in which they dwell. ⁴⁰

Dr. Wise recognized and warned both Jews and non-Jews that these rights were seriously threatened by Nazism. He was one of the first to make such predictions in the 1930's and to organize for the defense of Hitler's victims. He established the World Jewish Congress in 1936 and administered it until 1949 when he died. It has been claimed that he was responsible for making President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the U.S. State Department, and the general public aware of the circumstances which the Jews faced.⁴¹ This general belief is contestable in the light of the little known accomplishments of the Irgun Delegation and the New Zionist Organization which were the real motivating forces for the change in government policy and public opinion.

Wise contended that diplomacy should be the first route to liberation but did not discount "deeds of despair" when all else failed.⁴² However, he opposed the actions of the Revisionists and Irgun Delegation. According to the founder of The American Friends

⁴⁰ Ibid, "World Jewish Conference," p. 21.

⁴¹ Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 16, p. 567.

⁴² Wise, S. , As I See It, Address to the American Jewish Conference, " The Jewish Fate and Faith," 1943, p. 76.

for a Jewish Palestine, co-organizer for the Committee for a Jewish Army, and the Emergency Committee to save the Jewish people of Europe, Rabbi Wise was the chief opponent of Ze'ev Jabotinsky in America.

In New York, Stephen Wise, the most politically prominent rabbi in the United States, called Jabotinsky a "traitor" for preaching "evacuation" from the ghettos of Europe. Davar, the Socialist-Zionist daily in Palestine, said that by working with the Polish government on annual emigration quotas, Jabotinsky was "joining hands with the Endeks, the pogromizers of the Jews of Poland."⁴³

When Jabotinsky died in 1940 Stephen Wise said,

He was not only one of the most eloquent men of his time. . .but he was one of the bravest . . . His limitation was that he could not bear to be a Grand Vizier, second in command. Feeling born to lead, and indeed, possessed of an undeniable flair for leadership, he was ill at ease in enduring a mere Lieutenancy. He was ill favored, too, in his following, which was pitiably unequal to its Commander. . .⁴⁴

Members of the Kook group contend that a delegation headed by Rabbi Stephen Wise formally requested the British Ambassador not to make any gestures of sympathy to Jabotinsky's campaign and issued instructions to the Jews of the United States not to contribute funds to the Irgun Delegation. When they ran an ad in major U.S. newspapers appealing for funds to "purchase" the Jews which

⁴³ Ben Ami, p. 211.

⁴⁴Wise, p. 228

Rumania was selling for fifty dollars a piece the State Department and the Jewish establishment denied that such an offer existed. Stephen Wise called the appeal “a hoax on the part of the Hecht group. . . By the fall of 1943, when the United States Government and Stephen Wise finally admitted that such an offer had even existed, it no longer did.”⁴⁵

David Wyman wrote about this issue. According to him the Rumanian government had offered to help relocate 70,000 Jews from Transnistria to any place chosen by the Allies in exchange for approximately \$130 per refugee. When the administration was approached with the matter it was referred to the State Department. They stated that the story was without foundation. Wyman charges that the State Department’s investigation was “superficial.” He believes that

the Rumanian proposal might not have been workable. Quite likely it would have involved an element of bribery in addition to the actual costs of removing the imperiled Jews. But it most certainly was not a story “without foundation. . .”⁴⁶

It is believed by some political analysts that the plight of the Jews was used by the Revisionists and by the Irgun to promote public sympathy for a Jewish state. For example, political analyst Alan R. Taylor writes that Zionists, while emphasizing the need for asylum

⁴⁵ Ben Ami. p. 288

⁴⁶ Wyman, p. 84 - 85.

for the displaced Jews of Europe to draw support to their cause,

employed the general sympathy of all people of good will in selling the idea of Jewish statehood. To the Zionists, asylum was not the real issue - rather it was the current need of Jews for asylum that they employed to justify the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.⁴⁷

Certainly the horrendous events which occurred in Nazi Europe provided a legitimate reason to bargain for a Jewish State in Palestine. However, it is wrong to assume that Zionist aims were focussed on exploiting the circumstances of their Jewish brethren to ensure statehood. This is simply not the case. Zionists were the most dynamic segment of the Jewish population. They were deeply concerned with the plight of Jewish refugees. The fact that the use of that plight served to capitalize on the statehood question should in no way diminish the attention and concern that Zionists had for victims of the Holocaust. Zionists, it should be remembered, were the most active elements worldwide to initiate or to campaign for rescue attempts for concentration camp victims. David Wyman adequately described the various attempts by Zionist groups to affect the war. Revisionist branches of Zionism were at the forefront in the list of risk-takers. The majority of rescue attempts were initiated by Revisionist groups or with Revisionist support. (In this context the

⁴⁷ Alan Taylor, p. 77.

term Revisionist applies to both the Revisionist party and to the Irgun and Lechi.) These attempts include at least sixty two rescue missions attempted between 1937 and 1944, involving approximately 33,598 individuals.⁴⁸ Such rescue attempts were typical of the dedication of Revisionists to the rescue of Holocaust victims. Similarly, they were intensely dedicated to the idea of creating a Jewish Army.

The early efforts of the New Zionist Organization and the Irgun Delegation were successful in setting up the mechanisms for the promotion of organized efforts to rally a nationwide campaign to gain American public support. Financial needs were successfully planned for. These plans became fully operative. Plans to publicize the campaign were enacted through the use of rallies and mass meetings. An effective nationwide ad campaign was initiated. Although resistance confronted them from the within the Roosevelt administration and from mainstream Jewish organizations the operations of the two organizations were successfully set in motion. The campaign for a Jewish Army became the primary initial focus of these efforts.

⁴⁸The chart in Appendix J illustrates this point.

CHAPTER 3

THE BATTLE FOR A JEWISH ARMY

The campaign for a Jewish Army appealed to Americans because it was believed that such a force would benefit the War effort. Zionists contented that the defense of Palestine and the “World Island” was crucial to the Allied success in the War because of the extremely important ge positioning of this area at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe. The Zionists based their case for a Jewish fighting force in Palestine on these premises while harboring an underlying goal of establishing a strong armed fighting force which would be able to evict the British from Palestine at the end of the war.

In 1941, following the initial efforts by Ze’ev Jabotinsky and Benzion Netanyahu to campaign in America for the creation of a Jewish Army, the Committee for a Jewish Army was formed. This group was headed by Irgun representative, Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson). The president of the Carnegie Institute, Dr. Samuel Harden Church, and Colonel John Henry Patterson were the honorary chairmen and Pierre van Paassen was National Chairman of the committee. The name of the organization was amended to the

Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews shortly after Pearl Harbor was attacked. “This dissident group” which was later called the Hebrew Committee for National Liberation, “agitated in the U.S., mainly through newspaper advertisements, by expounding and supporting the ideas and acts of the Irgun Zeva’i Le’ummi (I.Z.L.) in Palestine. . .The style and tactics of the “Bergson Group” were the subject of sharp controversies in Zionist circles, particularly among Revisionists and their sympathizers.”¹

Irgun agents had contacted both Zionist and non-Zionist Jewish leaders even before the formation of the Committee in America, asking for their support. They refused and actively attempted to hinder its work. They believed that the Irgun emissaries had exaggerated the Nazi threat to Jewish survival and that they were too militant. Mainstream Jews feared that such militancy would stir up anti-Semitism in America.

These views were largely a reflection of the official position of the U.S. Government. The indifference of the allied governments and of the Jewish community’s silent acceptance of the position of the allies on the fate of the Jews under the Nazis became known as “the abandonment of the Jews.”²

The Committee for a Jewish Army proceeded with its plan despite

¹ Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 16, p. 1144.

² Eliahu Lankin, To Win the Promised Land: Story of a Freedom Fighter, Shengold Publishers, Inc., New York, 1992.

Jewish and non-Jewish resistance.

Jews who considered themselves assimilated, patriotic Americans were outraged and uneasy. When members of the Kook group visited conservative synagogues they were faced with traditional pacifist Zionist reactions. People questioned the necessity of a Jewish Army and of a Jewish State. They were not yet aware of the extent of the Holocaust and felt threatened by the push for a Hebrew nationalistic movement. They considered themselves fully assimilated American Jews (i.e. Americans who practiced Judaism) and felt that the movement might threaten their security in the United States.

Orthodox congregations were more sympathetic, but were in no hurry to assist the Kook group. They felt that redemption would come in its own time and that it did not require the hand of man intervening in heavenly matters. While they resisted the national liberation movement they often supported and collaborated with the group in rescue and relief missions.

On January 5, 1942, the Irgun Delegation published its first full page advertisement in The New York Times which was headlined "Jews Fight for the Right to Fight."³

Our first public statement, stunned Jews and non-Jews alike, made Washington uneasy, outraged the British and irritated

³ This slogan had been coined prior to this time by Benzion Netanyahu in an article which he wrote.

the Zionist establishment.⁴

It bore the signatures of a variety of notables including Louis Bromfield, Ben Hecht, Melvyn Douglas, Lion Feuchtwanger, Bruno and Waldo Frank, Frances Gunther, Max Lerner, Reinhold Niebuhr, Abraham L. Sachar, Paul Tillich and Lowell Thomas. Many congressmen also signed. The ad was repeated in other papers across the nation.

We continued using this technique of full - page ads until we ended our activities in the United States. It was without precedent among Jews to campaign on such a large scale of public agitation.⁵

The motives behind the Zionist proposal for a Jewish Army were, self-defense for the Jewish community in Palestine, “which was threatened by the possibility of Axis invasion, British evacuation, and Arab insurrection; and second, the desire for national revenge against Adolf Hitler, who had declared war on Jews the world over.”⁶

Those favoring a Jewish Army had political motivations as well. They hoped that a strong military showing during the war might lead to statehood after the war. This was the primary reason why the British continually opposed a Jewish Army.

⁴ Ben Ami, p. 250.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Michael J. Cohen, The Rise of Israel: The Jewish Military Effort, 1939 - 1944, vol. 29, Introduction.

Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, first offered Jewish military aid in the war effort to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain on August 29, 1939. The British Cabinet bickered over the proposal throughout much of the war.

From New York, in May, 1940, Jabotinsky cabled Winston Churchill, offering military assistance from a Jewish Army.

I offer to raise Jewish Army for all Allied fronts . . . provided MacDonald policy stopped, leaving Palestine destiny officially unprejudiced till peace conference.⁷

While Churchill favored utilizing Jewish troops in Palestine to relieve British troops and allow them to return to Britain, he was unable to convince his government that such a trade off was worthwhile. Their response was to advise him to decline Jabotinsky's offer "in view of the insuperable objections to which any such scheme would be open."⁸

The reason for opposing the creation of a Jewish Army was even more exactly expressed by Colonial Secretary Lloyd in correspondence to Churchill in a suggestion as to how the Prime Minister should respond to American Zionist Leaders.

. . . I need hardly emphasize the objections to this Zionist plan for arming the Jews of Palestine. . . I am convinced that

⁷ Western Union Cablegram from Jabotinsky to Churchill, May 12, 1940, Foreign Office 371/24566, The Rise of Israel: The Jewish Military Effort, 1939-1944, Doc., 10.

⁸ "Secret" letter from Colonial Secretary George Lloyd - after consultation with Halifax and Eden - to Prime Minister Churchill, May 22, 1940, Colonial Office, London, R.O.I., vol. 29, Doc. 11).

the step should not be taken. The political and military consequences would be so grave that any advantages would count as nothing in the scale.⁹

Colonel Secretary Lloyd emphasized the trouble that such a policy would cause to British - Arab relations.

. . . This apart from the dire consequences that would ensue in Palestine, would make shipwreck of our relations with Egypt and the neighboring Arab countries, which lie athwart of a vital line in our communications, thus greatly aggravating our military problem in the event of an enemy offensive.¹⁰

Secretary Lloyd urged Churchill to tell the American Zionist leaders that he could not endorse the formation of a Jewish military force in Palestine.

Although George Lloyd had the agreement of Lords Halifax and Eden he could not persuade Winston Churchill, who continued to support the creation of a Jewish Army. In response, Churchill stressed the very large numbers of troops needed in Palestine (6 battalions of Infantry, 9 regiments of Yeomanry, 8 battalions of Australian Infantry, totaling more than 20,000 men). Churchill contended that this was a heavy price to pay for Britain's anti-Jewish policy. If the war were to go heavily into Egypt the troops would have to be withdrawn leaving the Jewish Colonists in a precarious

⁹ Colonial Secretary Lloyd to Prime Minister Churchill, June 27, 1940, R.O.I., Doc.16.

¹⁰ Ibid.

position. By arming them, Churchill believed, British forces could be released to serve where needed.

. . . I think it is little less than a scandal that at a time when we are fighting for our lives, these very large forces should be immobilized in support of a policy which only commends itself to a section of the Conservative Party. ¹¹

Churchill also disagreed with Lloyd's assumption that Arab feelings in the Near East and India would be prejudiced, especially since the British relationship with Turkey had vastly improved and because of a settlement Churchill made with the Arabs on the basis of the Zionist policy which "commanded the full assent of Lawrence."¹²

Disillusioned and frustrated by the obstructions in Britain, Jewish leader, Chaim Weizmann planned to go to the United States to rally support for a Jewish Army. He went with two objectives in mind. These were to accelerate the process of recruitment and training of such a force and to use what influence he had within the Jewish community to help speed up production. He also believed that hundreds of Jewish commercial airline pilots could be recruited to fight for Britain.¹³ David Ben Gurion agreed with Weizmann, "We

¹¹ Churchill to Lloyd, June 28, 1940, Prime Minister's Office, London, 3/348, R.O.I., Doc. 17.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Chaim Weizmann to Field Marshall Chetwode, of the War Office, July 6, 1940, R.O.I., vol. 29, Doc. 18.

must bring our supporters in America into action.”¹⁴

This was not the full extent of Weizmann’s objectives however. In a secret meeting on August 29, 1940, Dr. Weizmann told the Zionist Executive that he had, the prior day, made his true intentions known to Lord Halifax.

Weizmann told Halifax that he would be proceeding to the United States in order to unite the Jews there on a single platform to ensure a solution to the Jewish problem at the war’s end. Weizmann believed that the Jews would have difficulty in finding a place to emigrate to at that time. “Therefore it was essential to establish a Jewish State in Palestine, within reasonable limits; that was his solution.”¹⁵

Plans for a Jewish Division of the British Army were weighed and disputed throughout 1941. No action was taken.

The position of the United States government regarding the creation of a Jewish Army changed during the following two years from aloofness and opposition to a position of support in the Congress. This support extended even to sections of the State Department and the administration itself. It was highly affected by

¹⁴ Memorandum by David Ben Gurion, July 31, 1940, chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem 24/14.632, R.O.I., vol. 29, Doc 22.

¹⁵ “Secret” -minutes of Zionist Executive meeting in London, August 29, 1940, War Office, London, R.O.I., vol. 29. Doc. 25.

the zealous efforts of the Revisionist Zionists in America and the Irgun Delegation. They continued their effective ad campaign and lobbied for support where ever possible.

From the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures, Andrew L. Somers wrote to Senator Harry S. Truman requesting his support for the Jews and asking him to support "a Resolution asking the President to direct the Secretary of State to prevail upon the British Government to authorize such an Army" ¹⁶ (i.e. a Jewish Army in Palestine).

Truman responded to the call for a Jewish Army in Palestine with little enthusiasm. It is questionable whether he understood the complete plan at that time as, in his response, he pressed for American Jews to remain in the U.S. Army. These Jews were not the focus of a Jewish Army but rather stateless and Palestinian Jews. America was merely a staging area to rally support for the movement. However Truman's reply did not reflect this thinking. He wrote,

. . . so far as the United States is concerned I think the best thing for the Jews to do is to go right into our Army as they did in the last war and make the same sort of good soldiers as they did before. It is an honorable undertaking to organize an Army for Palestine but I think American citizens ought to serve in the American Army.¹⁷

¹⁶ Senatorial Files, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Truman Library, January 26, 1942.

¹⁷ Papers of Harry S. Truman, January 28, 1942, Senatorial Files, Truman Library.

The campaign for a Jewish Army lasted nearly three years and reached the highest levels in the United States government. There it was not always received well. In April of 1942 Samuel Edelman, a Jewish public relations man from Philadelphia wrote to Secretary of State, Cordell Hull. Edelman emphasized his belief that the demand for the creation of a Jewish Army “does not even have the support of the Zionist organization and certainly not of the educated classes of Jews in America. Nevertheless, this movement is gaining support from the masses, and it is a flareback against the British government.”¹⁸

Yitshak Ben Ami was cited as the leader of the movement . Edelman requested that proceedings be initiated against Ben Ami as “an undesirable alien.” This caused investigative correspondence to begin between Ben Ami and the Department of State to determine whether the campaign for a Jewish Army was being conducted on behalf of a foreign principal. Despite these allegations Jewish Army leaders continued their attempts to make inroads at high levels and to stir up public awareness.

In February, 1942, a shock method was employed in the advertisement entitled “FOR SALE to Humanity 70,000 Jews-Guaranteed Human Beings at \$50 a Piece.” This New York

¹⁸ Ben Ami, p. 323.

Times ad stemmed from the offer by the Roumanian government to the "Four Freedoms" to deliver 70,000 Jews to Palestine for a price. The ad, which was antagonistic and sarcastic toward the so-called Four Freedoms, included a note from the famous writer, Ben Hecht.

To the Four Freedoms

Care United Nations Leaders.

My Dear Noble State of Mind:

I know you are very busy, too busy perhaps to read this story on the left hand side of this page.

For that reason I am writing an ad. Ads are easier and quicker to read than stories.

Your admirer,
Ben Hecht

Beneath this note, which was on official Committee for a Jewish Army stationery, was more sarcasm.

Attention Four Freedoms ! ! !

NO SPIES WERE FOUND AMONG THE 300,000 JEWS WHO CAME TO PALESTINE SINCE HITLER ASSUMED POWER IN GERMANY. THERE WILL BE NO SPIES SMUGGLED IN AMONG THESE JEWS. (IF THERE ARE YOU CAN SHOOT THEM.)

Attention Humanity ! ! !

PALESTINE'S ARABS WILL NOT BE ANNOYED BY THE ARRIVAL OF 70,000 JEWS. THE ONLY ARABS WHO WILL BE ANNOYED ARE THE ARAB LEADERS WHO ARE IN BERLIN AND THEIR SPIES IN PALESTINE.

Attention America ! ! !

THE GREAT ROUMANIAN BARGAIN IS FOR THIS MONTH ONLY !

IT IS AN UNPRECEDENTED OFFER !

SEVENTY THOUSAND SOULS AT \$50 A PIECE !

The Doors of Roumania Are Open ! Act Now !¹⁹

¹⁹ The New York Times, Feb. 16, 1943, p. 11.

The ad then described the plight of the European Jews and urged immediate help to save them. It said, in part, that the principal demand of the Committee was that the United Nations immediately “appoint an intergovernmental committee to formulate ways and means of stopping the wholesale slaughter of human beings . . .”

Ben Hecht, who wrote this and many other ads for the Committee, and who wrote the script for a famous pageant which they held at Madison Square Garden called “We Shall Never Die,” proved to be a tremendous asset to the Committee for a Jewish Army.

Hecht’s mind was as sharp as his tongue. He said that he “wrote with a whip as much as with a pencil,” but the whip seemed more to me like a scalpel; sometimes it drew another’s blood, sometimes his own.²⁰

Sunday, May 3, 1942 marked a milestone on that road to the creation of the Jewish Army. Detailed plans were expounded at a national conference and testimonial dinner for Pierre Van Paassen which rallied 800 supporters.²¹

At this meeting, which was held at the Waldorf-Astoria, plans were made to accelerate and expand the movement for the formation of a Jewish Army “to defend the lifelines of the United

²⁰Ben Ami, p. 284.

²¹ From the newsletter called MEMO from the National Headquarters of the Committee for a Jewish Army, 535 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y., May 15, 1942

Nations in the Middle East.”²² At this meeting Dr. Emil Lengyel, Committee member, author and authority on Middle East affairs gave a speech entitled “The Jewish Army and the Middle East.” It reinforced the idea that the Middle East was one of the most important strongholds of the Allied defense.

In this speech Dr. Lengyel emphasized the importance of the strategic location of Palestine in the “World Island,” a term by which the Germans had referred to Europe, Asia and Africa. Lengyel contented that if Palestine were to fall to the Nazis the entire World Island would be swept along with it, thereby determining the fate of the rest of the world. He believed that no one was better equipped to defend Palestine than the Jews residing there who knew the terrain and believed in what they were fighting for.²³

Other members of the Irgun delegation also spoke at the Conference. They stressed the value of a Middle East force, giving facts and figures of military strength of various elements there and analyzed their value in the world struggle.²⁴

In the ensuing discussion a number of speakers raised the question of the relationship of the Committee to the Zionist Organization. They urged cooperation and understanding despite the continuing independent activities of the Revisionists and the Irgun

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid, MEMO, p. 3, 4, 6

²⁴ Ibid, p. 7

Delegation.

The Conference received considerable attention in the press both in America and abroad.²⁵ Most notably the articles covered the comments of two American Senators, James M. Mead, a Democrat from New York, and James E. Murray, a Democrat from Montana. These speeches were entered in The Congressional Record. Both Senators urged the immediate organization of a Jewish Army in Palestine to oppose the Axis thrust toward the Middle East and the Suez Canal.²⁶ Mead warned that Suez was “virtually the last bastion we command between Malta and Australia.”²⁷ Senator Murray stressed the importance of oil fields in Iran and Iraq which were vital to the war effort.

Irgun delegation members who spoke believed that a Jewish Army would differ greatly from the non-committal (and later pro-Axis) attitude taken by the Arabs in the war. The speakers compared this attitude to the whole-hearted support given by the Jewish population of the Middle East, and particularly of Palestine, to the defense of the Middle East.

Alfred A. Strelsin, chairman of the executive board of the Committee for a Jewish Army, speaking at the same dinner, outlined

²⁵ See the New York Mirror, May 3, 1942, The Rochester Times, May 3, 1942, The Buffalo N.Y. News, May 4, 1942 .

²⁶ For the complete text of the speeches of Senators Mead and Murray see Appendices B and C.

²⁷ The Washington, D.C. Post, May, 3, 1942.

the plan for the creation of the Jewish Army.²⁸ He said that the testimonial dinner marked the closing of the formative stage of the campaign. The second stage would be devoted to making the Jewish Army idea a reality through the use of the press, radio, and rallies.

We hope to impress Great Britain with the American public desire to give concrete expression to Churchill's recent statement that this is not a war for territorial controls, nor subordination of people, but for the freedom of the world, the dignity of man, and equality of all races, colors, and creeds. . .²⁹

Hillel Kook also addressed the group at the Waldorf Astoria.³⁰ He reiterated many of the essential points made by the other speakers but, in doing so, emphasized the Palestinian side of the argument. That is, that Jews not only wanted to fight the Nazis but were being treated as "protected people," unable to defend themselves and their families. He also stressed the rebirth of their fighting spirit.

We will fight because out there has grown a generation that has again learned something that Jews have long forgotten, and that is to kill. For generations we have learned to die a multitude of deaths, the fighting Jews of Palestine have learned to kill a ruthless enemy. .. give us the tools, and we

²⁸ For the complete text of Alfred Strelsin's speech in the Congressional Record see Appendix D.

²⁹ Congressional Record. Comments of Alfred A. Strelsin, from The Jewish Arm Extension of Remark of Hon. James A. Shanley of Connecticut In the House of Representatives Tuesday, May 12, 1942.

³⁰ For the complete text of Hillel Kook's speech in the Congressional Record see Appendix E.

will do our job.³¹

The testimonial dinner for Pierre Van Paassen and convention for the creation of a Jewish Army brought the work to a decisive stage. The Convention authorized the Executive Board 1) to create a nation-wide net of affiliates all over the United States, 2) to establish offices in London, Buenos Aires, and Montreal , and 3) to make a survey of the Jewish manpower available for the Jewish Army. ³²

Messages of encouragement were received from around the world. Eleanor Roosevelt, Frank Knox (Secretary of the Navy), as well as a number of British M.P.'s sent supporting messages. ³³

The pressure generated by the Irgun Delegation and the New Zionist Organization forced the appearance of a resolution on the Senate floor regarding the formation of a Jewish army.

Resolved by the House of Representatives (The Senate concurring), that the President of the United States is hereby requested to direct the Secretary of State to petition the Government of Britain to take such action as may be necessary to permit the organization of all-Jewish military units in Palestine.³⁴

The efforts of these activist Zionists to draw attention to the

³¹ Congressional Record. Comments of Hillel Kook from Extension of Remarks of Hon. Andrew L. Somers of New York In the House of Representatives, Thursday, May 7, 1942.

³² MEMO from the National Headquarters of the Committee for a Jewish Army, May 15, 1942, p. 9.

³³ For their comments see MEMO from the National Headquarters for the Committee for a Jewish Army, Vol. 1. No 13, May, 1942.

³⁴ Zionews, May 1, 1942, vol. 5, no. 8, p. 1.

plight of European Jews were effective in giving additional credence to the activities of the Jewish agency and other mainstream Jewish organizations. The perception that the Revisionists and the Irgun delegation were radicals actually benefited the mainstream Jewish activities in some ways. While somewhat suspicious of the linkage between the Revisionists and mainstream Zionists, the President and Government officials were, perhaps, more willing to listen to and talk with men like Wise, Silver, Weizmann, and Ben Gurion whom they considered to be more moderate. Whether planned or not, the presence of "radical" groups in the arena of struggle of any national liberation group gives to the "more rational" members of that struggle a seemingly tolerable voice. This has proven true, for example, in the current struggle of the Palestinian Arabs for a homeland. In the 1960's and 1970's the Palestine Liberation Organization was perceived as the most extreme faction of the Palestinian population. Its leader, Yasser Arafat, was then the most obvious of the radicals. He received some credibility after addressing the United Nations. As time passed and other extremist groups such as Hamas and Hizbollah, appeared on the scene. The P. L. O. began to appear less radical and slowly gained credibility. It used this change in perception to its advantage by making statements that sounded more diplomatic and acceptable to the

world at large.

It is evident from the example of the P.L.O. and from the example of the Zionist Revisionists, that there is a necessity for extremism in any national liberation movement. Acts of violence are often used by these groups to draw world attention to their causes. The cycle of events in a national liberation movement therefore often begins with the efforts of a few extreme activists who may represent a dissatisfied constituency who yearn for something that they dare not attempt to achieve. It is often the most idealistic of that population, the freedom fighters or terrorists, who sacrifice their blood to move the rest into action. Conditions affect that movement. Usually, the greater the oppression the quicker and more intense the action. Legitimacy and diplomacy often follow in a cycle which begins with terrorism and shock tactics. These may eventually lead to national liberation.

So it was with the Irgun and Lechi in Palestine. The Revisionist and Irgun representatives in America employed more subtle shock tactics by use of the written and spoken word, rather than by the gun.

Following the convention and testimonial dinner for Pierre Van Paassen at the Waldorf Astoria, these two groups renewed their efforts to gain the support of American leaders such as Senator

Truman. He was approached by Dr. A. Hadani, a representative of the Committee for a Jewish Army (in reality Dr. Alex Raphaeli, member of the Irgun). Van Paassen requested that Truman “grant an interview to Dr. A. Hadani, . . . a brilliant scholar and authority on Middle Eastern affairs,” in a letter dated May 19, 1942 which was also sent to acquaint Truman with the new Committee headquarters in Washington at 2317-15th Street, N. W.³⁵

Truman reluctantly agreed to Van Paassen’s request for the meeting.

I will be glad to talk with Dr. A. Hadani some time at his convenience, but I am not very strong for a Jewish Army. I am enclosing you a copy of a letter which I wrote to Congressman Somers on the same subject some time in January. Sincerely, Harry S. Truman, U.S.S.³⁶

This comment indicates that Truman was still presuming that the Jewish Army would include many American Jews. A meeting with Dr. Hadani may have reeducated Senator Truman for, by the following week, Truman had suddenly changed his mind.

An F.B.I. file entitled “Background Information Concerning Members of the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation and Other Individuals Associated with the Committee” says

. . . another member of the original Palestinian delegation (i.e. the “Bergson group”) was Dr. Alexander Rafaeli, alias

³⁵ Letter from Pierre Van Passen to Harry Truman, May 19, 1942, Senatorial File, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Truman Library.

³⁶ Undated Copy, Senatorial Files, Papers of Harry S. Truman.

Alexander B. Hadani . . . Dr. Alexander Rafaeli, who uses the pen name Hadani, is an economist, an expert on Near East affairs. He was editor of the Economic Post in Tel Aviv. Since 1938 he visited more than forty countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa, conferring on Jewish problems. . .³⁷

Two memoirs of the Irgun also mention the name, Alexander Rafaeli. (Though neither mentions the alias, Dr. Hadani.) Yitshaq Ben Ami stated that Rafaeli's job in the United States was to take "charge of mobilizing local activists to manage our spreading network of organizations."³⁸ Ben Ami also stated that, in 1948, "Rafaeli would concentrate on his specialty of aircraft acquisition."³⁹ This is corroborated by the captain of the *Altalena*, Eliahu Lankin, who, in his memoirs, wrote that Rafaeli was one of the six original "Irgun emissaries"⁴⁰ sent, in 1939, to the United States to set up The American Friends of Jewish Palestine.⁴¹

(Yaakov) Meridor conceived the idea of organizing a flying squadron to accompany and protect the *Altalena* on her way to Eretz Israel and later to become part of the future Israeli air force. We succeeded in mobilizing a dozen volunteer pilots who had served in the various Allied forces during World War II and were competent and experienced. Among them were fighter pilots, heavy and medium bomber pilots, and reconnaissance pilots. We began to buy planes. Our experts, Yehiel Ratushnik, Alexander Rafaeli and Meir

³⁷ F.B.I. Confidential File, "Background Information Concerning Members of the HCNL" taken from *The Answer*, June 15, 1944.

³⁸ Ben Ami, p. 299.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 400.

⁴⁰ The sixth member being Eri Jabotinsky, son of Vladimir Jabotinsky.

⁴¹ Eliahu Lankin, To Win the Promised Land: Story of a Freedom Fighter, p. 62.

Zilberstein, were sent to various destinations, and the airplanes began to arrive only after the *Altalena's* departure. They were eventually turned over to the representatives of Israeli government.⁴²

Besides procuring airplanes for the Irgun, Rafaeli was a spokesman for the group. It was in this capacity that he approached Harry Truman, and gained support in the United States for the Irgun.

Alex Rafaeli pointed out the friendship and understanding we had found among Chinese, Indians, Koreans, Yugoslavs, Czechs and other exiles in the United States, and said that we needed to attend international gatherings to present the cause of Hebrew independence in a militant style, without the self-deprecating restraint of traditional Zionism. When the war was over, and the nations of the free world met to decide the future, we had to make sure that the reborn Hebrew nation was represented forcefully and with dignity.⁴³

About himself Dr. Raphaeli said:

I was a publisher for Economic Newspaper in Israel. I volunteered in 1937 for a full time job with the Irgun. I did, from '37 to '39, underground work in Europe organizing the Jews for . . . underground immigration. I was purchasing arms. I was carrying (on) political negotiations with other national minorities like Maronites in Lebanon, like Kurds, etcetera, etcetera. Then I was in charge of Irgun's western office in Paris. . . Then I was trying to get into England. England pushed me outside. I returned for a month or two to Israel, again Eastern Europe, and then the commander of the Irgun decided to send me with the other friends whom you know, Kook, Merlin, Ben Ami, Ben Eliezer to the United States. In the United States I was on the last boat from Italy,

⁴² Ibid, p. 273.

⁴³ Ben Ami, p. 296.

Rex. After that Italy declared war on the Allies and I was taken to the press conference of Jabotinsky in the hotel at Times Square . . . And there I couldn't be introduced under my real name and I wasn't used to the name of Hadani. Since then the work in America `til `44 or `45 was done under the name Hadani. ⁴⁴

Dr. Raphaeli was one of the main publicity men for the Irgun Delegation to the United States. He was sent to Hollywood to gain the support of stars.

I was asked to go to Hollywood via (the) West Coast. Lots of lectures, in Texas, Oklahoma. No one ever heard about such strange things like Irgun. And then I started a more continuous work, established our office in Chicago, and then I was in Hollywood where I worked with quite a number of people - among them Ben Hecht and Georgie Gessel and Billy Wilder and Garfield, etcetera. I think most of them are published in a number of books. I was in Hollywood doing public relations and mobilizing public opinion of the community there which is not American community, not specifically Jewish, there were many British there, etcetera, establishing the American Friends of the Jewish Palestine. And then, from that work, I was sent to Washington and Philadelphia. I had a radio station in Philadelphia - WPHIL - once a week on Near Eastern subjects. And I worked in Washington. Hillel Kook got, at that time, sick and I had, for a while, to take over completely. At this occasion Truman was just one of quite a number of matters. Truman at that time was chairman of the, of the War . . . not the War Supply Board but Senate's Committee of War Production Board - something like that, I don't remember the exact name. And what happened was that General Rommel, the Nazi General, was at that time already coming close to the Egyptian borders and we were afraid he will move into Palestine. Montgomery wasn't strong enough to stop him.

⁴⁴ Telephone interview with Dr. Alex Raphaeli from Jerusalem by Joanna Sidel, June 15, 1993.

Rommel captured the whole coast up to Egypt and we expected them in Palestine. There was (a) plan of us withdrawing into the mountains and we needed weapons. And I was charged with a job.⁴⁵

Dr. Raphaeli said that while President Roosevelt did nothing to help the Jews, his Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, was very helpful, as was the Secretary of the Interior, Ickes.

Morgenthau took an unequivocal stand against the State Department's policy to conceal from the public all information regarding the murder of the Jews, which had been available since September 1942. Together with some of his colleagues at the Treasury, he tried to convince Roosevelt to publish this information and assist Jews who had managed to escape the Nazis. He supported our demand that the American government publicly state that the Nazis and their cohorts would be tried as war criminals at the end of the war. . . He never joined our board officially, but was always willing to help.⁴⁶

Apparently, on May 27, 1942, the Irgun Delegation (perhaps also because of behind the scenes pressure which the New Zionist Organization had effectively exerted within the administration) succeeded in "enlightening" Senator Truman. It may have been the conversation with Dr. Raphaeli, followed by one with Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson) which finally convinced Truman to join the effort. This is evident from correspondence of that day in which Bergson wrote:

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Dr. Alexe Raphaeli, Dream and Action, p. 105-106.

Following our conversation of this morning in which you expressed your sympathy and approval of our plan and consented to become a member of the Committee for a Jewish Army, I am writing to express our deep appreciation for your kindness and assure you that the Jewish people will never forget that you were among the leading personalities in this country to take a positive and friendly stand towards their most vital problem in the most critical moment of their history. . .⁴⁷

Truman's response to this letter was ". . . I really think you give me too much credit. I will be glad to do what I can."⁴⁸

On June 22, 1942 one, Baruch E. Rabinowitz, submitted a short memorandum to President Truman highlighting the main points of a plan to create a Jewish Army in the Near East. Rommel's breakthrough in Libya necessitated a Jewish Army in the region, argued Rabinowitz. The benefit of such an army was that shipping transport forces would not be necessary since 100,000 men could be immediately mobilized in Palestine, plus an additional 100,000 stateless Jews from elsewhere. While many Arabs had joined the Axis ranks, Jews could be counted on to remain firmly within the Allied camp. Reiterating some of the points addressed at the Waldorf Astoria meeting the prior month he wrote, "Palestine is the gateway to the Persian Gulf, the back-door to Russia. It is also where Hitler

⁴⁷ Letter from Bergson to Truman, May 27, 1942, Senatorial Files, Harry S. Truman, Truman Library.

⁴⁸ Letter from Truman to Bergson, June 1, 1942, Senatorial Files, Harry S. Truman, Truman Library.

and Hirohito hope to join hands and thus have complete access to the oil and minerals of the heart of the *World Island*, which is the Middle East.”⁴⁹

Rabinowitz remarked that the crisis of lack of manpower had already destroyed Singapore, Malaya, Burma, Crete, Hong Kong and other areas, and would similarly threaten the Middle East. The Jewish Army would solve this problem; “100,000 men on the spot are worth 3,000,000 men yet to be drafted and transported,” he wrote.⁵⁰ These available men would fight fiercely and “provide the unbreakable morale that is the absolute condition of victory . . . If the Jews of the Middle East are slaughtered unarmed, it will be the greatest blow to Allied morale in this war because the aims of the Atlantic Charter will then be suspect wherever free men still breathe.”⁵¹ Rabinowitz closed by proposing the immediate formation of a Jewish Army to be placed under Supreme Allied Command and by expressing a moral point of view written by Lord Davies in a letter to the Manchester Guardian.

Davies stressed that a determined stand needed to be taken either for or against the Jews. The attitude taken would reflect the sincerity of British war aims. Abandonment of the Jews would be

⁴⁹ “Highlights on the Jewish Army Plan,” attached to a letter from Baruch E. Rabinowitz to Senator Harry S. Truman, June 22, 1942, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Senatorial Files, Harry S. Truman Library.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

construed as the abandonment of ethical principles, since Hitler had chosen them for his personal target. By this action the Jews had become central to a choice between good and evil. Desertion of the Jews would imply the betrayal of British war aims and the repudiation of British principles. The Jews and Palestine needed to be defended.

Assumptions by supporters of the Committee for a Jewish Army concerning Hitler's plans to attain the World Island with the assistance of Arab collaborators proved to be true. "Haj Amin al Husaini, the most influential leader of Palestine Arabs, lived in Germany during the Second World War. He met Hitler, Ribbentrop and other Nazi leaders on various occasions and attempted to coordinate Nazi and Arab policies in the Middle East."⁵² It was claimed that al Husaini had connections with Adolf Eichmann. Hannah Arendt, who covered the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, believed however that this charge was incorrect. She nevertheless confirmed the union of Husseini with the Nazis.

The Grand Mufti's connections with the Nazis during the war were no secret; he had hoped they would help him in the implementation of some "final solution" in the Near East. . . That Arab nationalists have been in sympathy with Nazism is notorious, their reasons are obvious . . . they never were in hiding. . . The Mufti had been in close contact with the German Foreign Office and with Himmler, but this was

⁵² Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, The Israel-Arab Reader, New York, 1984, p.79.

nothing new.⁵³

The outbreak of the war had caused the Germans to reevaluate their position on the Arabs because of the importance of Middle East oil and supply routes.

The Axis began giving generous subsidies to the Mufti in Baghdad, and the Germans modified their racial theory of the Arabs, who were upgraded from a primitive people belonging to the lower races (though above Jews, gypsies, and blacks) to those possessing Nordic influences. The Mufti's fair hair and blue eyes convinced Hitler that the Arab leader "has more than one Aryan among his ancestors and one who may be descended from the best Roman stock."⁵⁴

On November 30, 1941 the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem had actually met with Hitler in Berlin. In a record of the conversation between them, which was held in the presence of the Reich Foreign Minister and Minister Grobba, the Grand Mufti affirmed that

"the Arabs were Germany's natural friends because they had the same enemies as had Germany, namely the English, the Jews, and the Communists. They were therefore prepared to cooperate with Germany with all their hearts and stood ready to participate in the war, not only negatively by the commission of acts of sabotage and the instigation of revolutions, but also positively by the formation of an Arab Legion."⁵⁵

⁵³ Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, p. 13.

⁵⁴ Philip Mattar, The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Haji Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement, p. 100.

⁵⁵ Laqueur and Rubin, p. 80.

The Grand Mufti expressed his desire to enter into an agreement with Hitler. He promised the Mufti that once the gateway to the Middle East was opened by way of the Caucasus that the Mufti could make a public declaration telling the Arab population of Axis support. Hitler assured the Mufti of the following, "enjoining him to lock it in the uttermost depths of his heart:"

1. Hitler would continue his efforts to destroy "the Judeo-Communist empire in Europe."
2. German armies would reach the southern exit of the Caucasus.
3. When this happened "Germany's objective would then be solely the destruction of the Jewish element residing in the Arab sphere under the protection of British power. In that hour the Mufti would be the most authoritative spokesman for the Arab world. It would then be his task to set off the Arab operations which he had secretly prepared."⁵⁶

Meanwhile, Hitler continued to butcher the Jews. As the fact of the extermination of the Jews became known to the world, a rising sense of moral outrage grew.

In New York, forty thousand people attended a pageant, called "We Shall Never Die," in Madison Square Garden to watch a theatrical presentation of the extermination on the Jews. This performance, which took place on March 9, 1943, was conceived by Ben Hecht and the Irgun Delegation in America, and directed by Moss

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 83, Prof. Laqueur took this information from *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. XIII, London, 1964, pp. 881 ff .

Hart. It was staged before a backdrop of two huge tablets three stories high bearing the Ten Commandments. In the production there was a roll call of the greatest Jewish figures throughout time emerging from the tablets individually, each carrying a candle which symbolized the Jewish contribution to humanity. The pageant ended with these words,

The corpse of a people lies on the steps of civilization. And no voice is heard to cry halt to the slaughter, no government speaks to bid that the murder of millions end. Those of us here tonight have a voice. Let us raise it. Perhaps the dead will hear it and find hope. Perhaps the four freedoms will hear it and find their tongue.⁵⁷

The presentation was repeated in Washington, at Constitution Hall, where it was attended by seven members of the Supreme Court, two Cabinet members, hundreds of Congressmen and high ranking government officials. Eleanor Roosevelt was in the the audience. She wrote movingly about the event in her weekly syndicated column.

Others were also writing about Bergson's production in less favorable tones. The F.B.I. received mail from an individual who wrote a number of "personal and confidential" letters to J. Edgar Hoover concerning Peter Bergson's (Hillel Kook) activity in the Theatre Authority of New York. The writer believed that the Theatre Authority should be investigated for doing business with a non-

⁵⁷ Ben Ami, p. 286.

citizen of the United States, Peter Bergson, and allowing him to collect funds thereby. The writer stated,

The question is? Why didn't Alan Corelli (of the Theatre Authority) write your department about Mr. Bergson and make some inquiry regarding Bergson's status in this country or what right had Mr. Bergson in this country? . . . (to organize) the 'Gigantic Pageant "We Will Never Die"' at the Madison Square Garden and gather in Thousands of Dollars from the Pageant when Alan Corelli knew right well that Bergson was not a citizen of the United States. To my mind the Theatre Authority is an organization of "Parasites," that have no right to exist. . .⁵⁸

The use of this underlined term, so often employed by Hitler to describe the Jews, may suggest that the source of this letter was an anti-Semite, writing for that purpose rather than the purpose stated (i.e. to investigate the theatre company and the alien status of Bergson).

The same writer (apparent from handwriting) wrote to Hoover regarding a play called "The Gate" put on by the Theatre Company which was supposed to benefit the children of India. The writer asks, "Will India's children get the money Paid for the benefit?" and then implies that it might go to "European and other suspects" who were making "in roads on the American Pocketbook."⁵⁹

An F.B.I. investigation into the activities of Peter Bergson and

⁵⁸ Letter to J. Edgar Hoover, from F.B.I. file on Peter Bergson.

⁵⁹ F.B.I. file on Peter Bergson.

his group was undertaken. The Committee for a Jewish Army continued to attempt to put pressure on the United States government and to influence American public opinion.

While the New Zionist Organization and the Irgun Delegation worked in an all out effort to gain acceptance for the creation of a Jewish Army in Palestine they were not successful. Despite American support for the idea, the British, completely aware of the underlying motives for such a force, feared the consequences and were determined to oppose the creation of such an Army. The work of the Irgun and the N.Z.O. did, however, result in the creation of the Jewish Brigade and continued to be the major agent of public exposure to the plight the Jews of Europe, to the anti-Jewish policy of the British in Palestine, and of the ineffectiveness of the United States government in assisting the Jews.

CHAPTER 4

BERMUDA

The ineffectiveness of the United States government in dealing with the “Jewish problem” in Europe was clearly visible in America’s response to the Bermuda Conference on Refugees in 1943. The Irgun Delegation made this response the focus of an ad campaign which characterized the Conference as a sham and a mockery. Though this analysis was substantially correct, its appearance in the nationwide press was premature. The inappropriate timing of the advertisements proved to be extremely costly for the organization primarily due to the attachment of a list of names of congressmen, without their expressed consent, prior to the release of the official report of the Conference. The Irgun Delegation was angrily decried in public and on the Senate floor. The group lost many supporters including Senator Truman because of their error in planning.

On April 19, 1943 the Irgun Delegation to the United States shifted their attention from the creation of a Jewish Army to the Bermuda Conference on the Refugee Problem which lasted until the end of the month. This Anglo-American Conference sponsored by Roosevelt and Churchill was the result of pressure from Jews, and from the general public in the U.S. and in Britain. Their demands for

action could no longer be stifled, particularly after the issuance of the United Nations Declaration on Jewish Massacres in December, 1942. This declaration stated that the governments of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Yugoslavia, and the French National Committee had been drawn to numerous reports from Europe that the German authorities were carrying into effect Hitler's intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe.

From all the occupied countries Jews are being transported, in conditions of appalling horror and brutality, to Eastern Europe. In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughterhouse, the ghettos established by the German invaders are being systematically emptied of all Jews except for a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able bodied are slowly worked to death in labor camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions. The number of victims in these bloody cruelties is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women and children.¹

By the declaration the above mentioned governments and the French National Committee condemned, in the strongest possible terms, the "bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination." They warned that

¹ Monty N. Penkower, The Jews were Expendable: Free World Diplomacy and the Holocaust, p. 91.

those responsible for the crimes would not escape retribution and expressed their determination to press on until this enemy was vanquished.

While Jews submitted various rescue plans, the members of the Bermuda Conference, headed by the president of Princeton University, Willis Dodds, anxiously avoided referring to the Jews as the Nazis' major victims. The Conference attained little except to revive the Evian Committee (Intergovernmental Committee of Refugees) and to decide to extend the British mandate over Palestine to deal with problems that would occur after the war ended. British plans to open up wartime refugee camps in North Africa did not materialize. The decisions of the Bermuda Conference came too late to save Jews from the Nazi Holocaust.²

The revival of the Inter-Governmental Committee on Refugees would secure visas for refugees wherever it could. However, this body did not facilitate Jewish immigration into Palestine since it regarded its activities as purely humanitarian and wished to avoid being drawn into political controversies.³

The Conference proved to be a sham. Despite public demand for action, the British and American governments "hid behind questionable immigration figures . . . Ships were found to bring

²Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 4, p. 669.

³Richard Stevens, American Zionism and U.S. Foreign Policy 1942-1947, p. 70.

400,000 German prisoners of war to internment in the United States outside current visa regulations, but not for Jews facing death . . . Indeed, the word “Jews” could not be found in the final communiqué’ from the conference.”⁴

The failure of the Conference to assist the Jews of Europe brought Zionists who had been inactive to their feet. Rallies and protests increased. Restrictive immigration policies gave credence to the Zionist contention that only a Jewish state would relieve the suffering of European Jews .

This was especially true after the Bermuda Conference of 1943 demonstrated that Washington was not prepared to modify existing American immigration laws. Not until 1947 was a belated, and ultimately futile, effort made to relax American immigration policy with a view to aiding growing numbers of Europeans of all faiths, displaced from their homes by the war. ⁵

Although the United Nations Declaration on Jewish Massacres had stirred public sympathy it had failed to call the Allied powers into action. It was the only international document of its nature produced during the war period.

“Deeds commensurate with the gravity of the hour,” called for in a last cable from the doomed fighters of the Warsaw ghetto uprising while the conference’s delegates basked in the Bermuda sun, had not followed. The pleas and reasoned proposals of a concerned public could not move London and

⁴ Penkower, p. 119.

⁵ Dan Tschirgi, The Politics of Indecision: Origins and Implications of American Involvement with the Palestine Problem, p. 129.

Washington to meaningful action. Chaim Weizmann's bitter observation, included in a memorandum to the conference which the Jewish Agency could not deliver in person, that "the world is divided into countries in which the Jew cannot live and countries which they must not enter" had proved only too true during the Holocaust.⁶

Dr. Yehuda Bauer, Professor of Holocaust Studies and former head of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry at Hebrew University in Jerusalem analyzed the reaction of mainstream American Jews to the Holocaust. He believes that while Jewish organizations in America were well informed about the failure of the Bermuda Conference, "they did not respond with plans of their own. In addition to the formidable psychological hindrances to action hinted at already, there were certain objective circumstances that militated against "radical" demonstrations, hunger strikes, and the like." Such actions, Bauer contends, would have hurt President Roosevelt and his administration, which, Bauer states, "for all its shortcomings, had stood between the Jews and American antisemitism. Any demonstrations against the government would be perceived as a demonstration against the war. Jews in 1943 simply could not demonstrate against Roosevelt."⁷

Bauer states however that if groups like the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which was the chief representative of

⁶ Penkower, p. 121.

⁷ Yehuda Bauer, American Jewry and the Holocaust, p. 195.

mainstream Jews in Europe during the War, had backed the activist Zionists in America, rescue actions would probably have been much more successful.

Some action was attempted, and might have been more successful if more representative groups had joined: the mission in the United States of the extremist underground Revisionist Irgun organized an Emergency Rescue Committee which roped in senators and congressmen and demanded action, such as sending funds to Nazi-controlled territory and creating a special governmental agency to deal with rescue plans. But their activity, aimed at maximum publicity and lobbying, went far beyond what the JDC (Joint Distribution Committee) considered its proper line of approach.⁸

This presumed “proper line of approach” did not deter the Irgun Delegation who were outraged by the Bermuda Conference. They again used shock tactics to bring attention to the Conference. On May 4, 1943 they placed another ad in The New York Times . The caption atop it read, To 5,000,000 Jews in the Nazi Death-Trap Bermuda Was a “Cruel Mockery” . It was subtitled “When Will The United Nations Establish An Agency To Deal With The Problem of Hitler’s Extermination of a Whole People?” The ad criticized the Bermuda Conference, calling it a “mockery and a cruel jest.” It drew public attention to the problem but alienated many important individuals because it was published before the final reports of the

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ For full text of this ad see Appendix L.

Conference were published. Although the accusations of the Irgun Delegation proved to be true, many officials resented having their names attached to the ad without consent and prior to the disclosure of the official findings. The overriding result of the ad however was, to some extent, positive. It helped increase pressure resulting in the formation of the War Refugee Board.

This powerful advertisement did not go unnoticed. A legal adviser of the Visa Division named Mr. Alexander pointed out the article to an F.B.I. agent who noted it in his file on Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson). The F.B.I. file on the Bermuda Conference ad said

The entire article which followed the headline was cast in a tone of vituperation. . . Along the margin of this ad, separated in a black-lined box, was a large number of names of people prominent in public life, including Sidney Hellman, Donald Nelson, Herbert Hoover and thirty-three United States Senators. The implication was offered that these persons endorsed the statements appearing in the ad.¹⁰

This list, which was composed of many military officers, senators, ambassadors, governors, and distinguished American leader, included their names under the subtitle "The Voice of America."¹¹

Senator Edwin Johnson immediately complained to Mr. Bergson because he felt it was unfair to condemn the Conference before an

¹⁰F.B.I. Memorandum to Mr. Ladd from S. S. Alden - Re: Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews, May 12, 1943.

¹¹ See Appendix G for entire list of names included in this ad.

official report was issued regarding Bermuda. He also believed that one of the U.S. representatives to the Conference “who had no background in refugee matters,”¹² Senator Scott W. Lucas, had been maligned by the ad.

... My colleagues and I have great respect for Senator Lucas and we do not deem it fair to him to prejudge or condemn the work of the committee until it has had sufficient opportunity to make a report. None of the work of the Conference has been disclosed to me in confidence or otherwise, and in all fairness I must therefore withhold my judgment until such time as I know what actually took place in the Conference. . .¹³

Johnson also objected to the use of his name, which appeared as National Chairman of the organization, and to the publication of other names, saying, “While there is nothing to indicate that this group of distinguished citizens endorses the specific advertisement, the inference might be made that they do.”

The Congressional Record for May 6, 1943 set forth a protest by Senator Lucas in which he defended the conference at Bermuda. He also read Senator Johnson’s letter to Peter Bergson into the Record. During that session of Congress four other senators disclaimed knowledge of the ad. These included E. H. Koore of Oklahoma, A. B. Chandler of Kentucky, Alexander Wiley of

¹² Penkower, p. 108.

¹³ Letter from Senator Edwin C. Johnson to Peter Bergson, May 6, 1943; Senatorial File, Papers of Harry S. Truman.

Wisconsin, and Harry S. Truman of Missouri.

Senator Truman was outraged. He withdrew his support for the Committee for a Jewish Army. In a letter to Peter Bergson Truman stated his case.

Dear Mr. Bergson,
Senator Lucas yesterday called my attention to an advertisement in the New York Times to which was signed the names of some dozen or so Senators and to which the name of Senator Edwin C. Johnson was signed as Chairman.

Senator Johnson informs me this advertisement was never submitted to him for approval, and I have the same information from a number of other Senators.

I am withdrawing my name from your Committee, and you are not authorized under any circumstances to make use of it for any purpose in the future.

This does not mean my sympathies are not with the down-trodden Jews of Europe, but when you take it on yourself without consultation to attack members of the Senate and House of Representatives who are working in your interest I cannot approve of that procedure.

Sincerely yours,
Harry S. Truman, U.S.S.¹⁴

On May 10, 1943 Senator Maybank of South Carolina pointed out that his name had also been used without his approval and "that the man responsible was one Peter Bergson, a citizen of Palestine, who, with four or five other Palestinian citizens, is presently in the

¹⁴ Papers of Harry S. Truman, Senatorial File, dated May 7, 1943, Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Missouri.

United States preparing full page ads of the same general tenor.”¹⁵

In the Congressional Record for this date Senators Lucas and Chandler expressed their resentment that “an individual not an American citizen should, without authority, use the names of other Senators to condemn a colleague in the United States Senate.”¹⁶

Mr. Lucas made the following comments in the Congressional Record .

The time may come for a showdown with respect to the alien groups, regardless of who they may be, who are here under temporary sufferance at the hands of a benevolent government which accords them better treatment than they can get at any other place under God’s shining sun, and while they are here they take advantage of the courtesy and kindness extended to them.¹⁷

Bergson sent letters of apology to both Senator Lucas and Senator Truman on May 13, 1943 for what Bergson considered a misinterpretation of intent by the senators. But the damage had been done. Truman’s reply to the apology was curt. “. . . I still feel that you abused your privilege when you subjected the members of the United States Senate to the embarrassment of your advertisement which was not authorized by any member of that committee.”¹⁸

¹⁵ F.B.I. Memorandum to Mr. Ladd from S. S. Alden - Re: Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews, May 12, 1943.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Congressional Record, May 10, 1943.

¹⁸ Letter to Peter Bergson from Harry Truman, May 24, 1943 ; Senatorial File, Papers of Harry S. Truman.

Irgun delegation member, Yitshak Ben Ami, commented on the reaction to advertisement in his memoirs.

As we hoped we would, we touched a nerve, and a storm of protest against us broke loose, whipped up by Senator Scott Lucas, who had just returned from the conference. The debate which then broke out on the Senate floor revolved mostly around Senator Lucas' hurt feelings. Lucas declared before the Senate that no one could accuse him of not caring for the Jews of Europe, since "some of my best friends are members of the Jewish faith." In May, 1943, this was considered a forthright and courageous statement. Without knowing the facts or understanding the historic issues, Lucas' colleagues rose up on the floor and several, including Harry S. Truman, announced their withdrawal from the Committee for a Jewish Army. How could our ad have dared to state "It was almost improper to mention the word Jew?" Lucas called this a "diabolical untruth," and wanted to know how we knew what had been said or not said at the Conference. (We did have friends who had attended.)

While Eichmann's Germany herded thousands into the shuttle trains to the extermination camps, while David Wdowski and his comrades were retreating from bunker to bunker in the Warsaw ghetto, the members of the United States Senate were patting each other on the back in a show of support for each other's fine efforts.¹⁹

While the Senate continued to debate the issue, Kook (Bergson) wrote to Senator Edwin C. Johnson, "President Roosevelt called this a war. . . for the survival of human liberties; for the survival of human freedom; for the survival of world civilization and the dignity of the human race. . . Let not the day of victory come and find seven million

¹⁹ Ben Ami, p. 290.

Jewish corpses in Europe.”²⁰ During 1943 Truman had been urged by more moderate elements of the Zionist movement to support a Jewish State in Palestine. On January 28, Rabbi Stephen Wise sent him a copy of a volume called “Why a Jewish State” written by Rabbi Leon Feuer of Toledo.²¹ On February 4, 1943 Truman replied, “I shall read it with much interest.”²² Truman’s amicable relationship with Wise prompted further correspondence in the wake of the Senator’s resignation from the Committee for a Jewish Army. On May 20, 1943 Rabbi Wise, representing the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, wrote to Truman about Peter Bergson and the Irgun Delegation in America.

The activities of Mr. Bergson have been a source of considerable embarrassment to the organized Zionist movement in this country, whose leadership has viewed with concern the manner in which he and his associates have been conducting their campaign.²³

Senator Truman’s June 1, 1943 reply to this letter is both interesting and revealing. In it he openly criticizes Bergson and states why.

Dear Rabbi Wise,

I appreciate your letter of the twentieth very much, and it is fellows like Mr. Bergson who go off half cocked in matters

²⁰ Ibid, p. 290-291.

²¹ Letter from Steven Wise to Senator Truman, Jan. 28, 1943, Truman Senatorial Files, Truman Library.

²² Reply from Truman to Wise, Feb. 4, 1943, Senatorial Files, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Truman Library.

²³ Letter from Rabbi Steven Wise to Senator Harry Truman, May 20, 1943, Truman Library.

that affect strategy of the whole world that causes all the trouble. No one feels more sympathetic toward the Jews than the members of the United States Senate who signed that Committee petition, but when an ad such as Bergson put in the New York Times can be used to stir up trouble where our troops are fighting it is certainly outside my policy to be mixed up in such an organization.

That ad was used by all the Arabs in North Africa in an endeavor to create dissension among them and to stab our fellows in the back.

We want to help the Jews and we are going to help them but we cannot do it at the expense of our military maneuvers.

Sincerely yours,
Harry S. Truman, U.S.S.²⁴

The failure of the Irgun Delegation to properly time the release of its advertisement attack on the Bermuda Conference was regrettable. The plan could have been highly successful had proper endorsement been attained. It is probable that such support could have been mustered. Over-zealousness and a desire to make the public aware of the hypocrisy of the event seemingly overshadowed the systematic approach of affirmation and consent which should have been followed. This failure, however, did not stop the Irgun Delegation from continuing with its mission.

Other important events were simultaneously taking place. Despite the animosity between the Irgun Delegation, the Senate, and

²⁴ Letter from Harry Truman to Steven Wise, June 1, 1943, Truman Library.

the mainstream Jews in America, in 1943, over the Bermuda Conference, there was cooperation elsewhere.

The establishment Zionists, important anti-Zionist figures, and a group of young Palestinians in the United States led by Peter Bergson managed to torpedo a joint U.S.-British declaration that would have disavowed commitment to a Jewish state in Palestine, and denied freedom of expression to a minority (i.e. the Revisionists) in the United States.²⁵

The affair began in January with the appointment of Lt. Col. Harold B. Hoskins, “an Arabist in the Office of Strategic Services,” to the position of Near East envoy to Franklin Roosevelt.²⁶

²⁵ “The Hoskins Affair,” by Louis Rapoport, The Jerusalem Post, November 23, 1984, p. 5.

²⁶ Ibid.

THE FIGHT FOR A JEWISH STATE

The Hoskins Affair threatened to stifle the Palestine question during the war and to make a decision on Palestine dependent upon Arab agreement. This incident, which was averted by the united effort of a broad spectrum of Jews, was only one incident in the large number that constituted the fight for a Jewish State by supporters in both America and Palestine. While the methods were controversial, the results of those efforts was increased pressure and publicity for the creation of a Jewish State.

Harold B. Hoskins, the son of missionaries from the United States, was born in Beirut and educated at American University, and, in the United States, at Princeton. His first job in the Roosevelt administration was to establish friendly contacts (i.e. to create an intelligence network) in the Arab world.¹ In a report which he wrote, he pressed for a joint Anglo-American declaration which would, in effect, stifle the Palestine question during the war and making a decision on Palestine depend upon Arab agreement.² He advised that unless this was done there would be civil war there

¹ "The Hoskins Affair," by Louis Rapoport, The Jerusalem Post, November 23, 1984, p. 5.

² Summary of Lieutenant Colonel Harold B. Hoskins' Report on the Near East, Foreign Relations of the United States, (Palestine section) 1943, volume IV, p. 784.

which would endanger Allied war efforts.³

He also cited the controversy between mainstream and Revisionist Zionists (particularly the campaign of Rabbi Wise against the Irgun Delegation) as contributing to “domestic disunity.” Hoskins’ appraisal stated that 10 additional divisions would be needed in Palestine unless Zionist agitation, especially the campaign for a Jewish Army, was silenced immediately.⁴ British reports and State Department assessments confirmed Hoskins’ assumptions. There Wallace Murray headed the Near East desk and “was considered the most intransigent foe of Zionism in the government.”⁵ General Patrick Hurley (Army Intelligence) made similar recommendations. Had Roosevelt and Churchill jointly disavowed any commitment to a Jewish homeland in Palestine it would have been a terrible blow to Zionism.

However, Churchill’s strong support for an allied Jewish force overcame the major forces of opposition.

Without the Prime Minister’s support, evident at every crucial stage since September, 1939, the Jewish Brigade would never have gotten by the careerists in London and the Middle East. The U.S. War and State departments also rejected the idea, and a report in mid-1943 from Roosevelt’s personal emissary to the Middle East (Hoskins),

³ Hoskins to Under Secretary Sumner Welles, from Cairo, January 23, 1943, Foreign Relations of the United States, Palestine Section, 1943, volume IV, p. 748.

⁴ “The Hoskins Affair,” by Louis Rapoport, The Jerusalem Post, November 23, 1984, p. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*

which did much to shape government opinion, omitted any mention of the Yishuv's war record. . . Churchill justified the Jewish Brigade on military grounds, on the basis of his firm views supporting a large Jewish state in Palestine . . .⁶

By the end of July 1943, Roosevelt used a Jewish aide, Judge Samuel Rosenman, to convince Jewish leaders to accept the Hoskins report. Rabbi Stephen Wise and Chaim Weizmann were two of the Jewish leaders to whom appeals were made to stop the activities supporting the formation of a Jewish Army. "Wise pointed out, quite justly, that he had no control over the Jewish Army people, but that he would see what could be done." Similarly there was a request made of Chaim Weizmann in Great Britain "to stop the Jewish Army campaign, and the Zionist leader's reply to Lord Halifax (was) that the Bergson group would not listen to him. The Zionist establishment tried, nevertheless, to frustrate the movement for a Jewish Army."⁷

In 1984 Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson) said that Rabbi Wise, after talking with Rosenman, had telephoned and asked Bergson to attend a meeting in New York of about 10 Zionist leaders. At the meeting, Wise stated that Roosevelt told him personally that unless the Jewish Army Committee's ads were stopped, he would alter the tax exemption status of all Zionist organizations in the United States.⁸

⁶ Penkower, p. 26.

⁷ "The Hoskins Affair," by Louis Rapoport, The Jerusalem Post, November 23, 1984, p. 6.

⁸ Ibid.

Controversy continued over both Kook's (Bergson's) activities and the Hoskins report. Kook's friend, Senator Edwin Johnson (national chairman for the Committee for a Jewish Army and chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee) demanded an inquiry into the Hoskins affair. After Johnson was finally able to obtain the Hoskins report, he told Kook that "the recommendations in it were based purely on opinion, that there was no substantiation for his assessments of a possible Arab revolt."⁹

I. F. Stone, Washington correspondent, editor of The Nation, and PM newspaper, called Hoskins "politically a Syrian nationalist who had given alarmist accounts to Franklin Roosevelt."¹⁰ By July 1943 the War Department stated that Lt. Col. Hoskins' activities were unauthorized. In the Treasury Department Secretary Henry Morgenthau was dismayed by Hoskins' activities. Morgenthau defended the rights of the Irgun delegation.

A cross spectrum of Jewry united, for it was feared that if Hoskins' efforts succeeded there would be an increase in anti-Semitism nationwide. "The president realized that he was facing, for the first time, united Jewish and Zionist opposition representing the entire spectrum: the clamorous Bergson group in the same company as Baruch, Frankfurter, Wise, Morgenthau and Roseman. All would

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ The Nation, March 18, 1944.

be in one open revolt if the joint declaration were forced through.”¹¹
Despite efforts to halt Hoskins in this matter, he remained friendly with F.D.R., who sent him on other missions to the Middle East to talk with Ibn Saud.¹²

The Hoskins affair showed the strength of the Jewish lobby.

No similar effort was made-except by the Bergson group-to lobby intensely for the rescue of Jews from Nazi satellite states. It was a question of priorities: the Bergsonites, after November 1942, put rescue first, Palestine second. The mainstream Zionists openly admitted - even at the height of the Holocaust- that Palestine should be “first and foremost” on the agenda, as Zionist leader Dr. Israel Goldstein said in a statement at the establishment’s American Jewish Conference in June 1943. Rescue was a poor second.¹³

Following the Hoskins Affair, Colonel Hoskins became less conspicuous. He left the secret service and returned to the State Department, becoming director of the Foreign Service Institute from 1955-1961. Later, he became a Middle East consultant to Standard Oil of New Jersey. His 1977 New York Times obituary never mentioned the Hoskins Report, which nearly became Allied policy.¹⁴ It was only because of the united Jewish lobbying effort that this was prevented.

It was believed that the underlying motive of the Irgun

¹¹ The Jerusalem Post, November 23, 1984, p. 6.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Delegation and the Revisionist Zionists in America was to arm the Jewish population in Palestine in preparation for a revolt against the British. This belief was especially held by the British themselves and was the principle cause for the demise of the Jewish Army plan. The British War Office produced a seventeen page report on the subject in December of 1942, which stated that “the Committee for a Jewish Army . . . is closely connected with the [aim of] creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. . .” The British, however, were not too concerned about American support for such an Army. The report commented that Lord Halifax believed that officials in the State Department were aware of the real objectives of the Jewish agitation, but due to benevolence, and a desire, in an election year, to avoid the risk of offending voters or being called anti-Semites, did not publicly confront the matter. ¹⁵

In Washington the British approached this matter more diplomatically. Members of their embassy requested the Prime Minister to tell the Irgun Delegation that the arming of the Jews in Palestine was being actively implemented with the help of the Jewish Agency. Nonetheless, after three years only 12,000 of the 130,000 men and women registered in Palestine for service had been admitted to various British units in the Middle East.¹⁶

¹⁵ Report from the British War Office, Dec. 10, 1942, quoted by Ben Ami, p. 332.

¹⁶ Ben Ami, p. 333.

In June of 1943 Irgun delegation member, Yitshak Ben Ami's, army furlough was ending. He believed that his work in the Irgun Delegation in the United States had been beneficial.

Even though we had met opposition every step of the way from our fellow Jews in the establishment, if nothing else, we had at least served as a stimulus, pointing to new approaches, and shaming Jews and non-Jews alike to look up, to take notice, and sometimes to act. Whether or not we succeeded, we had done our best.¹⁷

While hopes for an Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews were dashed, the effort was not a failure. In England Chaim Weizmann, though not a Revisionist, had also been pushing for independent units of stateless and Palestinian Jews within the British forces to serve with the Allied armies.

Although this effort was criticized by more extreme elements who wished to see an independent Jewish fighting force, Weizmann believed that such a force, even under British control, would help to form the nucleus of a Jewish army which could contend with Arab opposition when Jewish statehood was proclaimed. He also hoped that the creation of such a unit would have political ramifications. Jewish units representing the Jewish people, fighting under a Jewish flag, would draw further attention to the goal and recognition of Jewish statehood. It would also affect non-Zionist Jews by creating the impression that Jews were fighting in the war as members of the

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 334.

Jewish nation, not as subjects of other nations, which was the real situation.¹⁸

Continuing Revisionist and Irgun agitation for a Jewish Army in the United States impacted on the situation in Great Britain. In September, 1944, the combined efforts in America and in Great Britain succeeded. The British War Office created the Jewish Brigade which fought in Italy under the flag of present day Israel. In this respect these Zionist activists achieved some of their goals. "The veterans of the Jewish Brigade became, exactly as the [Mandate] Administration had foreseen, the nucleus of the future Israeli Army and the decisive factor in the Arab defeat, which, as things were, amounted to a defeat of British policy."¹⁹

Weizmann had secured the assurance of Churchill that Great Britain would recognize statehood. If the Conservatives had remained in power, the British probably would have recognized Zionist claims to statehood, at least a restricted part of Palestine. However, it was Zionist operations in America during the war that initiated the final showdown before Israel's birth.²⁰

The Irgun delegation fervently turned their sights toward the statehood question. While Senator Truman had resigned from the

¹⁸ Alan R. Taylor, Prelude to Israel: An analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897-1947, p. 67.

¹⁹ Taylor, p. 69, (quoting Arthur Koestler, Promise and Fulfillment, Palestine, 1917-1949, Macmillan, New York, 1949).

²⁰ Taylor, p. 70.

Committee for a Jewish Army he had not deserted the idea of a Jewish State. Undated and untitled correspondence, possibly in response to a May 2, 1944 request from the American Zionist Emergency Council for a statement of support for a Jewish Homeland,²¹ contained a statement which suggested and urged Truman to say, in part, that, as a member of the Sub-Committee of the Resolutions Committee of the Democratic National Convention, he would give his earnest support to the plank in the platform which favored the opening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration and colonization, resulting in the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth at the earliest possible moment.²²

Truman, though sympathetic, was hesitant to issue the statement. He wrote in other correspondence, "My sympathy is with the Jewish people and I am of the opinion that a Resolution such as this should be very circumspectly handled until we know just exactly where we are going and why. With the difficulties looming up between Russia and Poland, and the Baltic States and Russia, and with Great Britain and Russia, it is absolutely necessary to us in financing the war. I don't want to throw any bricks to upset the applecart, although when the right time comes I am willing to help make the fight for a Jewish Homeland in Palestine."²³

²¹ Letter from Rabbi Leon I. Feuer to Truman, May 2, 1944, Truman Library.

²² Senatorial File, Harry S. Truman

²³ Undated Senatorial file, Papers of Harry S. Truman.

Messages of support such as this one were continually being sought by Jewish Agencies, Revisionist and otherwise, to give additional credence to the movement for a Jewish State. On September 15, 1944 the Zionist Organization of America requested such a statement for its forty-seventh Annual Convention. In the request to Harry Truman the responsibility of America to keep past promises to the Jews was recalled and emphasized.

The Senator was reminded that, after World War I, 52 nations, including the United States, had guaranteed a Jewish Homeland in Palestine, and that it was the obligation of the United Nations to declare Palestine open to unrestricted Jewish immigration so that it could become a Jewish Commonwealth, in which all the inhabitants would be guaranteed full equality and cultural autonomy.

The establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth is in harmony with the policies of our Government as set forth in the Joint Resolution of Congress in 1922, reiterated by every president from Woodrow Wilson to President Roosevelt, and reconfirmed in the Palestine planks in the platforms of the two major Party Conventions this year. . . ²⁴

Meanwhile other things had been happening within the Irgun Delegation in America. In 1943 the Gillette-Rogers resolution calling for a Presidential Commission to Save the Jewish People of Europe

²⁴ Letter of Israel Goldstein, President of the ZOA, to Truman, September 15, 1944, Senatorial Files, Truman Papers.

had been introduced to Congress. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved it by a unanimous vote. This led, in January 1944, to the creation of the War Refugee Board, which eventually proved to be the only United States Government entity to help save substantial numbers of Jews from extermination, although the total of those saved was actually very small compared to the number that could have been saved had the Board been created earlier. Nevertheless, it was a success for the Irgun Delegation to the United States, which had been directly responsible for promoting the plan as a result of ads in The New York Times and throughout the country on August 30, 1943. These ads were captioned, "WE ALL STAND BEFORE THE BAR OF HUMANITY, HISTORY AND GOD! WE WILL ALL BE JUDGED IF WE DO NOT CREATE THE MACHINERY TO SAVE THE JEWISH PEOPLE OF EUROPE." The response from President Roosevelt had been that the rescue of the Jewish people of Europe was under constant examination by the State Department.

Outraged by Roosevelt's failure to effect any rescue efforts, 400 Orthodox rabbis had marched on Washington in October, 1943, demanding a special governmental agency be established to rescue Jews from the Holocaust. While Roosevelt's policy had been "rescue through victory," critics pointed out that by the end of the war there

might be no Jews left to rescue. They marched from Capitol Hill to the White House hoping for an audience with the President. This was not forthcoming. They were told by the Presidential secretary that he could not meet them "because of the pressure of other business." This was not true. The President had few meetings that day but had refrained on the recommendation of Dr. Steven Wise, president of the American Congress and Judge Samuel Rosenman, of the American Jewish Committee. Before the rabbis arrived President Roosevelt "slipped out a rear White House exit to attend a ceremony marking the induction of 40 Yugoslavs into the American army. Then he left for a long weekend in the country."²⁵ Roosevelt was severely criticized in the press for his treatment of the rabbis.

This march had been planned by Hillel Kook. During the summer of 1943 he had sponsored an Emergency Conference to Save the Jewish People in Europe. This conference had rallied forces from many walks of life to unite and to put additional pressure on the administration.

President Roosevelt had been uncooperative with the Irgun Delegation in another important pursuit. Dr. Alex Raphaeli had attempted to establish an off shore radio station to publish news about the Holocaust to the Jews of Europe. Though fully funded, and

²⁵ "The Day the Rabbis Marched," by Dr. Rafael Medoff, Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles, October 22-28, 1993, p. 17.

supported by the head of the Office of War Information (O.W.I.), Elmer Davis, Raphaeli's plan was thwarted by the President.

Dr. Alex Raphaeli, after a few initial meetings, was able to convince Elmer Davis that it was the duty of the Irgun Delegation, and of the American people, to establish, outside territorial waters of the United States, a radio station which would broadcast to Europe in Yiddish, Russian, and Polish, via London.

I had to provide the budget for it, which was a very big budget, and I got the money and obligation from a very famous man. . . This was Samuel Zammuray, the King of the White Fleet. . . This was a poor Georgia boy who came to New Orleans at age of eight; started dealing with bananas and, after forty, fifty years controlled all the banana fields of Central America. And controlled the White Fleet - all the boats bringing bananas from Central America, to America, to Europe, all over the world . . . we became very friendly . . . and for us he undertook the obligation for three million dollars to finance this radio station. So I was absolutely covered and I had this radio station and then Elmer Davis comes and says, Alexe - but the President has to confirm it. I cannot go ahead. I'm for it. I passed it in all committees of O.S.S. and British objected. I told them this has nothing to do with Britain it's outside the territory, (in) international waters. And he (Roosevelt) vetoed it. And we couldn't do it.²⁶

Dr. Raphaeli turned to Eleanor Roosevelt for help. She had previously helped him but could not in this situation.

And I went to see his wife who was very helpful. . . Eleanor. . . who was very helpful when our boats when our boats got stuck in (the) Danube. She was very helpful contrary to the

²⁶ Telephone interview from Jerusalem with Dr. Alexe Raphaeli by Joanna Saidel, June 15, 1993.

President. But when it came to this she said, Excuse me please, this is a political matter. . . I can not get involved.²⁷

The question remains, Why did Roosevelt refuse permission for this station? Perhaps it had to do with an internal battle that was taking place regarding control of propaganda and psychological warfare. On June 13, 1942 the President consolidated the Foreign Information Service, the Office of Government Reports, the Office of Facts and Figures, and the Division of Information of the Office of Emergency Management into a single agency. This agency was the Office of War Information (O.W.I.) which was given the duty of conducting foreign and domestic informational programs through radio, the press, movies and related sources. Elmer Davis was chosen by the President to head the O.W.I.; Dwight Eisenhower's brother, Milton, became the associate director.

On June 13, 1942 the President also created the Office of Strategic Services, placing it under the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A quarrel arose about who had jurisdiction over clandestine broadcasting. It was argued that the O.W.I. should have control over informational broadcasting but that the O.S.S. should control psychological broadcasting. The O.W.I. controlled most of the available broadcasting transmitters in America.

On December 23, 1942, the Joint Chiefs gave the O.S.S.

²⁷ Ibid.

responsibility for “propaganda and warfare phases of psychological warfare.” On January 3, 1943, William Donovan, O.S.S. head, created the Morale Operations branch of the O.S.S. which would use propaganda to incite and spread dissension in enemy countries.

Elmer Davis was angered by Donovan’s attempt to take control of U.S. government propaganda. On January 5, Davis met with the President to object to plan. F.D.R. assured Davis that the O.W.I. would retain control of government propaganda and that he would discuss it further with the Joint Chiefs of Staff (J.C.S.). The controversy expanded into the public arena. Donovan gained the backing of the Joint Chiefs who advised the President of their decision. “Before receiving the statement of the Joint Chiefs, F.D.R. had sided completely with Davis and planned to remove O.S.S. from under the J.C.S. and place it under the War Department. The J.C.S. statement, however, changed his mind.”²⁸ The result of this decision was that the O.W.I. would control propaganda while the Joint Chiefs would control psychological warfare.

On October 27, the Joint Chiefs gave the O.S.S. control of all forms of morale subversion, including “false rumors, ‘freedom stations,’ false leaflets and false documents. . . for the purpose of creating confusion, division and undermining the morale of the

²⁸ Lawrence C. Soley, Radio Warfare: OSS and CIA Subversive Propaganda, p. 71.

enemy.”²⁹

Further problems developed in this arena. “O.W.I. was always plagued with internal disagreements and conflicts, over which Elmer Davis was able to exercise some control,” however when, in September 1943, additional power was given to the Overseas Editorial Board in New York, it was at the expense of Elmer Davis. Members of this Board submitted proposals that “in effect, stripped Davis of authority over foreign propaganda.”³⁰ Another dispute followed which Davis won resulting in the firing of the heads of the Overseas Editorial Board.

It is possible that, because of this struggle for power and the complexities evolving as a result of these problems, the request by Raphaeli for his radio station was somehow hindered during the commotion which took place during 1942 and 1943, the years in which he attempted to get the broadcasting base. There may have been other reasons as well. It is not clear.

During this time, Dr. Raphaeli was inducted into the U.S. Army. He was selected to be an agent for the Counter Intelligence Corps. He was responsible for the arrest and interrogation of the powerful German industrialist, munitions manufacturer, and S.S. official, Alfred Krupp. This interrogation led to the arrest of Erich Mueller, who had

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 101.

designed the infamous German guns, known as Kanonnen Mueller, and of Houdremont, “another builder of German cannons which, at that time, were the best in the world. The Americans were very anxious to get Houdremont, and he was actually delivered to us with Krupp’s help, after found hiding in a forest around Essen.”³¹

In March, 1944, the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation (HCNL) was founded. Its chairman was Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson). Again the members of the Irgun delegation found themselves at odds with the Zionist establishment in America. “Paralleling the declaration of revolt by the Irgun in Palestine, it (the Irgun Delegation in America) served notice on the Zionist establishment, on the British, and on the State Department that once the war was over, Hebrew freedom and Statehood could not be stopped.”³²

Preparations for this move began in 1943 when victory over the Germans began to look possible and the Irgun delegation’s campaign to save European Jewry was in full swing. In November, ads were placed in newspapers throughout the United States featuring a piece by Ben Hecht called “My Uncle Abraham Reports.” Uncle Abraham was a ghost chosen by the millions of murdered Jews to represent all their ghosts at worldwide conferences “to make the world a better place to live.” Uncle Abraham would take notes while

³¹ Dr. Raphaeli, Dream and Action, p. 128.

³² Ben Ami, p. 328-329.

sitting on the windowsill. He would then report back to his departed friends. He told them that for some unknown reason, their names were never mentioned - not in Moscow, not at 10 Downing Street, not at the White House, 'When we were killed, we were changed from Nobodies to Nobodies. Today, on our Jewish tomb, there is not the star of David but an asterisk.' 'Uncle Abraham has gone to the White House, is sitting on the windowsill two feet away from Mr. Roosevelt. But he has left his notebook behind.' Roosevelt did not like the ad; neither did Secretary of State Cordell Hull."³³

Hull not only disliked Hecht but tried to undermine Peter Bergson. The F.B.I. reported that "this man has been in the hair of Cordell Hull and they would like to have him inducted with the least possible trouble."³⁴ An article which appeared in the Washington Post on May 23, 1944 was captioned, "Bergson Faces Inquiry by F.B.I. as Alien Agent." This article, written by Ann Cottrell, stated that the F.B.I. was investigating the status of Bergson. The official reasons given were the expiration of his temporary visitor's visa on July 7, 1941, and his not registering with the Justice Department's foreign agents' registration section. The article stated that the President of the United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers of America, Max Zaritsky, accused the American League for a Free Palestine of being

³³ Ibid, p. 327-328.

³⁴ F.B.I. Internal Security Memorandum from J. F. Buckley to D. M. Ladd, May 23, 1944.

an offshoot of Bergson's Hebrew Committee for National Liberation. Zaritsky forbade the use of his name on any documents issued by the league.

Linking the league and the Liberation committee, Mr. Zaritsky said members of the two groups are members of the Palestinian Irgun, which he said has been "denounced as Fascist by the Palestinian Labor Federation."³⁵

The article reported that the open letter from Mr. Zaritsky had been endorsed by Mr. William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, (who also asked in a separate letter, addressed to Representative Andrew L. Somers, that his name no longer be used); R. J. Thomas, president of United Automobile Workers of the Congress of Industrial Organizations; Samuel Wolchok, international president of the United Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Employees of America; James Maloney, president of the American Glass and Bottle Blowers Association; and Leo E. George, president of the National Federation of Post Office Clerks.³⁶

The article stirred up an internal discussion within the F.B.I. itself. Interdepartmental memorandums suggest that the F.B.I. was not conducting an investigation of Peter Bergson (Hillel Kook) at that time. An agent reported:

I called Mr. _____ (blacked out) of the Department to find out about a newspaper article which appeared in the

³⁵ New York Herald Tribune, May 22, 1944.

³⁶ The Washington Post, May 23, 1944.

Washington Post today to the effect that the Justice Department was investigating Peter Bergson and the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation, and whether the Department had requested that we conduct an investigation inasmuch as our records did not show that such a request was made. _____(blacked out) said they had not requested us to conduct any investigation.³⁷

This correspondence went on to explain the circumstances. Bergson had been in contact with an agent of the F.B.I. and had kept the bureau informed about his plans to organize the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation. The point of registration as an alien group was discussed. The agent told Bergson

that it was one of those cases where he could not say it is definitely out or he could not say it is definitely in, it is just a question of interpretation. _____(blacked out) told Bergson it was one of the cases in which he would not tell him that he thinks they are exempt and at the same time he would not insist that they were absolutely subject to the Act. Bergson finally said from the standpoint of public relations and general things just to prove they have a place to show their records and show they are not hiding anything, they would comply with the Statute in spite of the difficulties and just show the Jewish people throughout the world is their foreign principal.³⁸

The correspondence also stated that while the F.B.I. had not been specifically requested to investigate Bergson, the Justice Department had asked the F.B.I. to "secure information from the British as to the background of the organization (the H.C.N.L.) because

³⁷ F.B.I. Office Memorandum from D.M. Ladd to J.K. Mumford, May 23, 1944.

³⁸ Ibid.

the Department was positive that there is some tie with Palestine and this group which they have not been able to find.”³⁹

Other F.B.I. correspondence corroborated the fact that Bergson was not being investigated for failure to register as a foreign agent. It said, “. . . Bergson has not been investigated by the Bureau nor has an investigation been requested by the Department relative to him. Information has been supplied to the Criminal Division of the Department concerning the Committee for a Jewish Army of Stateless and Palestinian Jews of which Bergson was the National Director.”⁴⁰

The correspondence reviewed Bergson’s case. On November 6, 1942 Peter Bergson had sent a letter to Assistant Secretary of State, A. A. Berle, Jr. In it he explained that he and his five colleagues, who were visiting in the United States, were in danger of being drafted for service in the U. S. Army. He said that he would willingly fight for the United States except that he and his associates were responsible for a much more important issue, that is, raising a Jewish Army of two hundred thousand. Bergson appealed to Berle to consider the value of this mission, stating, “But surely some way could be found which would enable us to impress upon members of our local draft

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ F.B.I. Office Memorandum from E. A. Tamm to D. M. Ladd, Subject: Hillel Kook, alias Peter Bergson, May 23, 1944.

boards the character of our work in order to permit them to reconsider the matter of our classification in the light of the proper facts." Mr. Berle expressed his regrets that he could not be helpful in the matter in a letter to Bergson dated November 21, 1941.⁴¹

Following the Bermuda Conference incident the angry Senator Lucas indicated to a State Department official, Mr. Alexander, that he intended to call upon the director, J. Edgar Hoover, to suggest an investigation of the Mr. Bergson's draft status (i.e. if Bergson was trying to avoid, or assist others in avoiding, the draft), and to determine the source of the funds for the full-page ads which the Irgun delegation had purchased.⁴²

Mr. Alexander then advised an F.B.I. agent that Bergson had come to the United States in 1940 and that his status, as of May 23, 1944, was that his visitor's visa was "overstayed." He said that there was a warrant outstanding for the deportation of Bergson, but that it has not been served, "possibly because it might make a martyr out of Bergson. . . He also said that Bergson had requested diplomatic immunity from the State Department, presumably to avoid the draft, but the State Department had not considered it at all."⁴³

Bergson (Kook) asked the Board of Immigration Appeals to

⁴¹ F.B.I. file on Peter Bergson, Memo, S.S. Alden to Mr. Ladd, May 12, 1943.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ F.B.I. Office Memorandum from E.A. Tamm to D.M. Ladd, Subject: Hillel Kook, May 23, 1944, p. 3.

rescind the warrant. He disclaimed the possibility that he could be deported, stating that there was no transportation for civilians from America to the Near East. He said that he had also applied to the State Department for a permanent visa so that he could continue his work in behalf of the Hebrew people.⁴⁴

The F.B.I. did investigate the Committee for a Jewish Army. They reported that

while there were allegations that there were Communists infiltrating the Committee, there were no concrete indications of this. None of its officers were known Communists. It was reported in April, 1943, that the majority of the Jewish people in the United States were not supporting it, although at that time its following was increasing.⁴⁵

The report said that while there had been no indications of widespread activity since that time and that "British authorities had taken no notice, thinking the group would die a natural death."⁴⁶

The reports of Communists in the Committee for a Jewish Army were further discredited by the F.B.I. on March 16, 1945 in a report which discussed, in part, the reaction of the press to the Irgun Delegation in America. The report stated that Bergson and his activities had been publicly attacked in the press for more than a

⁴⁴ "Hebrew Leader Asks Board to Recall Warrant," The Washington Post, July 6, 1944, p. 9.

⁴⁵ F.B.I. Office Memorandum from E.A. Tamm to D.M. Ladd, Subject: Hillel Kook, May 23, 1944, p. 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

year. The Communist Daily Worker had been most vociferous in its attacks, while other news agencies stated that Bergson (Kook) was a representative of the Irgun. It was claimed that he collected over one million dollars from the American people, although he “became vague,” according to one news article, when it was insisted that he tell what use had been made of this money.⁴⁷

On October 4, 1944. The Washington Post reported, “Bergson Admits His Committee Has No Right to Collect Funds.” The article reported a press conference in which Peter Bergson (Kook) charged The Post of “deliberate misrepresentation and insinuation to present him in the worst possible light.” He admitted, when questioned, that the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation “is not American; has no right to collect funds; is taking no action toward direct relief to “Hebrews;” and does not, to their knowledge, represent either Europeans or Palestinian “Hebrews.”⁴⁸ A compatriot of Bergson called The Washington Post the tool of “British imperialists and defeatist Zionist leaders.”⁴⁹ When asked who provided the capital for the Hebrew National Liberation Fund, Inc., Bergson replied that part of the funding was provided by night club impresario, Billy Rose. Rose denied any connection with Bergson, saying, “Let him show one

⁴⁷ F.B.I. file on Peter Bergson, March 16, 1945, p. 2 of summary statement regarding file #!00-316012-8.

⁴⁸ The Washington Post, October 4, 1944.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

single check I ever signed. It is true that I did stage the pageant, "We Will Never Die," both in New York and at Constitution Hall in Washington for Ben Hecht, who wrote it. I did it because it was a good show. That was my only connection with the pageant."⁵⁰

Representative Sol Bloom (Democrat from New York) also decried Bergson. He said, "No authorized Jewish agency approves of the methods adopted by Bergson and his groups,"⁵¹ which Bloom said were purely lobbying and high pressure.

Other inquiries were made concerning the right of the "Bergson groups" to solicit or collect funds in the United States. Assistant Attorney General, Herbert Wechsler, of the War Division wrote to F.B.I. Director, J. Edgar Hoover asking if Bergson had a license from the Treasury Department to collect funds for foreign relief, and if they did not whether Bergson should be investigated for that reason.⁵²

Meanwhile, on October 15, 1944, President Roosevelt gave his support to the Democratic Party plank on Palestine. However, he did little to alleviate the plight of Hitler's Jewish victims in the concentration camps.

The Jews of Europe may have been going unnoticed but those

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Letter from Herbert Wechsler to J. Edgar Hoover, F.B.I. file # 100-310922, October 18, 1944.

in Palestine were not. At the beginning of the 1944 Menachem Begin led the Irgun there in a series of armed attacks on government and police installations in order to exert pressure upon the government to change its policy. This resulted in the deportation of 251 men to Eritrea.

Relations between the British and the Jews further deteriorated when the British minister of state in the Middle East, Lord Moyne, was assassinated on November 6, 1944 by Lechi (Lohamei Herut Israel, also known as the Stern Gang), the underground group which had seceded from the Irgun in 1940. This group, led, after the 1942 death of Stern, by Nathan Yalin Mor, considered the action to be appropriate. The decision to liquidate Moyne was defended by supporters of the underground. When Irgun member, Yitshak Ben Ami, asked Nathan Yalin Mor if the assassination of Moyne had been a positive act in the War of Liberation, the answer was "Absolutely." Mor felt that Moyne was the personification of British imperialism in the Middle East. Moyne had acted in opposition to the Jews throughout his career as Colonial Secretary earlier in the war, as a member of the House of Lords and as Resident Minister in Cairo. Moyne believed that the European Jews were mixed with Slavic blood. Therefore only the Arabs were pure Semites, having a historic rights in Palestine. Moyne was responsible

for having the authorities in Turkey send the vessel, *Sturma*, back to the Black Sea, where 770 passengers drowned. He also defended the murder of Avraham Stern by the Palestine British police in 1942.⁵³

Former Israeli Prime Minister, Yitshak Shamir, and Lechi theoretician, Israel Eldad, supported and participated in the Moyne assassination.

Lord Moyne was the highest British official in the Middle East. And because we fought against the British in this area we took him for a target. This was the main reason for the, his assassination. Certainly we had known about his hostile attitude towards Zionism, towards the idea of ingathering the Jewish people here. He was against any Jewish aliyah, any Jewish immigration. He didn't believe that there exists such a thing like a Jewish nation or a Jewish people, and therefore we decided to make this operation.⁵⁴

Abba Eban accused Shamir with sending the assassins of Moyne on a suicide mission.⁵⁵

. . . in sending these people to kill Moyne those who sent them, that includes Shamir of course, were quite consciously murdering these two young Jews because there was no possibility whatever that they could carry out that mission and escape. Where could they escape to? So, in other words, on the negative side it was a death sentence for these two youngsters. . .⁵⁶

⁵³ Ben Ami, p. 362.

⁵⁴ Interview with Yitshak Shamir by Joanna Saidel, October 25, 1993, Knessett, Jerusalem.

⁵⁵ Telephone interview with Abba Eban from New York by Joanna Saidel, September 6, 1993.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Shamir denied this charge.

It's not a suicide mission. They wanted to escape but have not succeeded. It was very risky of course. But there was a plan how to, after killing, after the assassination, they had a plan to escape! . . . They'd been like soldiers and they had all the documents of soldier, British soldiers. And they could reach the railway and by the railway come here. It was possible! But it was bad luck because there was a policeman, an Egyptian policemen in the area . . . when they killed Lord Moyne. There was in the area a policeman on a motorcycle. And they had bicycles to escape. He was faster. And he shot them then. He shot. And Bet-Zouri was wounded, slightly, but he was wounded. He couldn't continue to run. And so in such a way it happens. But the plan was, before, the plan was to, to, to, for their escape. It was planned to get an ambulance, an ambulance, a British ambulance, but it did not succeed to bring this ambulance . . . they didn't want to wait longer. It had been determined to do it and then they have been caught in that escape.⁵⁷

A similar mission was carried out against Count Bernadotte four years later. He was appointed by the U.N. Security Council to mediate in the Arab - Israeli conflict in 1948. On September 17, 1948 he was assassinated in Jerusalem. The Encyclopedia Judaica states, "His assailants have not been identified, but are believed to have been connected with Lohamei Herut Israel (Lechi)."⁵⁸

Dr. Israel Eldad, scholar, writer and Zionist revolutionary was a member of Lechi. When asked who was responsible for the Count

⁵⁷ Interview with Yitshak Shamir by Joanna Saidel, October 25, 1993, Knessett, Jerusalem.

⁵⁸ Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 4, p. 670. Also see Middle East Journal, 42, #2 (summer 1988), "A Haunting Legacy: The Assassination of Count Bernadotte."

Bernadotte assassination he said, "Lechi. Me personally. . . I was responsible only for the idea, not for the . . . Yitshak Shamir . . . was responsible for the organizational (operations)."⁵⁹

Abba Eban believes that the practices of the Irgun and Lechi, particularly the murder of Lord Moyne cost Israel early statehood. He believes that partition would have resulted from a plan scheduled for vote on December 21, 1944. British Foreign Office documents confirm that a British plan for partition was set for proposal at that time. It is questionable whether or not the plan would have been accepted. According to Mr. Eban, the motives for this plan were pro-Arab, but would nonetheless have served the Jewish cause. According to Winston Churchill's November 4, 1944 memorandum to Chaim Weizmann, Moyne had come over to the Zionist cause, albeit for pro-Arab motives. The murder of Moyne put a strangle hold on the partition plan. Churchill became despondent and alienated as a result of the attack and did not pursue the plan with his former vigor. It was dropped until 1947. Mr. Eban spoke about the murder.

The murder of Lord Moyne carried out in 1944 without any knowledge by the people who carried it out of the general context was a shattering tragedy because without it the cabinet committee that Churchill had appointed was about to reach a decision on the partition scheme. I myself in fact being in the, in Cairo myself, got wind of this and conveyed it to Sharett and to Weizmann. The decision was, in order to abolish the White Paper, to put a plan of partition which

⁵⁹ Interview with Dr. Israel Eldad by Joanna Saidel, Jerusalem, November 3, 1993.

was to be announced on December the twenty-first nineteen hundred and forty four, and what happened was that Lord Moyne, the Minister of State there had become, I would not say converted to Zionism, that was not the case, but he had become converted to the idea of partition with a Jewish state as the only solution. He did this for Arab reasons. In other words he said that unless the British were able to stop immigration, which they were not able to do, then the only way to save anything for the Arabs was by seeing that some part of Palestine was reserved to them. So he reached what I would call a Jewish state solution for anti-Jewish reasons, namely that otherwise the Jews would take over the whole of the country, and therefore partition was a sort of defense of the Arab position. That was also the view that was put forward then by Harold MacMichael, the High Commissioner at that time. In other words, he was saying that the game is up, as it were. There was no way of preventing the Zionist thing from developing because the immigration pressure is so strong therefore the question is how to protect the Arabs to some extent. Therefore, there should be at least a part of the country which was reserved, and that was one of the reasons why Lord Moyne went over to support partition. In November, 1944, Churchill invited Weizmann to Checkers and told him triumphantly, We now . . . Moyne is now on our Zionist side. You've got to go to Jerusalem and see what happens. And Weizmann was going to Jerusalem. Then one day about two days later Lord Moyne was assassinated and Churchill went into a sulk which lasted for, oh I would think, about four or five years,⁶⁰ a refusal to deal with the problem at all until the Potsdam Conference which was in 1945. Therefore, it's no doubt that the murder of Moyne had a negative effect.⁶¹

The opinion of Abba Eban has been hotly contested by his political opponents. Yitshak Shamir said, "It's nonsense. It's nonsense.

⁶⁰ Mr. Eban probably meant four or five months.

⁶¹ Telephone interview with Abba Eban from New York by Joanna Saidel, September 6, 1993.

In `44, `45 (laughs) the British, the British after all, have still been here, very strong, and they didn't think about leaving the country."⁶²

Menachem Begin's advisor on Foreign affairs, author, journalist and member of the Irgun command, Shmuel Katz, agrees with Shamir. He said that Eban's contentions were,

Absolutely untruth. Neither, neither the facts of the incident itself nor the situation, nothing was going to be done until after the war. In `44 the war was not over. That the murder of Lord Moyne, which was completely justified, caused Churchill to be very angry, that we know. And lots of other people in England were very angry. But Mr. Abba Eban should have explained to them why Lord Moyne was killed instead of jumping at the idea that Lechi was to blame. I never heard that Abba Eban ever explained to them that Lord Moyne was the man who said, among other things, when they talked of getting a million Jews out of Europe, he said, What will we do with a million Jews? He was an anti-Semite, Lord Moyne. And he had a hand in the White Paper, in carrying out the White Paper policy. I don't say that I would have, if I had to decide, that I would decide that he ought to be shot but once he was shot there were good reasons for him being shot. And (it was) because we had people like Abba Eban on the other side that we had so much trouble, and our acts of resistance, which were justified, which were much less than any other people would have carried out, were undermined by people like Abba Eban, not that he had very much authority in those days.⁶³

Author David Wyman agrees with Shamir and Katz. He stated, concerning the supposed British decision for partition, "the British

⁶² Interview with Yitshak Shamir by Joanna Saidel, October 25, 1993, the Knesset, Jerusalem.

⁶³ Interview with Shmuel Katz by Joanna Saidel, November 2, 1993, Tel Aviv.

were not ready to move out Palestine. . . They were not ready to be out until they were thrown out.”⁶⁴

While Lechi supported the Moyne assassination, the Zionist Establishment, headed by David Ben Gurion, was outraged. It initiated repressive measures known as the “Saison,” or (Hunting) Season, on the Irgun and Lechi, going as far as to arrest some of them and turn them over to the British thereby evoking extreme controversy within Zionist ranks. The campaign was directed against the Irgun rather than Lechi because the Irgun was a political threat to Ben-Gurion. He knew that his Labor party would have to join with Haganah in the battle for independence or the Irgun would assume control. The only alternative, if Labor wished to keep control, was to eliminate the Irgun entirely. On May 12, 1945 the Irgun issued a warning :

WARNING!

1. The Government of oppression should **WITHOUT ANY DELAY** evacuate children, women, civilian persons and officials from all its offices, buildings, dwelling places, etc., throughout the country.
2. The civilian population, Hebrews, Arabs and others are asked, for their own sake, to abstain from now until the warning is recalled, from visiting or nearing Government offices etc.

YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Interview with David Wyman by Joanna Saidel, August 20, 1993, Canterbury, New Hampshire.

⁶⁵ Ben Ami, p. 352.

The following month Teddy Kollek, who later became mayor of Jerusalem, turned over a list of names of Irgun and Lechi men to the British resulting in the arrest of many. An extract in the Palestine Post, June 17th, 1945 said, "The Inspector General of the Police wishes to express his appreciation to the Arab Customs Officer and to the member of the Jewish community who gave the information which led to the finding of two batteries of mortars in Jerusalem on June 12th and 13th."⁶⁶

Mr. Kollek was responsible for providing this information.

I am the "member of the Jewish community" referred to by the Inspector General of Police. I received the information regarding these weapons in my capacity as liaison officer between the Jewish Agency. . . and the Palestine authorities, and I passed it on in the usual way. . .

TEDDY KOLLEK⁶⁷

Mayor Kollek, whose contributions to the Municipality of Jerusalem are profuse and whose lifetime dedication to the State of Israel is unquestioned, chose, during those tumultuous years, to follow the laws of Palestine under the British. Although he favored a Jewish state he preferred the more traditional diplomacy of the Jewish Agency which opposed the radical action of the Irgun.

In the spring of 1945 invading Allied troops in Europe made a

⁶⁶ Ben Ami, p. 352.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

world-shaking discovery which confirmed the Jews worst beliefs and fears. This was the discovery of the death camps. Although these had been reported long before, the liberation of the camps drew world attention to atrocities too horrendous to be believed. Military leaders, government officials, members of Congress, and journalists were stunned despite their previous exposure to information about the camps.⁶⁸

Military men were appalled and astonished at what they saw. Hardened war correspondents found the horror "too great for the human mind to believe." General Eisenhower called the "Barbarous treatment" inflicted on inmates "almost unbelievable." To dispel any doubts about the accuracy of reporters' accounts, Eisenhower requested that a dozen congressmen and a delegation of American editors fly to Germany to look at the camps. The legislators emerged from Buchenwald "shocked almost beyond belief." Editors, expecting to find that correspondents had overstated the situation, came away convinced that "exaggeration, in fact, would be difficult."⁶⁹

In July, the killing center at Majdanek was captured. American reporters were permitted to inspect the camp, which was still intact. They witnessed the crematoria, gas chambers, heaps of ashes, and more.⁷⁰ The New York Times reported the reaction of one American whose comment reflected that of all who viewed Majdanek: "I am now prepared to believe any story of German atrocities, no matter

⁶⁸ Wyman, p. 323-324.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 325.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 324.

how savage, cruel or depraved.”⁷¹

The news, which had been suppressed for so long, captured the headlines of newspapers across the country and around the world. Newsreels and magazines were filled with monstrous photos of unburied corpses, skeleton-like survivors, piles of glasses, human hair and garments. The scope of destruction was beyond imagination; the crimes against humanity beyond comprehension.

The reaction among viewers, and particularly among mainstream Zionists, was outrage. These reports confirmed the repeated statements issued by the Irgun Delegation and the Revisionists for at least three years prior to the 1945 disclosures.

As the war in Europe drew to a close, and these revelations were forthcoming, the activities of the Irgun Delegation to the United States began to focus with even greater determination on the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. Jews were greatly disillusioned when the expected radical change in British policy regarding large-scale immigration to Palestine did not materialize. The displaced Jews still alive in Europe were interred in Displaced Persons camps there. The Irgun Delegation in America tried to effect a change in the condition of the DP's and appealed to the President. They also tried to get one of their long time leaders, Yitshaq Ben Ami, back to the United States to renew his activities there.

⁷¹ New York Times, August 30, 1944, p. 9.

Having completed his duty fighting in Europe, Ben Ami had been requested by the Irgun in New York to meet with Menachem Begin to coordinate the work in America more closely with that of the Irgun in Palestine. "We had to strengthen the bridge of communications . . . between the homeland and the United States . . . if the revolution was going to have a chance."⁷²

In America, Truman continued to push for the repatriation of 100,000 displaced Jews. The writer, Jack London, chaired a meeting of the American League for a Free Palestine held on June 20, 1945 at the City Center Auditorium in New York City. In a telegram to President Truman he requested that the President act immediately to implement the plan concerning the 100,000 and that the government of the United States support fully the program of the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation.⁷³

Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson) also appealed to Truman on this matter. In a four page letter to the President dated September 7, 1945, Kook reminded Truman that while the war in Europe had been over for four months. "Some 200,000 Hebrews in Germany and Austria still find themselves in the same position in which they were prior to V-E day . . . the same notorious camps, the same bunks, the same German hideous prison clothes, the same barbed wire and

⁷² Ben Ami, p. 350.

⁷³ Note to David Niles concerning a telegram from Jack London to President Truman, June 24, 1945, Truman Papers, General File.

armed sentries watching outside, only it is an American, British or Russian soldier that stands guard now and this, if anything, makes it even more painful.”⁷⁴ Kook reminded the President that, while “everywhere people are feverishly laboring for their rehabilitation and reconstruction and are returning to life and liberty,” the Jews again seemed to be forgotten. Kook also approached the Palestine question, affirming that Palestine was not a British territory but had been placed under the British mandate by international authority. He contended that the United States, as leader among the United Nations, bore direct responsibility for the Palestinian situation and should intervene to put a stop to the heartless and despotic action of the British Government which prevented Hebrews from returning to their own national home. Kook told Truman that, when America was actively participating in the supervision of elections in Greece and Bulgaria and in the establishment of a new Roumanian government, America should not hesitate to take an authoritative and dynamic stand on the crucial problems in Palestine.⁷⁵

Anger and frustration increased within Revisionist and mainstream Zionist ranks on September 18, 1945. That evening in

⁷⁴ Letter to the President from Peter Bergson, September 7, 1945, Truman Library.

⁷⁵ Peter Bergson - representing the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation- to President Truman, September 7, 1945, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Official File.

Jerusalem, a dispatch from Reuter's news service reported the rejection of Jewish demands for Palestine by the British. A British cabinet sub-committee was appointed by Prime Minister Attlee to draft the Labor Government's policy with regard to Palestine. The sub-committee recommended maintaining the British White Paper and said that the Jewish demands for a state in Palestine and for free immigration under Jewish control were unacceptable. Only 1500 Jewish immigrants were to be admitted monthly and land acquisition was to be restricted. A Palestine Legislative Council should be established in which Jews could have representation as compensation for restricted immigration. This Council would have limited authority over internal affairs but "all questions concerning foreign policy, security and defense should continue to be under the control of the British Government."⁷⁶

Representing the American Zionist Emergency Council, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver and Dr. Stephen Wise made urgent requests to see the President.⁷⁷ In a note in inter-departmental correspondence from Hon. Charles G. Ross to the President's Secretary, Matthew J. Connelly, Ross stated his distaste for the Zionist activists and his respect for the Jewish establishment in America. He writes, "I can only testify that

⁷⁶ JTA Daily News Bulletin, The Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Vol. XII, No. 213, September 19, 1945.

⁷⁷ Letter of September 20, 1945, Silver to Truman, Truman Papers, Official File.

Dr. Silver's is a high-class organization unlike the 'renegade' outfit which appears to have put out a recent statement purporting to give the President's views."⁷⁸

That "renegade outfit" continued to seek the support and assistance of the U. S. Government. It refused to cave into to pressures to moderate its stance. In October, 1945, Yitshaq Ben Ami met with Irgun leader, Menachem Begin.

My job was to help Begin and his associates understand the political scene in Washington, London and the United Nations, so we could best coordinate strategy between our delegation in the United States and the Irgun in Palestine. . . Most important was our agreement in principle that as the time neared for the final stage of the uprising against the Mandatory power, a provisional government would be formed, one part underground in Palestine, the other in the diaspora."⁷⁹

It was also decided at meetings between Begin, Ben Ami and Haim Landau (Begin's chief of staff) that the Hebrew Committee for National Liberation would need international recognition. The main complaint of the central Irgun was that the Irgun Delegation was not providing sufficient financial help to maintain the military revolution in Palestine.

The chances for weapons acquisitions, for training and for large recruitments were there, if we in the United States provided the means. No matter what we accomplished in the United States, the center of battle was in Palestine- and if

⁷⁸ Honorable Charles Ross to Secretary Connelly, The White House, September 17, 1945, Truman Papers, Official File.

⁷⁹ Ben Ami, p. 355-256.

our people lost the ability to fight with arms, no political campaign would secure our nation's freedom. . . It was true that without the political front the military one would fail, and we needed to achieve a synthesis, but we had to remember that everything we did was to support the military revolution.⁸⁰

That revolution was different than any other revolution on earth. Zionist theoretician and Lechi member, Israel Eldad, wrote his own explanation of the underground's perception of this revolution. He stated that, unlike the major revolutions which have taken place in the world to change economic, political or social structures, "Zionism is a revolution and neither a philanthropic institution nor a reform movement. It is concerned with the shift of an entire nation from an exposed position to a place of refuge."⁸¹ Eldad gives both religious and secular motivation for the revolution, quoting the Bible - "and among these nations ye shall find no rest" - and citing "the endless repetition of historic events."⁸² In his analysis of the motivations for the revolution Eldad recalls a comment made by the founder of political Zionism; "Herzl once replied to one of the skeptics who doubted his vision: An orange needs a table in order not to fall to the ground; Zionism is like the globe - it is kept up by its own motion. The existential need for a Jewish revolution is the only

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 358.

⁸¹ Israel Eldad, The Jewish Revolution, Shengold Publishers, N.Y., 1971, p. 46.

⁸² Ibid.

motive force required.”⁸³

Eldad detailed the revolution as it was interpreted by his political and ideological faction - the FFI (i.e. Lechi). The FFI, or Freedom Fighters of Israel, were an offshoot of the Irgun and the Betar youth movement. It was founded by Avraham Stern, whom the British murdered in 1942, and was the smallest, most radical and daring of the underground Zionist movements.⁸⁴ The New York Times described the FFI in this way:

. . . the Fighters for the Freedom of Israel, or the Stern Group, is even more fanatical and sinister than Irgun Zvi Leumi. They plot individual political assassinations. They were responsible for the unsuccessful attempt on High Commissioner Mac Michael's life in Jerusalem in August 1944, and the murder of Lord Moyne in Cairo three months later. Their leader is Nathan Friedman Yellin, a studious type of man for whose capture a \$4,000 reward is offered. Yellin, mild-mannered and with an inconspicuous face behind gold-rimmed glasses, is a former school-teacher. He wields tremendous influence over 200 to 300 followers, mostly of Polish origin. They are expert marksmen, pledged to the utmost self-sacrifice. They would shoot their way out of any police ambush not hesitating to turn their last bullet on themselves to escape arrest, if necessary.⁸⁵

The Times article stated that the group had a vendetta against the British police whom they accuse of having unnecessarily shot and killed Avraham Stern, their first leader.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 50.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 79.

⁸⁵ The New York Times, "Political Terrorist Groups Keep Palestine in Turmoil," July 28, 1946, p. 4E.

Stern was captured in February 1942, by a surprise police swoop on his rooftop room in Tel Aviv. His followers later said that he wore only shorts and an undershirt. His wrists were handcuffed behind his back, they added, and he then was pushed a few paces and shots were fired into his back.⁸⁶

The police authorities never announced the circumstances of the shooting except to say that he was killed while trying to escape.

The most distinctive feature of the FFI was its new political conception which was first publicized in the trials conducted against its members for acts against the British government. Members of Lechi (FFI) refused to participate in the trials on the grounds that the British courts had “no legal standing in the Land of Israel.” They claimed that the British were a “foreign, imperialist occupying power, and the British Mandate granted by the League of Nations . . . cannot supersede the *a-priori* title of the Jewish nation to this land. . .” The FFI defendants declared in court that when their forefathers were living in the Lands of Israel, “with their kings and generals, their poets and prophets, the ancestors of the British were still living in the primeval forests of the savage British isles . . . We, the freedom fighters of Israel, are the only ones entitled to bear arms, to fight for our rights . . . This is the homeland of the Jewish people, this is where it first became a productive and creative nation. It was banished from here by force, and will therefore return by force. We are a

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Hebrew liberation movement.”

While the Irgun refrained from fighting against the British during the war, they joined Lechi at the war's conclusion and, under the leadership of Menachem Begin, joined in military operations against the Mandatory power in Palestine. They were supported in the United States by the Irgun Delegation which continued its public relations efforts to gain support for a Jewish state and to raise funds for Irgun - Lechi related projects such as the purchase of the ship, *Altalena*. Members of the Irgun Delegation worked closely with the Paris headquarters in this and other missions. Dr. Alex Raphaeli was involved in the Paris operations.

Our object was to organize an army in Europe, transport it to Palestine, and capture whatever territory we could hold. We would then proclaim ourselves as the temporary Jewish government of these areas and gain a right to be represented in the international political forums on an equal basis.⁸⁷

Jabotinsky had approved of this idea in 1939 but the outbreak of the war prevented its implementation.

My tasks were not too clearly defined, but I was generally required to establish political contacts and find and purchase weapons. . . Besides the tasks that had been assigned to me I was put in charge of a so far non-existent “Air Force.”⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Raphaeli, p. 154-155.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Dr. Raphaeli recruited pilots who had served in the Allied forces and was able to purchase arms from many places. A f t e r Israel became a State, Dr. Raphaeli became Director of the Board of Israel Aircraft Industries. This company “was the only foreign firm listed in the top 100 companies on the Pentagon’s list of 500 contractors dealt with in fiscal 1993.”⁸⁹

Dr. Raphaeli was an asset to the State of Israel from pre-statehood days to the present. He worked for the Irgun in the early years. After statehood Raphaeli became a great industrialist in Israel. He began by founding the Jerusalem Pencil Company (Israel had been importing most of its pencils from other countries). He later started a factory to produce corrugated cartons. All citrus products had previously been shipped in wooden crates. Raphaeli became the main supplier of corrugated cartons in Israel, establishing plants also in Turkey, Greece and Spain. He then developed Dura Plastics which he part-owned. He had toolmaking and molding facilities. Dura was renamed Vered, and later Dukal Graphite Industries. This was a division of Jerusalem Pencils specializing in colored leads which it sold to other pencil factories. Later, it began producing oil pastels and wax crayons. Vered introduced plastic containers, like buckets, to Israel. Raphaeli’s various products found markets world wide. He shipped pencils to a company in Argentina owned by the Perons. He

⁸⁹ The Jerusalem Post, July 2, 1994, p. 4.

had markets in Britain, France and Africa. His biggest success was in Germany where his company had the largest share of the imported pencil market in West Germany. Raphaeli became the president of the Israeli Manufacturers Association. He was a partner in Rotoplas, a rotational molding plant, the first of its kind in the Middle East. They manufactured large containers for storing liquids and exporting fruit juice.

After the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Raphaeli became Chairman of the Board of Economic Welfare. This group dealt with the Arab economic boycott. From 1978 to 1985, Raphaeli was director of the boards of Zim Shipping Company; the Israel Aircraft Industries; and the Jerusalem Economic Corporation. He was also chairman of the board of the government owned Beth Shemesh Aviation Motors; and Dagon silos in Haifa.

Besides being an asset to Israel, Raphaeli proved to be an asset to the United States government during the war years in the field of counter intelligence. His first task was to uncover a German spy network. He was commended for this work. His further efforts were equally as fruitful. He searched for and discovered Alfred Krupp, who was a personal friend of Borman and who operated a worldwide industrial - military complex for Hitler, and Leo Schlessman, governor of the Ruhr district, top Nazi official, and the recipient of

the Nazi Goldabzeichen (golden Emblem), the highest Nazi award.⁹⁰ Raphaeli's interrogation of Krupp resulted in other very important arrests.

He worked with the Irgun Delegation to try to affect the politics of the United States government. Despite their efforts, the Irgun Delegation found itself still at odds with the Roosevelt administration. Mainstream Jewish organizations did little better.

In October 1945, the American Zionist Emergency Council submitted a memorandum to the State Department. This lengthy material, was submitted to counter the effects of correspondence which President Roosevelt had with King Ibn Saud earlier in the year. On his way home from Yalta, President Roosevelt met with the King on an American cruiser in the Suez Canal. Roosevelt expected the Saudis to accept the American position on Palestine since Saudi Arabia had been the only non-combatant to receive lend-lease aid during the War. The President promised more aid in return for Saudi support. The King however was vehemently opposed to Zionism, suggesting, instead of a Jewish State in Palestine, that the Jews take defeated German lands as their homes. The President, in the face of this hostile response, agreed not to adopt an anti-Arab policy in

⁹⁰Raphaeli, p. 127.

Palestine.⁹¹ When Roosevelt died in early April, Truman was left with the dilemma concerning the Saudis. "The temptation to become more involved in the Arab world and to promote its alliance with the West competed with the practical problem of handling the Jewish refugees who had survived the Holocaust."⁹²

In October, the American Zionist Emergency Council, having over the prior few years been highly influenced by the activist work of the Revisionists and the Irgun Delegation, reviewed the pro-Zionist positions which had been taken by the U. S. Government, for the new President, reminding him, and the State Department, of the following. On July 4, 1945 a declaration was made by the Governors of 40 out of 48 states favoring the establishment of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth. The legislatures of 33 states, representing 85% of the population of the United States also went on record in favor of the Zionists. The prior summer, 1944, both major parties had endorsed unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine. The Democratic platform had stated that they favored "such a policy as to result in the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish Commonwealth." The American Zionist Emergency Council claimed that both Roosevelt and Truman were elected on that platform.

⁹¹Steven L. Spiegel, The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America's Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan., p. 13.

⁹² Ibid, p. 14.

They said that Roosevelt and Truman were not the only Presidents to favor a Jewish State in Palestine. In March 1919 President Wilson, who had directly affected the issuance of the Balfour Declaration stated that: "The Allied Nations, with the fullest concurrence of our Government and people, are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundation of a Jewish Commonwealth." This objective was supported by every American President since then. The United States government's support of the Jewish National Home was recorded legislatively in two Acts of Congress, namely, the Joint Resolution (No. 73) unanimously adopted in 1922 by the 67th Congress of the United States; and the United States-British Convention on Palestine, ratified by the Senate on February 20, 1925.⁹³

This correspondence to the State Department also stated the concern of the Zionists that President Roosevelt had failed to assure King Ibn Saud of Jewish intent to live in peace with the Arabs. Their concern was also apparent concerning Arab rights to sovereignty in Palestine.

. . . the Arabs have neither legal nor moral title to the sovereignty over Palestine. While they conquered the country over 1300 years ago, Arab rule ceased as early as 1071. Throughout the centuries the role of the Arabs in

⁹³ Memorandum submitted by the American Zionist Emergency Council to the State Department, October 23, 1945, p. 1-2, Papers of Harry Truman, Official File.

Palestine has not been creative but destructive. In the eroded, poverty-stricken and disease-ridden country which within the last few decades the Jewish people set out to reclaim, it was difficult to recognize the land of milk and honey described in the Bible.

The Emergency Council correspondence maintained that in the twenty years between the two World Wars the Jews had done much to repair the ravages of the previous 1300. "They have conquered deserts and swamps, revived agriculture and industry and established in Palestine a sturdy, self-reliant community."

They accused the Pan-Arabist claim to Palestine of being "an attempt to add yet another to the immense, but for the most part thinly populated and undeveloped territories of the independent Arab States," stating,

this expansionist appetite has recently manifested itself also in the demands put forward by the Arabs for Eritrea, the Sudan and Cyrenaica. The great mass of the people in the various Arab states are kept down in ignorance and fanaticism, in dirt and wretchedness by a ruling class which shows little or no interest in the improvement of their miserable lot.⁹⁴

The Council believed that Arab ethnic claims were distorted, arguing that about 75% of the Arabic-speaking people in Palestine were recent immigrants or the descendants of persons who emigrated to Palestine in comparatively recent times.

At no time was there a Palestine Arab State. It was the

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 4-5.

Jewish people which produced in Palestine the civilization and religious culture which, along with that of Greece, molded the civilization and the spiritual life of the whole Western world.⁹⁵

The Zionists stated their objection to a number of other points. These included the failure of the American Government to take action concerning the White Paper of 1939, to keep the doors of Palestine open to Jewish refugees during the War, to advise U.S. representatives abroad of U.S. determination to insure a Jewish homeland in Palestine, and to utilize conditions created by the war to advance the Zionist cause.

The Zionists also cited many pro-Arab positions which the U.S. Government had taken. These included the United States recognition of the independent governments of Syria and Lebanon soon after their formation. Also, the U.S. encouraged the Arab States to declare themselves to be against Germany toward the end of the war "assuring them of places of honor among the United Nations, irrespective of their war records." The United States had not withheld its support from the Arab League even though the League declared its opposition to Jewish aspirations and proclaimed the liquidation of the Jewish National Home as one of its major objectives.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 6

A separate memo from the American Zionist Emergency Council, called, "Some Facts on the Palestine Situation," stressed the support of organized labor and educators for a Jewish Homeland, citing a petition by more than 2,000 university presidents and professors favoring the establishment of a Jewish State.

The Council refuted the common arguments against the Jewish National Home Policy. The first of these arguments claimed that Palestine was too small and incapable of economically sustaining a large population. In rebuttal the Zionists stressed the possibility of large scale absorption of Jewish immigrants.

It was estimated by Dr. Walter Lowdermilk, Assistant Chief of the U.S. Soil Conservation Department, and Mr. J. L. Savage and Mr. J. B. Hayes (two American irrigation specialists), that at least a million acres could be irrigated, as compared with less than 100,000 acres under irrigation at that time. Dr. Lowdermilk also estimated that with proper development Palestine could sustain an additional four million inhabitants.⁹⁷

The second argument against a Jewish Homeland was that there were "too few Jews left" as a result of Nazi exterminations. The Zionists rebutted this argument by quoting a July 14, 1945 article in the London Economist, which was not pro-Zionist. This article stated

⁹⁷ "Some Facts on the Palestine Situation," American Zionist Emergency Council to the State Department, September 1945, p. 4, Truman Papers, Official File.

that observers of all types, returning from Germany, confirmed that unexpected numbers of the Jews left in central Europe wanted to go to Palestine.⁹⁸

The third argument against the Jewish Homeland was the fear of violent Arab opposition. The Council stated that the Arab countries could not offer any real resistance to a clearly defined policy on the part of the Great Powers since Arab dependence upon these Powers was greater than ever before. Although the Arabs successively opposed each stage of Palestine's development they "have consistently reconciled themselves to realities. . . Today they accept as an accomplished fact the 600,000 Jews in Palestine. They will likewise accept the Jewish State."⁹⁹

The fourth argument against Statehood was that Palestine was promised to both the Jews and the Arabs. The rebuttal of this argument by the Emergency Council took the form of documentation. While the Balfour Declaration promised Palestine to the Jews, the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence of 1915 presented a conflicting promise to the Arabs. The Zionists explained that Mr. McMahon made it very clear to King Hussein that that pledge excluded Palestine and that this was understood by the King. They contend that this was confirmed by Winston Churchill in 1922 and that

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 5.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 7.

further proof is evident “from the fact that at Versailles in 1919 Emir Feisal in asking on behalf of his father, King Hussein, for independence for the Arab countries, expressly excluded Palestine.” The Emir and Dr. Chaim Weizmann had signed an accord in which “the Emir recognized the right of the Jews to immigrate into and to develop Palestine provided Arab independence was achieved in the Arab lands outside of Palestine. That independence is today a reality,” wrote the Zionists.¹⁰⁰

The fifth argument against statehood was the growing dependence of America on oil. The rebuttal to this argument was the dependence of the Arabs on oil revenue. “It is altogether unrealistic, however to believe that the Arab states will allow their opposition to a Jewish Palestine to interfere with the flow of oil and thus with the steady receipt of oil royalties which constitute a major part of their revenue.”¹⁰¹

The Council argued that the United States was the only major Power which was ready to exploit these oil resources and pay royalties without attempting to interfere with the policies of the local governments, making the U.S. the most desirable partner in the development of their oil resources.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

The sixth argument against Jewish statehood was the question, Will the Jewish State be a theocracy? To this the Zionists stresses their belief in the separation of church and state. The Zionist movement “does not, nor has it ever aimed to set up a theocratic state in Palestine.” The term Jewish State did not refer to a religious state but that the Jews would constitute the majority in a country where each community would be autonomous in religious, educational, cultural and social affairs and in which all citizens could vote and hold office.¹⁰³

The last argument against Jewish statehood was that the Jews were divided against themselves. The Zionists believed that despite a small but wealthy Jewish group which campaigned against a Jewish State, the Jewish masses were wholeheartedly in favor of the Zionist program.¹⁰⁴

The Irgun Delegation in America agreed in principle with all of the above arguments put forth by the American Zionist Emergency Council. The Council however had a continuing vendetta against the Hebrew Committee for National Liberation. The Council had claimed in a 14 page document to the Justice Department on August 10, 1944 that the HCNL planned to destroy the existing Zionist leadership and replace it with their own kind. The Emergency Council claimed that

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

the HCNL represented no one except the Irgun in Palestine whose activities were condemned by all "legitimate" Jewish agencies.

The F.B.I. file on Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson) mentioned the antagonism between the two Jewish factions. ". . . It is reported that the American Zionist Emergency Council commented in a fashion which had been referred to as typical of the statements made by the more "solid" Jewish organizations: 'Bergson's action is an attempt to perpetrate a colossal hoax on the Jewish people.' The statement is said to have continued, warning the public, the press and officials not to be taken in by 'the brazen fraud of a half dozen adventurers with no standing, credentials or mandate, except from pistol-packing Irgun.'"¹⁰⁵

In November 1945, the Irgun's Jewish Resistance Movement attacked railroads throughout Palestine. Bevin repudiated the pro-Zionist commitments of his party and dispatched an Anglo-American Commission to Palestine to inquire into the Jewish refugee problem.

The revolt of the Jews against the British in Palestine began to affect politics in the United States. There the Irgun had submitted a memorandum to the American members of the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry (AACI) which listed, for six single-spaced pages, British crimes against the Jews. They maintained that it was

¹⁰⁵ F.B.I. Summary on Peter Bergson, December 15, 1944, from File # 62-60950-42..

useless to talk to the British since twenty-five years of talking had done no good. Appealing to the British conscience, justice, and humanitarianism was in vain and had led only to the massacre of their fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, children, rabbis and sages;

the British are to be those who deprive us of our homeland and destroy our people . . . we are determined, in our relations with them, to use no other words but "Fight!"¹⁰⁶

Not only the Irgun delegation but mainstream Jews were finally favoring the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine and immediate mass immigration for the displaced Jewish refugees of Europe.

The Palestine Solution was the title of a memorandum which had been submitted to Truman during a meeting held on June 14, 1946 with the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine (which included Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, Rabbi Stephen Wise, Dr. Nahum Goldstein, and Louis Lipsky). It was believed by them that in order for the British to release the 100,000 there needed to be substantial economic assistance from the United States and a clear statement of responsibility by the United States.

The British desire the type of statement from the United States which would enable them to convince the Arabs that the United States forced the admission of the "100,000." It is believed, however, that the British will, if pressed, agree to assume joint responsibility for such action.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Ben Ami, p. 369.

¹⁰⁷ Papers of David Niles, June 1946, Truman Library.

It was also suggested that the United States propose a long term solution to the problem. The Committee proposed partition (i.e. redrawing the boundaries of Palestine and Trans-Jordan), as well as other solutions such as Dominion status, U.N. Trusteeship, or a Canton State. It was suggested, in the section concerning the redefinition of Palestine's borders, that "the severance of Eastern Palestine and its annexation by Trans-Jordan might be the basis for gaining partial Arab support. It would also leave residual Palestine with a Jewish majority."¹⁰⁸

By mid June the Jews in Palestine and the British were on a collision course. Britain's rejection of the request for permits for the "100,000" outraged the Resistance. In retaliation, on June 17 they blew up the bridges linking Palestine with the neighboring states. The British Government prepared for war in an effort called Operation "Agatha" and gave the High Commissioner authority to liquidate the 'extreme elements' now supposedly in control of the Haganah and the Jewish Agency. The United States Government was not to be informed, until the last moment, to prevent leaks to American Jewish groups. All Jews of any political importance were targeted in the operation of June 29, 1946 ("Black Saturday") in which one hundred thousand British soldiers and ten thousand police

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

participated.¹⁰⁹

On July 2 1946, the White House issued a statement. It protested “the arrest and detention of members of the Jewish Agency and other prominent leaders of the Jewish Community in Palestine” and said that it was “a cause of deep anxiety to this government.” President Truman protested the fact that the action had been taken “without my having been consulted or informed by the British Government.” He stated that, since the Jewish Agency had been recognized by international law and international agreements to which the U. S. was a signatory, he was requesting an explanation from the British Government. President Truman then recommended the immediate admission of 100,000 Jewish refugees to Palestine and reiterated American co-responsibility in finding a solution to the Palestine question.¹¹⁰

Others also sought a solution to the Palestine problem. On Monday, July 22, 1946 a small article appeared on the front page of the Late City Edition of The New York Times bearing the title “Gandhi Counsels Jews.”

In this article Mohandas Gandhi advised the Jews of Palestine to abandon ‘naked force’ as a weapon against the British restriction of immigration and to adopt instead the “matchless weapon of non-

¹⁰⁹ Ben Ami, p. 376.

¹¹⁰ Papers of David Niles, Truman Library.

violence”.¹¹¹

If the Irgun read this article it had little effect. The following day the Late City Edition of the Times front page read, “Jerusalem Bomb Kills 41 in Attack on British Offices.” The article was subtitled “Zionist Terror Raiders Accused of Blast in King David Hotel.”¹¹² In this raid six stories of the historic hotel were destroyed in an attempt to hit the British headquarters stationed in the hotel. There were many injuries and deaths.¹¹³

Next to this article appeared a notation that the King David Hotel was owned by Palestine Hotels, Ltd., a subsidiary of the Palestine Economic Corporation, 570 Lexington Avenue. The Corporation had been organized twenty years earlier so that “American Jews and others might give aid on a strictly business basis to productive Palestinian enterprises and to further the economic development of the Holy Land and the resettlement of an increasing number of Jews there.”¹¹⁴ This non-political group was headed by Robert Szold.

The following day tensions increased. It was reported from Jaffa that Arab tensions in that port city were rising “because of the Jerusalem bombing and the presence of the British cruiser Liverpool

¹¹¹ The New York Times, July 22, 1946, p. 1.

¹¹² See Appendix H for the complete text of this article.

¹¹³ See The New York Times, July 23, 1946, p. 1, 3.

¹¹⁴ The New York Times, “Bombed Hotel Property Of New York Corporation,” July 23, 1946, p. 3.

off the harbor. The Liverpool was said to have been sent to Jaffa because extremists were mining the harbor.”¹¹⁵

Tension rose in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem, where armed, British soldiers patrolled the streets. Shopkeepers stood nervously in their doorways, ready to ring down iron shutters at the slightest alarm. A telephone operator for the Palestine Railways received an anonymous call that the building was going to be blown up. Police reached the building without result.¹¹⁶

As could be expected, the reaction to the bombing of the King David Hotel was extremely negative. The New York Times editors expressed their repulsion openly in the opinion section of the paper. They claimed that the action was self-defeating and could not expect to modify the position of the Mandatory Power, but would, rather, stiffen British opinion. They felt that it would also deter the United States government from pressing for further immigration into Palestine and would cause further divisions within that country. It was believed that “in the long run, the victims of these tactics of terrorism seem likely to include many of the harassed refugees whose escape from Europe may be postponed still further.”¹¹⁷ While supporting the admission of 100,000 refugees to Palestine the editors condemned the actions of the underground. The Irgun immediately took responsibility for the bombing of the King David.

¹¹⁵ The New York Times, “Arab Tension Reported,” July 24, 1946

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ The New York Times, “Violence in Palestine,” July 23, 1946, p. 24.

Irgun Z'vai Leumi, an extremist Zionist organization, announced that it had been responsible for the bombing of the British headquarters here in a communique' issued tonight in Tel Aviv but blamed the "British tyrants themselves" for the loss of life.¹¹⁸

The Irgun claimed to have warned the King David's switch-board operator of the impending disaster. This was explained in a communique.

The tragedy which occurred in the civilian offices of the occupying Government was not caused by Jewish soldiers but by the British tyrants themselves, who disregarded that warning and did not evacuate the building at the advice of military experts who undertook to dismantle the explosives.¹¹⁹

No evidence was forthcoming to support this claim and the Palestine Government vigorously denied any advance warning, according to Reuter. In the United States and in Jerusalem the Jewish Agency called upon the world Jewish community to condemn the action. The Jewish press expressed their abhorrence of the incident, calling on the Jewish community "to rise up against these abominable outrages." There was speculation that the formal action and full cooperation in this respect was contingent upon the release of men detained earlier by the British.¹²⁰

The bombing was denounced by President Truman who

¹¹⁸ The New York Times, "Zionist Terrorists Say They Set Bomb; Denounce British," July 24, 1992, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

declared that such terrorism “might well” damage the cause of Zionism. In his official statement the President commented on the effects of the bombing and its relation to ongoing U.S. talks in London to implement recommendations to allow 100,000 Jewish immigrants to enter Palestine.

Such acts of terrorism will not advance, but on the contrary might well retard, the efforts that are being made, and will continue to be made, to bring about a peaceful solution of this difficult problem.¹²¹

The Irgun Delegation in America remained loyal to the Irgun in Palestine despite the political repercussions. They held to the claim that “the heavy casualties were the end result of a series of tragic missed signals.” The Irgun had at that time united with Lechi and the Haganah in a United Resistance Movement. The plan to blow up the hotel had been approved by the Haganah Command on July 1, 1946.¹²² It was personally approved by Ben Gurion.¹²³ However, following the unexpected loss of life and devastation, the Haganah condemned the operation.¹²⁴ The Irgun publicly took responsibility.

In America efforts had been made to try to reduce bloodshed. The Irgun Delegation had set up the American League for a Free Palestine which continued their publicity efforts to focus attention on

¹²¹The New York Times, “Truman Condemns Palestine Blast; Sees Damage to Peaceful Solution,” July 24, 1946, p. 4.

¹²² Menachem Begin, The Revolt, p. 213.

¹²³ Ben Ami, p. 377.

¹²⁴ Begin, p. 224.

the Palestine problem.

In July, 1946, when the URM (United Resistance Movement) was entering its eighth month of operation, the destruction of British military headquarters in the south wing of the King David Hotel shook Jerusalem, and had wide spread repercussions. The heavy casualties were the end result of a series of tragic missed signals. Ironically, the President of our American League for a Free Palestine (ALFP), former Senator Guy M. Gillette, and the co-chairmen, Harry L. Selden, had confirmed reservations for July 27th at the King David. The activists who gathered around our cause in the ALFP, had been ceaselessly searching for ways to avoid the ever-increasing bloodshed . . . ¹²⁵

There were particular reasons for deciding to bomb the King David. Despite attempts by Senator Gillette and others to negotiate with the British Government in favor of a Jewish state in Palestine, the British had decided to launch Operation "Agatha" on June 29, at 1:45 A.M., the month prior to the bombing.

This Operation was an attempt to arrest "important" Jews in a dragnet of British soldiers and police. To justify the arrests, the British seized documents in the Jewish Agency building which they later admitted did not sufficiently incriminate either the official institution or the individual leadership. The Operation shook up the Agency's leadership, but it failed to destroy the Haganah, and hardly touched the Irgun or Lechi. However, when "Agatha" was launched on June 29, the immediate impulse in the United Resistance

¹²⁵ Ben Ami, p. 374.

Movement was for armed actions against the British administration; and the go ahead was given, for the King David attack .¹²⁶

The Irgun believed that damaging evidence had been found in the British attack on the Jewish Agency and that this material was being kept at the British headquarters. It was urgent that the evidence be destroyed.

Unknown to the Irgun, it had been decided by Dr. Weizmann to halt the armed struggle of the United Resistance Movement just as the planned attack against the King David was proceeding. A note was sent to Menachem Begin by Haganah leader Sneh on the 19th and on the 22nd of July urging Begin to delay the operation.

The attack on the King David had the effect of focusing the British public on the immediacy of the Palestine question. It also put that question on the front pages of American newspapers. It marked the end of the United Resistance Movement. In an interview in the Parisian paper France Soir, David Ben Gurion declared that the Irgun was “the enemy of the Jewish people.”¹²⁷

The King David incident was a catalyst for the call for partition of Palestine. Within three days of the blast the Anglo-American Cabinet Committee recommended to the American and British Governments a so-called federalist constitution for Palestine. This constitution was to

¹²⁶ Ben Ami, p. 375-377.

¹²⁷ Ben Ami, p. 380.

vest “strong central powers in a British controlled central government, leaving very little autonomy to the separate Arab and Zionist provinces” and would make the admission of the 100,000 Jewish refugees to Palestine, which President Truman had urged ten months prior, conditional upon the adoption of the federalization program.¹²⁸

The plan called for dividing Palestine into Zionist, Arab and central-government districts. The central government would control Jerusalem, Bethlehem and surrounding areas, and the Negev, south of Beersheba. The Zionist district would include about 1500 square miles (compared with the 2,600 recommended by the Peel report proposing partition in 1936 and the 45,000 in the area constituting Palestine when it was originally promised as a Jewish “national home”). This area would include two thirds of the southern coastal Plain of Sharon, except Jaffa, the Plain of Esdraelon, the Valley of Jezreel and eastern Galilee north of Beisan. The rest of Palestine would be Arab.¹²⁹ The British would retain substantial power.

The most striking aspect of the proposals is the degree of power to be left in the hands of the central government . . . Under the plan the British would control defense, foreign relations, the police, prisons, the courts, railway and court facilities in Haifa, the post office, the telephone and telegraph systems, customs, excise taxes, civil aviation, broadcasting and antiquities. They would also retain final

¹²⁸ The New York Times, “Divided Palestine is Urged by Anglo-U.S. Cabinet Body, Delaying Entry of 100,000”-July, 26, 1948, p. 1.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

authority over immigration, but the provincial governments would have the right of appeal to the United Nations' Trusteeship Council.¹³⁰

The British position on the immigration question had been that they could not agree to the absorption of 100,000 without the agreement of the Arabs. The Anglo-American Cabinet Committee deliberations caused an elaboration of this position. "The British have now said, in effect, that they cannot agree to admit the new refugees until the whole question of Palestine's future has been settled."¹³¹ This immigration question had become the main point of contention between the American and British governments.

Although the immigration plan had been delayed, details of the plan had been agreed upon by the United States and Britain. The United States would finance the movement of refugees to Palestine and world Jewish organizations would take over the estimated \$280,000,000 cost of resettling them after their arrival.

The attitude of President Truman and the policy of the United States Government was regarded as being pivotal to the solution of the Palestine problem.

If President Truman rejects the new plan for a federated Palestine that has been recommended to him by his Cabinet delegation and that the British favor strongly it is not only going to be a shock to British opinion but it is going to force

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ The New York Times, "Britain Tries Again on Palestine Solution," July 28, 1992.

a whole new reconsideration of the Palestine problem, with that much more time lost . . . What they do urgently desire is to get President Truman's blessing to go ahead with the new plan for a federated Palestine.¹³²

Meanwhile a close friend of President Truman was at work in Palestine for the Irgun delegation. Iowa's Senator Guy Gillette focused on their cause the prior year when he resigned chairmanship of the Surplus Property Board and declined other executive government appointments "to devote himself to the solution of the Hebrew problem of Europe and Palestine."¹³³ In August of 1945 Guy Gillette became full-time President of the Irgun Delegation's American League for a Free Palestine. Yitshaq Ben Ami was its Executive Director. They worked with Ben Hecht, Louis Bromfield, Will Rogers, Jr., Paul O'Dwyer, William Ziff and other prominent Americans. In 1946 Guy Gillette campaigned to stop Britain from establishing the independent state of Trans-Jordan on three-quarters of the Mandate area. Gillette pointed out that "this unilateral action by Britain contravened its obligation under the Mandate and went against the policies set by the Anglo-American Convention of 1924." When this attempt failed Gillette said on

¹³² The New York Times, "British Link Fate of Palestine to US," July 28, 1946, p. 29.

¹³³ Request from the White House to the White House News Photographers Association to cover a press conference at the headquarters of the Hebrew Committee for National Liberation where Gillette would discuss his plans concerning these matters, July 31, 1945, Truman Papers, Official File.

national radio, "It appears, from the study of Great Britain's record on Palestine, that she supports the lofty ideals of democracy provided they happen to coincide with the interests of the British Empire."¹³⁴

In July 1946, Gillette went to Palestine in an attempt to modify the course of British action, to meet with Begin to coordinate future policies, and to establish a better relationship between the Irgun Delegation in America and the Jewish Agency. His attempts "failed on all fronts . . . he came back a converted revolutionary . . . From then on his opening statement at public appearances was: 'It is 1946 in America, but it is 1776 in Palestine.'"¹³⁵

Attempts were also made within the ranks to strengthen the Hebrew Committee for National Liberation's political campaign, and to tighten ties with the Irgun which had been strained because of the decision by the Irgun Delegation not to send all their funds to the front in Palestine, and because of Hillel Kook's call for a democratic (rather than a Jewish) state in Palestine. On May 1, 1946 an agreement had been signed with the Irgun High Command which defined the Hebrew Nation as all Jews in the diaspora and in Palestine who desired Eretz-Israel (the land of Israel) as their home and wished to help in its liberation.

The HCNL is the political representative of the Irgun; the

¹³⁴Ben Ami, p. 380-381.

¹³⁵Ibid, p. 381-382.

links between the Irgun and its delegates abroad are reestablished. The HCNL accepts the Irgun's supreme authority. The Irgun's covert activities in the diaspora are directed by the Irgun's diaspora command. The Irgun delegates are autonomous in their political work and shall participate in formulating the Irgun's military and political policies.¹³⁶

Begin hesitated to ratify the agreement, leading to considerable friction, but the Irgun and American delegation continued to work together throughout the summer of 1946. The Morrison-Grady plan (whereby Palestine would be split into four sections, two under British rule, one under Jewish rule and one under Arab rule) motivated Menachem Begin to write to the HCNL that summer. He feared that the Jewish Agency might agree to the plan which would result in internecine fighting in Palestine. "A civil war can break out at any time within weeks or months," wrote Begin.

I have no doubt that your campaign in the United States . . . is one of the factors inhibiting the plotters. How long this will restrain them is impossible to predict . . . We did not give up our principles two years ago, after the Moyne incident, when Golomb (head of the Haganah) threatened us with annihilation. We did not stop our struggles then and we won't now.¹³⁷

Begin planned to establish a Provisional Government only if "the Agency people" agreed to the Morrison-Grady plan and "if there is no

¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 382-383.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

choice left.”¹³⁸

At this time a rift was developing within mainstream world Zionism. While Chaim Weizmann wished to settle for partition under British rules, the Zionist movement in America, led by Abba Hillel Silver, began turning toward the more militant stand of the Revisionists and the Irgun Delegation.

On August 5, 1946 the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine adopted a resolution rejecting the Morrison plan and demanding the immediate grant of 100,000 certificates and the transportation of the 100,000 to Palestine. They also demanded immediate full autonomy in administrative appointments and in national economics “to that area of Palestine to be designated to become a Jewish State,” as well as the right to control immigration there.¹³⁹ This resolution was accompanied by a ten page paper titled “Palestine: Trusteeship, Binational State, or Partition?” This report compared the proposed types of government, analyzed the affects of each upon the indigenous populations and made suggestions and recommendations. Among these it was believed that Partition would be the most acceptable solution as it would give “a full measure of satisfaction to the political aspirations of both groups. Its drawback is

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Resolution Adopted at Meeting of the Executive of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Paris, Monday, August 5, 1946, Papers of David Niles, Truman Library.

that it can offer that satisfaction only in a limited area of the country." The Jewish State could work out its own destiny while the Arabs would not feel "swamped" by the Jews as had been the feeling reported by the Palestine Royal Commission. "It would also give the politically conscious class among the Arabs of Palestine the ardently desired opportunity to obtain political office and influence." Trans-Jordan and Iraq would probably favor the plan.

It may also be viewed with favor (by) Iraq, which would obtain - through the friendly and allied state of Transjordan - close access to the Mediterranean - an aim which has long been a major objective of Iraqi policy.¹⁴⁰

The report objected to the fact that "the Arabs are represented in every branch of U. N. activity" while "it is clearly an untenable condition that the Jewish people should have no voice and no direct representation in affairs of the most vital concern to it."¹⁴¹ The report also suggested boundaries. "Both the Jewish State and Transjordan would have access to the waters of the Jordan and could exploit them for irrigation and the generation of electric power."¹⁴² The plan would partition Jerusalem, placing it under the control of an international trusteeship which would allow "the Jewish part of New Jerusalem" to be part of the Jewish State and "the Arab part of New Jerusalem" to

¹⁴⁰ "Palestine: Trusteeship, Binational State or Partition?" - page 7, August 5, 1946, Papers of David Niles, Truman Library.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 10.

be part of the Arab State. It was suggested that Jaffa would be part of the Arab State “though not contiguous with it” while the port of Haifa would remain in Jewish hands. Haifa, however, would be accessible to Transjordan through a free port area. There would also be a naval area under British sovereignty.¹⁴³

While members of the Jewish Agency found Partition acceptable the Irgun did not. Begin said, “We shall oppose it! We shall never acquiesce in partitioning of our homeland!” The thing they wanted to avoid at all costs was a civil war.

The efforts of the Irgun Delegation and the Irgun High Command to fight for a Jewish state in Palestine were inextricably intertwined. Each bore the repercussions of the successes or failures of the other. While the Irgun Delegation worked under the guise of several organizations (e.g. the Hebrew Committee, the American Friends for a Free Palestine, etc.) their true affiliation to the Irgun became known. This knowledge caused fund raising problems due to their alien status. Their organization and its leaders were investigated by the F.B.I. The results of the investigations, however, were not incriminating. During the war years some of their plans, such as Dr. Raphaeli’s plan to establish an off shore radio station, were foiled by the Roosevelt administration. Their political position however remained unshakable as they continued to pressure the

¹⁴³ Ibid, p. 9.

government directly and in the public arena.

ROOSEVELT AND PALESTINE

For a long time he was a hero. No president had appointed so many Jews to public office. No president had surrounded himself with so many Jewish advisers. No president had condemned anti-Semitism with such eloquence and persistence. Jews were mostly liberals in those faraway days, and a vast majority voted four times for FDR.¹

This dissertation has raised a question which is difficult to answer. Why did President Roosevelt fail to help the Jews of Europe during World War II and why did he put off Jewish leaders in America? There is no doubt that while the President supported the Jews verbally he failed to take action that might have drastically altered the outcome of the war for the Jewish victims of the Holocaust.² Some historians believe that the President was afraid of appearing too friendly to the Jews during a period when anti-Semitism was supposedly increasing.

The individual in whom the Jews placed their greatest trust . . . failed to seize the hour. Franklin D. Roosevelt had information on the Holocaust long before . . . November 24, 1942, but, as with the War Crimes Commission, he allowed the issue to come to a head before making a move of, in fact,

¹ "Did FDR Betray the Jews? Or did he do more than anyone else to save them?" James Schlesinger Jr., Newsweek, April 18, 1994, p. 14.

² Abandonment of the Jews, by David Wyman, carefully documents these events and the proposed various plans which Roosevelt might have enacted to save the Jews of Europe.

no immediate consequence. . . The chief executive turned down Sikorski's private appeal for large-scale bombing in retaliation for German savagery. . . He also proved unwilling to ask Congress about admitting thousands of Polish women and children, currently released from Soviet camps, fearing "anti-semitic agitation" upon the inclusion of many Jews.³

The Irgun Delegation to the United States and the New Zionist Organization in America tried to influence the administration to help the Jews of Europe and to take a stand against the British policy in Palestine. They had little success. While the Irgun Delegation began to attack the President through their ad campaign, the New Zionist Organization responded differently. They turned to the Republican party and tried to develop support there. This was a new approach. The large majority of Jews in America were Democrats. Although some disagreed with the policies of Roosevelt they did not want to criticize the President during the war. The New Zionists' decision to reach out to the Republicans for help proved to be effective. They did not, however, totally isolate themselves from the Democrats but tried to make inroads to affect policy at the highest levels.

The Irgun Delegation organized the march of the rabbis, formulated the campaign which exposed the Bermuda Conference as a "mockery," pressed for the creation of the War Refugee Board, staged rallies and mass meetings. They were opposed by Roosevelt each step of the way. These actions, as well as David Wyman's

³ Penkower, The Jews Were Expendable, p. 95.

documentation of Roosevelt's behavior, are the basis for seriously questioning the motivation of the President. Certain conclusions have come to light.

The President was deeply involved in establishing ties with the Saudi Arabian king, Ibn Saud. Washington's contact with the King were generally formulated for military and political benefits. Regarding Palestine, Roosevelt initially wanted to get the Saudis to speak face to face, or at least by royal representative, with Chaim Weizmann. The President would not proceed to support a Jewish State in Palestine without the support of the King because of geopolitical concerns of the United States. These included the need for Saudi oil concessions and plans for United States control of an air base at Dharaan.

Varying reactions have emerged from the proposal that Roosevelt's Saudi concerns were the main reason for his abandonment of the Jews. Most responses have been hesitantly questionable, some fully discounted the idea, others mulled over it and considered it a possibility.

David Wyman commented about Roosevelt in the following way.

He was very concerned not to get the Arabs upset. A part of this was he kept saying that he didn't want to see massacre. He couldn't put x - number of American divisions over there to protect the Jews. So that this is why he was so

hesitant, but there's no doubt about it, he was playing both sides against the middle. It was a very devious policy. He didn't know what to do. I think he was concerned about the Jews, I think he favored a Jewish state, but not to the extent of alienating the Arabs which is the only way your going to have a Jewish state. And so he seemed without any concern. He seemed just to lie . . . but at the same time he was assuring Wise and Silver that it was just a matter of time. He was also telling the Arab leaders that we won't do anything without Arab consent which means they aren't going to do anything. This came out, this correspondence whatever the communication was between him and Arab leaders was published in the press I think in late '45. It made quite an uproar because it showed what a false position he had taken.⁴

The earliest communication between President Roosevelt and King Ibn Saud is dated 1939. In this correspondence the question of Jewish self rule in Palestine was confronted by the King. He advised the President that such a decision would be against the sentiments of the majority of residents of the area (i.e. of the Arab population). The Under Secretary of State, Welles, advised the President that because this was "the first letter which we have had from an Arab Chief of State" an appropriate response should be forthcoming. Welles, therefore, drafted a reply to the King which he asked the President to sign. In it the King was assured that no action would be taken which departed from the position which had been maintained to that

⁴ Interview with David Wyman by Joanna Saidel, August 20, 1993, Canterbury, New Hampshire.

time.⁵

In 1940 Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organization, suggested to Mr. H. St. J. B. Philby, “the great Near Eastern authority and friend of King Ibn Saud. . . some basis of settlement which the King might be willing to support. Dr. Weizmann said that he had remarked to Philby that the only thing the Jews had to offer was money.” Weizmann stated that he was prepared to raise “three to four million pounds as the price of the King’s support of a scheme whereby the Arabs of Palestine would be voluntarily transferred to Trans-Jordan and Iraq.”⁶

The idea of transfer was one which Benzion Netanyahu and the New Zionist Organization promoted throughout their campaign against the British in Palestine. In 1938 Mr. Netanyahu expressed this idea in political literature. The idea of transfer was originated by Israel Zangwill. Netanyahu believed that it should be arranged politically and not by forced expulsion.⁷

With the war well underway by 1941, interest in Saudi Arabia increased. That year King Ibn Saud approached the administration to ask for financial assistance. This request was initially turned down

⁵ Under Secretary of State to the President, January 9, 1939 and Draft letter from President Roosevelt to King Ibn Saud, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1939, vol. IV, p. 694-696.

⁶ Memorandum of Conversation by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray), February 6, 1940, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1940, Vol. III, p. 836-840.

⁷ Personal interview with Benzion Netanyahu, November 1993, Jerusalem .

by the United States. The King preferred to ask the U.S. for a loan than the British because he felt that the U.S. would not try to meddle in Saudi Arabia's internal affairs. When this request was turned down he asked instead for a loan of road engineers and for a mission of agricultural and irrigation experts from the United States Government. State Department officials advised that such an arrangement would be beneficial to the United States. Agriculture experts argued "that quite apart from the question of helping King Ibn Saud, the information and experience which an agricultural expert obtained in Saudi Arabia would be very valuable to the Department of Agriculture."⁸

The year, 1942, was important in determining the outcome of the pressure campaign aimed at the President to assist the Jews of Europe. Hitler's plan was fully underway. Zionist groups in the United States, particularly the Irgun Delegation and the New Zionist Organization, were demanding action. However, important negotiations were beginning in Saudi Arabia for American rights for air transit over certain parts of Saudi Arabia.

The question remains whether President Roosevelt made agreements with Ibn Saud to gain advantages in Saudi Arabia. The Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Parker T. Hart, does not think this was

⁸ For a discussion on the proposal to assist Saudi Arabia see Foreign Relations of the United States 1941, vol. III, p. 624-659.

the case. He believes that the friendship between the King and the President was sincere and that no deals were made concerning the Jews and Dharan air base.

No. No. No. I don't, I don't take stock in that one at all. I don't think that's true. I don't believe there was any deal of that kind, in fact I don't think there was any real deal between them except that they were going to try to be friends; that he made a pledge that, of his own accord, that he would not undertake a policy which would be harmful to, or that could be considered harmful to either side but he particularly mentioned the Arabs, of course to Ibn Saud. He said, I wouldn't undertake a course of action without, that might be harmful to you certainly, without consulting with you before I do it. I'm paraphrasing what he said, but that is basically what he said.⁹

The request by Ibn Saud for an agricultural mission was approved, though not for purely friendly reasons. The War Department had become interested in acquiring air rights from the Saudis.

On learning of the War Department's interest in establishing one or more airfields in Saudi Arabia, this Department, to ensure the most favorable possible reception of a request for air facilities, took certain steps and made certain plans, i.e. visit of Minister to present credentials and President's letter to King Ibn Saud, organization and dispatch of Agricultural Mission, and opening of Legation at Jidda. . .¹⁰

The reasons for desiring these air bases were primarily

⁹ Telephone interview with U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Parker T. Hart, by Joanna Saidel, October 4, 1993.

¹⁰ The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Egypt (Kirk), April 15, 1942, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1942, Vol. IV, p. 567-568.

military. The War Department determined that if it was possible to establish a route across Saudi Arabia it would be very beneficial.

Ferrying distance for short-range aircraft between Khartoum and Karachi will be materially reduced, also Arabian route more secure than present one via Cairo. Moreover areas near Jidda and Fort Duwadamie seem more suitable with respect to terrain and communications than further south.¹¹

It was presumed that "there is probably no use in approaching Ibn Saud on this matter unless an adequate offer is made to him of financial or other economic assistance and unless the King is convinced that in some way his country will be made secure from Axis attack."¹² It was decided that Lend -Lease aid (financial, not in the form of war material) would be the best way to persuade the King to cooperate. Ambassador Hart confirmed the King's need for assistance.

We had a very strong proprietary feeling about getting that oil flowing. We also had a very strong feeling that the King absolutely had to have some income. He was absolutely flat when I got there in 1944.¹³

The British also wanted air rights over Saudi Arabia. Cooperating together the Americans and British were able to secure

¹¹ Ibid, p. 568.

¹² Secretary of State to the Minister in Egypt (Kirk), July 7, 1942, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1942, Vol. IV, p. 571.

¹³ Telephone interview with U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia , Parker T. Hart, by Joanna Saidel, October 4, 1993.

air rights from the Saudi King. It was reported:

The King is willing to grant to the British, routes for non-stop flights from Khartoum to Bahrein passing north of direct line from Birkeh to Bahrein and from Khartoum to Basra passing north of direct line from Dheba to Basra, and he will not object if American planes utilize the facilities so granted. He asked the matter to be treated with utmost secrecy.¹⁴

Also in 1942 the problem of protecting U.S. oil fields in Saudi Arabia was considerable. Suggestions were made to send American servicemen, anti-aircraft batteries and troops, to defend oil installations at Dharan.

American plans to help the Jews remained on hold into 1943. President Roosevelt made an agreement with Ibn Saud that he would take no action in Palestine without the full consultation of both Arabs and Jews, thus continuing his policy of appeasement. Ambassador Hart, believes that Roosevelt was sympathetic to the Arabs.

Franklin Roosevelt was, I think, concerned that the Arabs would be totally neglected in the sweep of sympathy for the Jews.¹⁵

Ambassador Richard Murphy thinks that the Zionism was not an important concern for Roosevelt.

Roosevelt and Zionism, frankly I don't think he put that much thought into it. It became much more of an issue in

¹⁴ The Minister in Egypt (Kirk) to the Secretary of State, July 31, 1942, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1942, Vol. IV, p. 574.

¹⁵ Telephone interview with U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Parker T. Hart from Washington, D.C., by Joanna Saidel, October 4, 1993.

Truman's time.¹⁶

The vigorous ad campaign promoted by Hillel Kook, Ben Hecht, Samuel Merlin, Yitshak Ben Ami, Alex Raphaeli and others in the United States may have been the most important single element in forestalling an outright pro-Arab policy in the United States in the early 1940's. The effects of the campaign were that public awareness was aroused to a degree which forced the White House in both the Roosevelt and Truman administrations not to abandon the idea of a Jewish State in Palestine despite suggestions to the contrary in 1943.

Some of these suggestions included the recommendation by Colonel Harold Hoskins to ship up to a half million Jewish refugees to Cyrenaica. In Part IV of a proposed post-war solution Hoskins made specific suggestions concerning the Jews.

The existing population of one million Arabs and one-half million Jews in Palestine is not to be moved and is to form a bi-national state within a proposed Levant Federation. This independent Levant Federation would be formed by the reuniting of Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Trans-Jordan that, prior to their dismemberment after the last war, had for years been one natural economic and political unit. The Holy Places, including Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Bethlehem, are to be an enclave under United Nations' control. The cession of some specific territory other than Palestine for a Jewish State is proposed - possibly northern Cirenaica, which is now virtually uninhabited.

The Jewish refugee problem is met to the extent that, under the proposed plan, the Jews could put another half

¹⁶ Telephone interview with Ambassador Richard Murphy from the Council on Foreign Relations, by Joanna Saidel, October 4, 1993.

million in Palestine so as to reach parity with the Arabs and up to a half million Jews in northern Cirenaica.¹⁷

Other suggestions for situating the displaced Jews in countries other than Palestine included that of President Roosevelt as mentioned in a memorandum by Harold Hoskins in September 1943. Therein he writes that “the President mentioned the fact that he had been receiving an increasing amount of information that indicated that many European Jews after the war would not care to migrate to Palestine but would prefer to return to their countries of origin in Europe” based on assurances of security.¹⁸

Because of the magnitude of the massacre of Jews by the Nazis, “the President felt that the number of Jews pressing to enter Palestine after the war may be substantially less than was originally anticipated.”¹⁹ Hoskins conveyed Roosevelt’s plan.

As to Jewish refugees who may wish to move out of Europe the President said that he was still working on the possibility of at least a certain number of them being settled in the trans - Andean portions of Colombia in South America . . . As to a solution to the Palestine problem, the President stated that his own thinking leaned toward a wider use of the idea of trusteeship for Palestine - of making Palestine a real Holy Land for all three religions, with a Jew, a Christian,

¹⁷ Summary of Lieutenant Colonel Harold B. Hoskins’ Report on the Near East, April 20, 1943, Foreign Relations of the United States, (Palestine Section), 1943, volume IV, p. 784-785.

¹⁸ Memorandum of Conversation, by Lieutenant Colonel Harold B. Hoskins, Washington, September 27, 1943, Foreign Relations of the United States, Palestine Section, 1943, volume IV, p. 812.

¹⁹ Ibid.

and a Moslem as the three trustees. . .²⁰

Roosevelt did not, however, act upon these ideas.

Meanwhile, Hillel Kook continued, with the Irgun delegation, to formulate new tactics to draw attention to the plight of the Jews. While failing to affect the President, this group, operating now under the banner, "Emergence Conference to Save the Jews of Europe," submitted their plans to Secretary of State Hull, Assistant Secretary Long, Attorney General Biddle, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau. There the Irgun Delegation found at least some help. Henry Morgenthau assured Hillel Kook of his continuing support.

I need not reiterate to you my interest in any intelligent plan which offers any reasonable hope of success for saving the Jewish population of Europe, which is rapidly being annihilated. You may rest assured that I am already doing everything in my power, consistent with my position in the Government, to facilitate the rescue of these oppressed people.²¹

President Roosevelt sent Colonel Hoskins to Saudi Arabia to confront the King regarding the future of Palestine and to discuss the possibility of a meeting between Ibn Saud and Chaim Weizmann. The King vehemently opposed any negotiations with Weizmann or the Jewish Agency.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 812-813.

²¹ Letter from Henry Morgenthau, Jr. to Peter Bergson, September 3, 1943, Morgenthau Diary, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park , New York.

Apparently President Roosevelt was concerned enough to send substantial gifts with Hoskins for the King. In an outline of Hoskins' report to the President on the visit to Saudi Arabia, Hoskins wrote, "I also showed to the President photographs of the presentation of the Jeep and of the Walkie-Talkie to the King, as well as photographs of the irrigation project at el Kharj, 75 miles south of Riyadh." ²²

Despite the failure to arrange a meeting between Weizmann and the King, Hoskins believed that his talks with Ibn Saud had been successful diplomatically because of an intimacy which he was able to develop with the King. "The fact that he could talk to me directly in Arabic, often without anyone else present, allowed him, he said, to be more frank than would otherwise have been the case since his best interpreters are not Saudi Arabians by birth."²³

Hoskins claimed that, due to this intimacy, the King explained "for the first time to anyone, the reason for his personal hatred of Dr. Weizmann." This was an attempt by the latter to bribe the King with 20 million pounds sterling which was supposedly guaranteed by President Roosevelt through an intermediary, St. John Philby.²⁴ Hoskins claims that the President greeted this charge with "surprise and irritation."²⁵

²² Ibid, p. 811-812.

²³ Memorandum by Hoskins, Cairo, August 31, 1943, Ibid, p. 808.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 809.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 812.

The King's hatred for Weizmann and the Jews went far beyond this point. His position and his religion were the determining factors.

King Ibn Saud is first a devout Moslem and only secondarily an Arab. He is the head of the Wahhabi (fundamentalist) sect of Islam. The Wahhabis regard themselves not as a sect, but as the only true Moslems, while non-Wahhabi Moslems are considered to have lost the purity of their faith.

There is every reason to credit the sincerity of the King's beliefs. Leader of the Moslems (Wahhabis anyway), guardian of the Holy Places of Mecca and Medina, and a Moslem sovereign who is independent in fact as well as in theory, he, with much justice, regards himself as the world's foremost Moslem, and assumes the defense of the rights of the Moslem community. Hence, his preoccupation with Jewish immigration into Palestine, a problem in which Moslem religious considerations are supported by Arab nationalist sentiment.

Although the King is reasonable in his interpretation of Moslem religious law, he is scrupulous in observance of established principles. Any relaxation of his steadfast opposition to Zionist aims for Palestine (about the only question on which the Moslem world shows unanimity) would violate his principles; it would cause him to lose the respect which he now commands from his co-religionists; it might threaten his influence with his intolerant Wahhabi subjects; and it could even result in the overthrow of his dynasty. The possibility that the King can be persuaded to alter his position with regard to Palestine is, therefore, so remote as to be negligible.²⁶

Besides the Palestine problem, oil and Dharan continued to be in the forefront of discussions between Saudi Arabia and the United States. The U.S. proposed to establish a consulate at Dharan in August

²⁶ King Ibn Saud - Summary, p. 3-4. Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Crimea Conference File, Map Room.

1943.

It was pointed out that a Consulate in Dharan would be a great convenience both to the California Arabian Standard Oil Company and to individual Americans there, in the issuance and validation of passports, notarial services, services to shipping and seamen, documentation of merchandise in normal times. . . .²⁷

The Saudis were reluctant to comply with this request fearing that “an American Consulate in Dharan would cause embarrassing demands for consulates of other nations in Saudi Arabia.” It was also believed that the same ends could be achieved in other ways.²⁸

President Roosevelt continued to affirm his good faith to the monarch. In correspondence he again reassured King Ibn Saud, his “Great and Good Friend,” “. . . I am glad of this opportunity . . . to reiterate my assurance that it is the view of the Government of the United States that, in any case, no decision altering the basic situation of Palestine should be reached without full consultation with both Arabs and Jews.”²⁹

The year, 1944, marked the beginning of proposals by the United States for the construction of an airfield near Dharan. On July 29th the American Resident in Saudi Arabia presented the request.

As has already been explained to Your Excellency, the United States military air forces are responsible for heavy

²⁷ The Minister Resident in Saudi Arabia (Moose) to the Secretary of State, October 25, 1943. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. IV, p. 835-836.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 838.

²⁹ President Roosevelt to King Ibn Saud, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943, vol. IV, p. 790.

air traffic movements between points in North Africa and India, and the responsible authorities believe that a direct route between Cairo and a point near Dharan would materially facilitate the movement of this traffic, and aid in the prosecution of the war.³⁰

The British opposed the American plan. They too had sent officials to Dharan "for the purpose of finding a site for a Royal Air Force landing field."³¹

Most authentic confidential source confirms that British told Saudi Government to refuse aerodrome to US Army at Dharan. Royal Air Force Chief Cairo stated to same source that Air Ministry London would not concur in US Army request for Dharan aerodrome.

In view of British survey for Dharan airfield this appears to be an unfriendly act constituting (1) anti-American coercion of Saudi Government, (2) obstruction of Allied war effort. Perhaps it is test of equal opportunities for US and of British cooperation in Saudi Arabia.³²

With the war in full swing, Dharan came to be considered a national security concern. The United States Air Corps had been flying to the Far Eastern war theater via Iraq and Bahrein. The airstrip at Bahrain was not considered suitable for heavy planes because of its soft soil. Dharan, on the other hand, was desirable. Its terrain was suitable and it would save each plane 220 miles of travel.

³⁰ The American Minister Resident in Saudi Arabia (Moose) to the Saudi Arabian Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs (Yusuf Yassin), Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, vol. V, p. 661.

³¹ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, vol. V, p. 663, note 13.

³² The Minister in Egypt (Tuck) to the Secretary of State, October 6, 1944, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, vol. v., p. 663.

American military authorities consider that the construction of an airfield near Dharan at the earliest possible moment is necessary for the prosecution of the war in the Pacific.³³

The Army Air Forces stated that “the acquisition of a military airfield at Dharan is considered to be a military necessity.”³⁴ It was considered essential for fueling the war in the Pacific.

It was intended . . . to save mileage or kilometerage on the route that went from Cairo to Karachi and then hooked into other carriers from there, to provision the Far Eastern lines of combat because at that particular time we didn’t have the . . . Pacific under our control. Later, when the Pacific passed under American control the war against the Japanese could be fought from the United States westward, rather than from Cairo eastward, and India eastward.³⁵

In a memorandum from the Secretary of State to President Roosevelt, proposals for long range financial assistance to Saudi Arabia were presented. These proposals were based on American national interests and assumed that a strong and independent Saudi Arabian Government in the Near East was essential to these interests. It also argued that oil resources of Saudi Arabia, “now in American hands under a concession held by American nationals, should be safeguarded and developed in order to supplement Western Hemisphere oil reserves as a source of world supply,” and that “the

³³ Informal Statement Prepared in the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, Nov. 9, 1944, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, vol. v., p. 668.

³⁴ Memorandum by Colonel John W. Bowen of the War Department General Staff, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, vol. v., p. 669.

³⁵ Interview with U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Parker T. Hart, October 4, 1993.

military authorities urgently desire certain facilities in Saudi Arabia for the prosecution of the war, such as the right to construct military airfields and flight privileges for military aircraft en route to the Pacific war theater.”³⁶

The Secretary of State urged the President to help implement these matters by asking Congress to authorize aid to Saudi Arabia, by asking the President of the Export-Import Bank to extend long term loans for economic and social development in Saudi Arabia, and by asking military authorities to give immediate attention to airfield and related construction, with the dispatch of training missions and equipment, and the construction of strategic roads and facilities.³⁷

Irgun Delegation leader, Dr. Alex Raphaeli commented on the importance of Dharan.

The interest of F.D.R. and the American government in Saudi was because Saudi controlled the oil fields. The biggest oil fields. And because a great part of the world, including the enemy of United States, Japan, (Japan was still in the war when F.D.R. went to see Ibn Saud). . . was still in the war. And Japan was getting its oil from Saudi Arabia. The idea. . . from the American point of view, not the Jewish, was . . . to protect America against enemies and to . . . make (it) difficult for them to get supplies of oil from which the whole war machine moved.³⁸

³⁶ Memorandum from the Secretary of State to President Roosevelt, December 22, 1944, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1944, vol. v., p. 757.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 758.

³⁸ Telephone interview with Dr. Alex Raphaeli from Jerusalem, by Joanna Saidel, June 15, 1993.

It wasn't until the following year, 1945, that an agreement was finally reached for the construction of an airfield at Dhara. Early that year President met King Ibn Saud aboard the *U.S.S. Quincy* on February 14, 1945, at Great Bitter Lake, Egypt.

The President spoke to the King about the Jewish problem. The King felt that the Jews should be returned to the lands from whence they were driven, stating that the Arabs and the Jews could never cooperate, neither in Palestine, nor in any other country and that the Arabs would chose to die rather than yield their lands to the Jews.³⁹ "The President replied that he wished to assure His Majesty that he would do nothing to assist the Jews against the Arabs and would make no move hostile to the Arab people."⁴⁰

Ambassador Richard Murphy does not believe that the relationship between the King and the President was that important to Roosevelt.

I don't think that Ibn Saud figured, frankly, much at all. . . as an individual on Roosevelt's personal screen . . . No. No. I mean he was old, very near to death, President, when he met Ibn Saud.⁴¹

Historian Walter Laqueur agrees that one must be wary of the relationship because of the President's personal condition.

³⁹ Memorandum of Conversation Between the King of Saudi Arabia (Abdul Aziz Al Saud) and President Roosevelt, February 14, 1945, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, vol. VIII, p. 2.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Interview with Ambassador Richard Murphy, October 4, 1993.

Look. Don't forget at this time Roosevelt was a very sick man and, in '44 - '45, and he, half the time he didn't know what goes on. So one should be a little careful you know.⁴²

The President did in fact feel a kinship with the King which was especially strong, in part, because of their similar physical ailments. Concurrently, the King spoke of being the "twin" brother of the President, in years, in responsibility as Chief of State, and in physical disability.

The President said, "but you are fortunate to still have the use of your legs to take you wherever you choose to go." The King replied, "It is you, Mr. President, who are fortunate. My legs grow feebler every year; with your more reliable wheel-chair you are assured that you will arrive." The President then said, "I have two of these chairs, which are also twins. Would you accept one as a personal gift from me?" The King said, "Gratefully. I shall use it daily and always recall affectionately the giver, my great and good friend."⁴³

The President also encouraged the King to take an interest in agriculture and irrigation.

The President spoke of his great interest in farming, stating that he himself was a farmer. He emphasized the need for developing water resources, to increase land under cultivation as well as to turn the wheels which do the country's work. He expressed special interest in irrigation, tree planting and water power which he hoped would be developed after the war in many countries, including the Arab lands. Stating that he liked Arabs, he reminded His Majesty that to increase land under cultivation would decrease the desert and provide living for a larger

⁴² Interview with Walter Laqueur, October 4, 1993.

⁴³ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, vol., viii., p. 7.

population of Arabs. His Majesty thanked the President for promoting agriculture so vigorously, but said that he himself could not engage with any enthusiasm in the development of his country's agriculture and public works if this prosperity would be inherited by the Jews.⁴⁴

The King did however grant to President Roosevelt the desired rights to the Dhahran base construction soon after this meeting. The King's agreement with the United States was made on the condition that the field and fixed installations would pass to the Saudi Government at the end of the war. The U.S. Forces would be allowed to use the base for three years following the war. American commercial airlines would receive most-favored-nation terms when the field was eventually opened to civil aviation.⁴⁵

The death of President Roosevelt ushered in a new hope for a solution to the Palestine problem. President Truman was more determined to support the Zionist cause than had been his predecessor. He pushed for the entry of Jewish immigrants into Palestine. This decision brought the response of confusion and disbelief from Ibn Saud, who was of the impression that Truman would uphold Roosevelt's Palestine policy. The King referred to the agreement reached on board the *U.S.S. Quincy*, the details of which

⁴⁴ Memorandum of Conversation Between Saudi Ibn Saud and President Roosevelt aboard the S.S. Quincy, February 14, 1945. Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Crimea Conference File, Map Room, p. 3-4.

⁴⁵ The Minister of Saudi Arabia to the Secretary of State, May 13, 1945, Ibid, p.894.

were not released in totality.

What was said at that meeting is not completely known. Is it possible that the President agreed, in return to rights to Dharan, not to support a Jewish State in Palestine? This question was posed to a number of people, including the former Israeli Prime Minister, Yitshak Shamir who was also asked what he thought about the possibility that President Roosevelt had been more concerned with retaining oil concessions and the air base at Dharan than in saving the Jews. His response was as follows.

Shamir: Maybe. It was not, it was not the only factor but it was a part of his hostile attitude towards the Zionism. Could well be understood, it was . . . handy to have an American influence in the Middle East and he met once with Ibn Saud, the king of Saudi. And well, of course, it's possible. I can say that most of the establishment officials of the United States have been anti-Zionist. Not after Roosevelt's death. This changed, gradually this changed because Truman was different.

Saidel: Yes. Roosevelt needed Dharan to fuel the Pacific, to fuel the war in the Pacific, and the oil, so maybe that was a national security concern to him, more than the Jews.

Shamir: I'm not sure because . . . Because there is, there was nothing in contradiction between these both interests, the Jewish interests and the American interests. There . . . has not been any contradiction between them. But maybe Roosevelt gave, of course there is no doubt of it, he gave more importance to the American interests. Oil interests and all that, but I know one thing. For the Jews, for the Jewish people he had a dislike.

Saidel: Do you know of any other reasons why?

Shamir: I don't think so.

Saidel: Those were the only reasons that I could come up with, Dharan and the oil.

Shamir: He didn't have a positive reason for supporting the Jewish state. And of course the Saudis, it may be that, nobody knows what was the content of his conversations with Ibn Saud. Nobody knows about it. But maybe that Ibn Saud told him, Let the Jewish, let the Jewish problem aside. Maybe. Maybe he talked with him and Roosevelt accepted it. Maybe. Maybe.⁴⁶

It appears that something of this sort took place between Roosevelt and Ibn Saud for the King makes mention of an agreement between himself and the President aboard the ship in a letter to Truman.

. . . we have been made aware lately, through the radio broadcasts, of a speech attributed to Your Excellency that you had searched through the papers of the late President, our dear friend, President Roosevelt, and that you were not successful in finding any confirmation of his talk with us regarding the Palestine question. We did not previously publish the subject discussed between us and the late President regarding this matter. However, in some particular cases, we did inform various heads of Arab States, concerning the conversation which took place on February 14, 1945. . .⁴⁷

This letter leaves room for speculation that President Roosevelt may have made a secret agreement with the King regarding the Palestine

⁴⁶ Interview with Yitshak Shamir by Joanna Saidel, October 25, 1993, The Knessett, Jerusalem.

⁴⁷ The King of Saudi Arabia (Abdul Aziz ibn Saud) to President Truman, October 2, 1945, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, Vol. VIII, p. 755.

problem.

In July 1946 Truman informed the King that the United States wished to implement the admission of 100,000 Jewish refugees to Palestine,⁴⁸ despite urging from the King to the contrary.⁴⁹ A polite verbal battle ensued, through correspondence, between the King and President Truman because of this demand for the admission of the 100,000 Jews to Palestine.

The Government and people of the United States have given support to the concept of a Jewish National Home in Palestine ever since the termination of the first World War. . . It is only natural, therefore, that this Government should favor at this time the entry into Palestine of considerable numbers of displaced Jews in Europe . . . It was my belief, to which I still adhere, and which is widely shared by the people of this country, that nothing would contribute more effectively to the alleviation of the plight of these Jewish survivors than the authorization of the immediate entry of at least 100,000 of them to Palestine. . .⁵⁰

Prince Faisal, the son of Ibn Saud, was scheduled to see the President on December 13, 1946. The State Department sent a memorandum to the President advising him what to say to the Prince at this meeting. It was suggested that the President indicate his happiness over the continued harmonious relations between the United States and Saudi Arabia, and the development of Saudi oil

⁴⁸ Letter from Truman to Ibn Saud, July 8, 1946, Official File, Truman Papers.

⁴⁹ Letter from Ibn Saud to Truman, May 24, 1946, Official File, Truman Papers.

⁵⁰ Letter from President Truman to King Ibn Saud, October 28, 1946, Official File, Truman Papers.

resources. It was also suggested that the President affirm U.S. interests to modernize Saudi Arabia by the construction of harbors, roads, railroads, hospitals, and public utilities. Concerning Palestine, the President was advised to say "that the Jewish National Home in Palestine should be developed further", and that he hoped and believed that this could be done "with the agreement of the Arabs and in a manner which will be satisfactory to all parties and which will safeguard existing rights and privileges. . . ⁵¹

While President Roosevelt may have felt compelled to accept the views of Ibn Saud regarding Palestine because of impending national security concerns which occupied him during the war, President Truman was not as restricted by these concerns. The war was over and, although oil and the Dahrhan base continued to be very important, he had more leeway to make his own decisions. Also political concerns on the part of the Saudis required them to be more pliable vis-`a-vis America. Principally, the King feared that the British were behind Transjordanian King Abdullah's plan for a Greater Syria which might include Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, Lebanon and part of Palestine. The King wanted assurance that the American government would support him in the United Nations should the

⁵¹ Memorandum from the Department of State to the President, December 13, 1946, President's Secretary's File, Truman Papers.

events begin to materialize.⁵²

On February 11 a top secret message was received from Minister Childs in Jidda, transmitting a message just received from King Ibn Saud to the effect that the King had obtained definite information that the British Government was planning to have King Abdullah made ruler of Greater Syria. King Ibn Saud asked that the United States Government intervene in this matter immediately. . . .⁵³

The Saudi Government became more dependent on the support and security provided by the United States as time passed. The same holds true for the State of Israel. These two enemy states found common ground in their mutual benefactor, America. A dual policy emerged in which the United States made guarantees to both nations, and simultaneously attempted to maintain a balance of power in the region. During the Truman administration, due to Saudi fears of possible aggression from the Hashemite Kingdoms of Jordan and Iraq, the United States was allowed to upgrade its facilities at Dhahran, which it still commanded, into a very important strategic ferrying base which became a part of a policy of containment against the Soviet Union, and a defense for Saudi Arabia.

Harry Truman, who very publicly gave moral support to the creation of Israel, secretly made agreements for the first American military support to Saudi Arabia.

The strange path of U.S. policy in the Gulf had been set. American now supported two countries who openly opposed each other and followed often conflicting Mideast

⁵² Memorandum for the President from the Department of State, February 18, 1947, President's Secretary's Files, Truman Papers.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 1.

positions.⁵⁴

One may conclude therefore that the United States' interest in Saudi Arabia, particularly in U.S. oil concessions and the Dhahran base, could have been determining factors in the formation of President Roosevelt's, and later President Truman's, policy toward that country, and toward the Jewish and Palestine problems. For President Roosevelt the need for oil and air strip rights was a primary national security concern which overrode any consideration he may have had for the Jews. He thought that, to save the Jews, the United States needed to win the war through military power. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. believes that "FDR, more than any other person, deserves the credit for mobilizing the forces that destroyed Nazi barbarism."⁵⁵ Revisionist Zionists contend that the President could have done more to save the Jews while fighting the war in Europe.

⁵⁴The Secret Files: Washington, Israel and the Gulf, WETA - TV Transcript #106, Air Date: February 17, 1992, p. 10.

⁵⁵Schlesinger, p. 14.

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CHAPTER 7

RESCUE AND PARTITION

The practical work of the Irgun Delegation involved the financing and purchasing of vessels to transport fleeing Jewish refugees, and later D.P.'s, from Europe to Palestine. These purchases caused friction between Delegation members and the Irgun High Command, particularly Menachem Begin, who believed that such funds should be used at the military front rather than for the purchase of vessels. This controversy led to the deterioration of relations between the American and Palestinian branches of the Irgun.

During these days the Palestine question was turned over to the United Nations. It is possible that this was a deliberate move on the part of the British, who did not expect partition to be accepted by the international body. The Irgun Delegation and the Revisionists opposed partition. During the fight for a Jewish state Revisionist leader, Benzion Netanyahu, developed a relationship with State Department official, Loy Henderson. While Henderson has been portrayed as an opponent of Zionism, Netanyahu's connection with him reveals another side to this story.

By the fall of 1946 it was clear to the Irgun Delegation that

their activities in America needed to intensify. Ben Hecht again took to his pen, writing play called *A Flag is Born*, which starred Marlon Brando on Broadway and which was sponsored in part by Eleanor Roosevelt. The play depicted the plight of the Jews of Europe, their desire for a homeland and the barriers of the British. It ended with Brando saying, "We promise to wrest our homeland out of British claws . . . the English have put a fence around the Holy Land. But there are three things they cannot keep out - the wind, the rain, and a Jew."¹ The London Evening Standard called it "the most virulent anti-British play ever staged in the United States."²

The proceeds from Hecht's play were used for two purposes. Part went to finance the work of the Irgun in Palestine. The rest was used to buy a ship, called the *S. S. Abril*, for \$38,000 at a government auction of surplus vessels. While the Irgun Delegation to the United States debated whether it was right to deprive the Irgun in Palestine of some of the funds, they decided that if the Irgun was not going to act to ship Jewish D.P.s to Palestine then the American League for a Free Palestine would. They formed the "Tyre Shipping Company" as a cover for the operation which was under FBI surveillance from the start.

Meanwhile, on October 31, 1946 the Jewish underground took

¹ Ben Ami, p. 384.

² Ibid.

its first action against the British outside of Palestine. The bombing of the British Embassy in Rome made the point that the battle would no longer be limited to Palestine but that the Jewish underground would strike at British targets worldwide if necessary. This was followed by other operations against British bases in Austria and Germany where weapons and explosives were confiscated. The decision to carry the fight to Europe, and to attack the British on all fronts, was made and executed, for the most part by Lechi, with operations often under the direction of Yaacov Eliav.³

In November, 1946, Irgun Delegation leader, Peter Bergson (Hillel Kook), requested a meeting with President Truman. In correspondence from a Revisionist member, Fowler Harper, to the White House, Fowler reiterates the Bergson request. This letter to Mr. Charles Ross bears a hand written note beside Bergson's name which says, "Bad actor, steer clear."⁴

Bergson was unable to see the President, who, his secretary wrote, had been "so unusually busy" as "so many pressing problems have arisen."⁵ Bergson did not give up. On December 24th he sent the President a case of Palestine wine in "the hope it might serve to

³ For a detailed account of the underground activities of Yaacov Eliav see, The Wanted.

⁴ Letter from Fowler Harper to Charles Ross, November 9, 1946, Truman Papers, Official File.

⁵ Letter of the President's secretary, Matthew J. Connolly to Fowler Harper, Dec. 10, 1946, Truman Papers, Official File.

assist the ushering in [of] the New Year.” Bergson said that having been “constrained” to approach the President in the past concerning the sordid aspects of Palestine it was now his pleasure to present the President with a “bit of Palestine and it not soaked with trouble.” He hoped that with pride and honor the Hebrew people would learn “of the President of the United States toasting the New Year with wine from the ancient hills of Judea.”⁶

Two days later, on December 26, 1946, there was an FBI raid of an Irgun ship. The raid yielded, not the arms that they had expected, but hundreds of lifebelts. The *S. S. Abril* then left Brooklyn, New York for Marseilles.

In January 1947 British Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin, stated his position on Palestine in a cabinet paper which he sent to Prime Minister Attlee. It said, “Without the Middle East and its oil. . . .[I see] no hope of being able to achieve the standard of living at which we were aiming in Great Britain.”⁷ His plan was to have Palestine replace Egypt as the headquarters for the Imperial Forces in the region. Thereby, the communications, oil supplies and the strategic geopositioning of the British would be maintained and protected.

On February 18th, the Palestine question was turned over to the United Nations. Britain, it was speculated, wanted to give the

⁶ Notes from a letter from Peter Bergson to President Truman, December 24, 1946, Truman Papers, General File.

⁷ Ben Ami, p. 398.

impression that it was tired of the situation and of the economic burden that it entailed.

While supposedly giving up in despair, Bevin was actually trying to precipitate events that would permit Britain to create an Arab puppet state in Palestine. He guessed at the scenario: The Arab and communist block would oppose a partition resolution, while the United States stayed friendly to all concerned. Thus, partition would fail, and under British tutelage, the Arab majority of Palestine would be given control of the country and eventually rule it.⁸

Under Bevin's plan the Jews would be relegated to small "cantons" in a plan similar to the Morrison-Grady Plan, which Bevin supported earlier. While Bevin publicly stated his support for the protection of Arab rights, he privately stressed British and American mutual geopolitical and economic reasons for backing the Pan-Arabists. "Bevin blamed American domestic politics for his troubles in Palestine."⁹

The Revisionists in America did not ease their pressure. American mainstream Zionist, Abba Hillel Silver, became more militant and demanding. In Britain, Weizmann vacillated and Ben Gurion agreed "to what amounted to an historic abdication from Zionism, and a retreat from his recent conversion to the goal of a Jewish Commonwealth."¹⁰

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, p. 398-399.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 400.

Although Loy Henderson has been perceived within Zionist circles to be anti - Zionist,¹¹ the New Zionist Organization leader, Benzion Netanyahu, described an unknown side of the State Department official. After two years of campaigning the New Zionist Organization forced the mainstream Zionists to also take political action. Netanyahu, sometime during 1945 - 1946, joined the Zionist Organization. As a member he was forbidden to negotiate with governments. He, therefore, decided to negotiate informally and secretly. He had a connection, through a fellow associate named Kolitz, to the wife of an Under Secretary of War under President Wilson, a Mrs. Bolton, who was a very influential congresswoman. Netanyahu and Kolitz asked her to arrange for a gathering with Loy Henderson at her home. This was agreed upon and the dinner meeting took place. At that affair Professor Netanyahu was able to convince Henderson of the importance of the Zionist movement by presenting it in a global scenario. He was highly impressed and invited Netanyahu, who was a very eloquent and powerful speaker, to come to the State Department and repeat the story to Henderson's associates. This was done.¹²

The intelligent and foresighted Revisionist spokesman had

¹¹ See The Arabists by Robert D. Kaplan and Truman Palestine and the Press by Bruce J. Evensen for more on this perception of Henderson.

¹² Personal interview with Benzion Netanyahu, November 7, 1993, Jerusalem.

envisioned a scenario which later proved to be true. Mr. Netanyahu predicted that the Middle East, after the war ended, would become an area of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. He believed that the Arabs would not be able to stop the Soviet advance and that the only true ally in the region would prove to be the Jewish state.¹³

Netanyahu and Henderson met numerous times after this. Their relationship opened many doors in the State Department, the Army and the Navy for Mr. Netanyahu. The congresswoman, Mrs. Bolton, was also able to open doors for him including arranging a meeting for him and Kolitz with General Eisenhower.¹⁴

Eisenhower was so impressed by Netanyahu that he asked him to speak directly to the General Wilson, head of the British Army, who was due to visit America. Eisenhower called Netanyahu personally to let him know the meeting had been scheduled. However, the day before the meeting Netanyahu received a call from Eisenhower's office informing him that the Foreign Office had ordered Wilson not to attend the meeting. Eisenhower was very angry, believing that they were afraid to attend a meeting which would weaken and expose them.¹⁵

Eisenhower then called upon Netanyahu to present his ideas at

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

a meeting of the General Staff. This was very important to the Revisionist cause. It may have been the first time in Zionist history that Zionists had the opportunity to address a General Staff. Netanyahu had penetrated very far and deep to be able to reach Eisenhower and the inner circles of the administration.¹⁶

Loy Henderson also arranged for Netanyahu and Kolitz to meet with the Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, and later his replacement, Mr. Lovett. Later he arranged for Netanyahu to meet Mr. Bohlen, author of the Marshall Plan, and Arbor, the Under Secretary of State.¹⁷

Mr. Netanyahu may have been responsible for changing the view of the State Department. (When asked if in fact he did, Mr. Netanyahu replied, "Absolutely.") Rather than seeing Palestine as a problem of the British, Jews and Arabs, Mr. Netanyahu was able to convince the State Department that it had much farther reaching importance. It was a global issue which needed to be dealt with at the highest levels. It was extremely important to the geopolitical and international political post war plans of America.¹⁸

The internal high level connections which Mr. Netanyahu developed may have been one of the most important parts of the history of the Zionist, and particularly the Revisionist, movement in

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

America. The results which he achieved working behind the scenes, as well as his public campaign against the British, were extremely important.

While Benzion Netanyahu worked behind the scenes, Hillel Kook tried to affect the American government in his own way. He cabled Truman from Paris to protest the British inaction concerning the transfer of Jews from German camps to Palestine. He urged the President to set up a commission which could carry out the policy. He also encouraged Truman to tell the British Government that unless they took action immediately the United States would no longer take part in any further discussion on Palestine.¹⁹

At the time Bergson sent this telegram he was in Paris. That city became the focal point for the activities of the HCNL. Kook (Bergson), Eri Jabotinsky and others worked out of the Lutetia Hotel. Yitshaq Ben Ami wrote that the Revisionists believed that France was “the best choice for a future government in exile.” The overwhelming view there “favored creating a Provisional Hebrew Government, with or without the Jewish Agency. The HCNL believed that such a *de facto* entity would put Britain on the political spot, elevating our “terrorism” to “National resistance,” and our battle would be given legitimacy in the eyes of the world.”²⁰

¹⁹ Papers of Harry S. Truman, General File, January 30, 1947.

²⁰ Ben Ami, p. 395.

Apparently the Irgun Delegation leader had contacted Menachem Begin regarding this idea.

I know that Kook was urging Begin to agree to a provisional government. And the notion was they set a provisional government abroad . . . And the notion was, of course, that if Begin couldn't get out of the country then Kook would be the man to do it. Sure. And Begin would be here the head of the fighting force, you see. Now, this is really amusing because Begin was a political animal and I don't think he knew one end of a revolver to the other, from the other (laughs).²¹

Irgun leader, Menachem Begin, however, rejected the plan by the Irgun Delegation to the United States, particularly Kook (Bergson), to set up a Provisional Government.

There will be the need for a government, and there will be the time to form it, and possibly even a constellation of events that will bring about declaring it - if the Agency accepts a modified plan. Then events will bring together all opposing factions and create the entity that will lead the War for freedom and the integrity of the homeland . . . To rush with such a decisive political step will be to destroy that edifice before it is built.²²

France was the country of choice for Zionist underground operations as the government there was quite sympathetic. Lechi leader, Yaacov Eliav said, "we were given a free hand on condition that our operations emanated not directly from France but from neighboring countries, in order not to implicate France in a

²¹ Interview with Shmuel Katz by Joanna Saidel, November 1993, Tel Aviv.

²² Letter from Menachem Begin to Yitshaq Ben Ami, Ben Ami, p. 424.

diplomatic conflict with England.”²³

In Paris plans were made to consolidate Irgun activities worldwide. Strategies were laid out for the formation of an aviation school, for the acquisition of explosives, weapons and bases for operations and supplies.

Kook and Ben Ami went to Paris. Perhaps they wanted to oversee the activities of their ship, the *S. S. Abril*, which had arrived in Marseilles. On February 28, 1947 it took 620 Jewish immigrants aboard. It was renamed the *S. S. Ben Hecht*. Sailing under the Honduran flag, with its announced destination Bolivia, it made its way toward Palestine. On March 8, 1947 it was intercepted by two British destroyers. The passengers of the “illegal” ship were arrested and brought to a detention camp on Cyprus.

The American League for a Free Palestine had manned the ship with an American crew. They used this point to repudiate the British actions, again launching an advertising campaign to arouse public emotions.

Britain waives the rules! British jail American seamen in Palestine. Who is breaking what law? These men fought alongside the British in W. W. II. Still fighting for freedom, they ran the *Ben Hecht* through the Royal Navy's illegal Palestine blockade. They were seized. Their crime: “Aiding and abetting illegal immigration” - the British say. Did the *Ben Hecht* crew violate the international pact of fifty-two nations? Or did they effectively fulfill President Truman's

²³ Eliav, p. 239.

repeated demand that Palestine's gates be opened "at once"?²⁴

Having Irgun ships fly under foreign flags was another of the methods used by the Irgun Delegation to the United States. They also bought consulates.

There was the question when the war was over how to get the people from the camps and train them militarily how to get the boats, etcetera. And this was the field (in) which I was active too. It was a complicated matter because we had to go to various South American states and buy consulates; you know this kind of a trick business, buying consulates and issuing visas in order that the Jews from Hungary, Poland, Rumania should be able to come to France or Italy and take, from there, a boat - because France and Italy would not permit them to enter on a transit visa unless they had a final destination. So our job was to get to all those ten of thousands of Jews a final destination visa like for instance Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, San Salvador, what have you. And then we had visas for which we had to guarantee that the Jews would never come there based on this visa. We were able to receive French or Italian transit visas and from there take them on the boat. And so there were things without end. There was not only airplanes there were these things too.²⁵

In March, Congressmen Hugh D. Scott (Penn.) and John D. Dingell (Mich.) protested the British arrests of Americans on the ship operated by the Irgun Delegation. Amidst such agitation the British released the crew and flew them back to New York. The American League for a Free Palestine welcomed them home at a reception at

²⁴ Ben Ami, p. 407.

²⁵ Interview with Dr. Alex Raphaeli, by Joanna Saidel, June 1993.

the Hotel Astor where Ben Hecht effectively stated the case of the Irgun and the released Americans.

Today there are only two Jewish parties left in the field; the terrorists and the terrified. You can dismiss the second party as a political force. . . These lads are Americans . . . the same sort of Americans who kept the lifeline to the British Isles open . . . It was an American boat, bought with American money. There is no Hebrew navy yet. There is no Hebrew nation in Palestine yet. There are no victories yet - there is only this: the air is clearing around a flag . . . victory is in us - and there is light ahead.²⁶

In Palestine the Irgun bombed the British officer's club in Jerusalem and, on March 21, Lechi set the oil refineries at Haifa on fire.²⁷ In May they attacked Acre prison, freeing 29 key Lechi and Irgun men. Nine others died. Five were arrested. The British government responded by hanging seven Irgun and Lechi men. The Irgun reciprocated, hanging two British sergeants.²⁸

In America Ben Hecht was recovering from surgery. From his hospital bed he wrote "A Letter to the Terrorists of Palestine."

My brave friends - you may not believe what I write . . .but on my word as an old reporter, what I write is true. The Jews of America are for you. You are their champion. . . Every time you blow up a British arsenal, or wreck a British jail, or send a British railroad train sky high, or rob a British bank, or let go with your guns or bombs at the British betrayers and invaders of your homeland, the Jews of America make a little holiday in their hearts.²⁹

²⁶ Ben Ami, p. 408.

²⁷ Eliav, p. 221, 222.

²⁸ Encyclopedia Judaica, vol. 9, p. 359.

²⁹ Ben Ami, p. 414.

Hecht contrasted this portrait of the Revisionists and Irgun supporters with that of mainstream Zionists, whom he characterizes as cowards.

Unfortunately, the heads of nearly all the Jewish organizations whom the American newspapers call "The Jewish leaders" are against you. Every time you throw a punch at the British betrayers of your homeland, nearly all these Jews have a collective conniption fit. They rush in waving white handkerchiefs and alibis. They didn't do it - not they! Respectable people don't fight. They gabble. . .³⁰

Hecht closed by stating his opinion on the United Nations proceedings concerning the fate of Palestine.

Right now, all the responsibility of the Jews is handsomely engaged in cooing before the United Nations. The British put the matter . . . up to the United Nations because they are frightened of you . . . [they] figured the sound of gabble before a world court would drown out the sound of Hebrew guns in Palestine. It has not and it won't!³¹

This letter was run as an ad in newspapers across the United States, in Mexico, Canada, South America and France. "The British and the Jewish Establishment were apoplectic. In the United Kingdom, Hecht was blacklisted, while in Palestine, the Irgun distributed his message to the population at large."³²

The opinion of Ben Hecht was shared by other Irgun members.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 414.

³¹ Ibid, p. 415.

³² Ibid.

Eliahu Lankin, commander of the Irgun in the Diaspora and commander of the ship, *Altalena*, wrote, “. . . constant references to the underground’s war with the British had captured the imagination of the American press. . .”³³

As a commander of the Irgun in the Diaspora Lankin operated out of Paris. He was financed “mainly from the Hebrew Committee for National Liberation, which,” Lankin writes, “had developed a comprehensive propaganda operation in the United States and had raised substantial amounts of money for their work there.”³⁴

Menachem Begin was angry with the Irgun Delegation in America which he believed were diverting funds from the revolt in Palestine to less important aspects of the movement. To delegation member, Ben Ami, he stressed, “I’m not a fatalist. Only one thing will decide the fate of Eretz-Israel - the armed resistance . . . which needs funds and which should have been forthcoming from you during the past year, but have not.”³⁵

He was further outraged by the American independent action concerning the purchasing of more ships and of the failure of Yitshaq Ben Ami to deliver \$100,000 which he had promised to raise for the Irgun in Palestine. Begin bitterly attacked the activities of the Irgun

³³ Eliahu Lankin, To Win the Promised Land: Story of a Freedom Fighter, p. 303.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 212.

³⁵ Ben Ami, p. 425.

Delegation.

I'm enraged to think that the Irgun delegates are not coming across with all possible help . . . which we must have to widen our battle. . . we lost repeated opportunities to purchase weapons . . . actions were canceled because of the lack of funds - and only because of that. . .

These miserable funds mean arms, safe havens for our men, printing our message. . . \$550,000 for two vessels! With such an amount in our hands, we could organize 'a small revolution . . .' I must conclude with one simple statement - everything, but everything for the front line!³⁶

Begin was not the only Irgun member who was angry at the Irgun Delegation to the United States. Others resented the fact that the first ship to be purchased with their funds was named after Ben Hecht rather than after Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Eliahu Lankin, who commandeered the *Altalena* wrote

The *Ben Hecht* had been named in honor of the American playwright who was a stalwart supporter of the Hebrew Committee in America and the Jewish underground in Eretz Israel. No doubt that he deserved to be honored in any project connected with illegal immigration. But the Hebrew Committee should have first acknowledged the debt of all Zionists and Jews the world over to the memory of Jabotinsky, who devoted his life to the struggle for the establishment of the Jewish State and who, during the last few years of his life, urged massive evacuation of the Jews from East Europe.³⁷

May 15, 1947 marked the formation of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). The General Assembly

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Lankin, p. 260-261.

gave UNSCOP “the widest powers to ascertain and record facts, and to investigate all questions and issues relevant to the problem of Palestine.” On the day that UNSCOP diplomats arrived in Palestine the British sentenced five members of the Jewish underground to death. “The resentment and dismay of Jews in Palestine colored the committee’s entire tour.”³⁸

Ralph Bunche, an influential committee member, met with Menachem Begin in his hideout near the Mediterranean. Bunche was moved by the plight of the Jews and told Begin, “I can understand you. I am also a member of a persecuted minority.” Bunche was an African-American. “A wise Negro can never be an anti-Semite,” he said.³⁹

In July of 1947 another incident occurred which had a profound effect on world public opinion and which bolstered the image of the Irgun in America and worldwide. The famous ship *Exodus 1947*, with 4,500 refugees aboard was forced, upon arrival at the port of Haifa in Palestine, to return to its French port of departure. When the refugees refused to disembark the British took the boat to Hamburg where the people on board were forced to get off and were returned to German soil.⁴⁰ Hillel Kook immediately

³⁸ Peter Grose, Israel in the Mind of America, p. 234.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 235.

⁴⁰ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 9, p. 359.

cabled the President concerning the *Exodus* . He urged the President to take action against the British. Kook stated that he had been in Germany on the day the ship left, full of survivors, including hundreds of children. He wrote that the behavior of the British was contemptible, and appealed again to the United States for repatriation of the D.P.'s and cessation of direct negotiations with the British government.⁴¹

On August 12th the American Jewish Labor Council contacted the President regarding a story which appeared in the Cleveland Plain Dealer eight days earlier. The story asserted that the minister from Syria, Faiz el-Khoury, had stated that "President Truman told me recently that he was tired of the Jews with their Zionism." Was it possible that the President would make such a statement? This was the question posed in the letters from Leo Sack of the American Zionist Emergency Council.⁴²

Charles Ross, secretary to the President, suggested that the State Department should handle the situation which had offended the Zionists. He wrote that "El-Khoury, after being quizzed by the reporter, Bryan, says that President Truman had not used those exact words he quoted. In other words, the President might have said that

⁴¹ Cable from Bergson to Truman dated July 23, 1947, Truman Papers, General File.

⁴² Memorandum from Charles G. Ross, Secretary to the President, to David Niles asking what should be done about the incident; Truman Papers, Official File, August 18, 1947.

he was tired of this Palestine problem and hoped it could have been solved. . . The President should not get in any controversy with El-Khoury. He could deny it, of course, if it came up at the Press conference.”⁴³

President Truman had perhaps, become increasingly irritated by the pressure which the Jews put upon him. “According to the diaries of Henry Wallace, at a period of particular pressure he exclaimed at a cabinet meeting in mid-1946, “If Jesus Christ couldn’t satisfy them here on earth, how the hell am I supposed to?” He added later, “I have no use for them and I don’t care what happens to them.”⁴⁴

The day after the release of the El-Khoury statement Abba Hillel Silver contacted the President’s secretary, Matthew Connolly in a cable in which Silver said, “. . . Would be most happy to hear from you. I will be [at the] Commodore Hotel, New York City beginning Thursday noon, Sailing Saturday morning, Best Wishes. . .”

Below this telegram was handwritten, apparently by Connolly, a big, double-underlined, word NO!⁴⁵ It appears that there was continued hostility between Silver and Connolly, which was reflected

⁴³ Memorandum: David Niles to Charles Ross, August 19, 1947, Truman Papers, Official File.

⁴⁴ Steven L. Spiegel, The Other Arab-Israeli Conflict: Making America’s Middle East Policy, from Truman to Reagan, p. 20.

⁴⁵ Telegram from Silver to Connolly, August 13, 1947, Truman Papers, Official File.

in their correspondence.⁴⁶

Silver was now taking a more militant stand than Ben-Gurion. An Irgun delegation member said, "Silver admitted to us that the Irgun was having 'a more successful psychological effect' on the British and world opinion than the Haganah."⁴⁷ Menachem Begin also stated that Silver told him, "The Irgun will go down in history as a factor without which the State of Israel would not have come into being."⁴⁸

Hillel Kook cabled the President again on August 23, 1947 when the British Government attempted to move 4400 Jews to Hamburg. Kook charged that such action violated the spirit of the Allied cause as well as the Potsdam Agreement.⁴⁹

As the battle heated up over Palestinian Statehood President Truman found himself in a whirlwind of controversy. While espousing a global policy of "containment" he was also concerned with regional implications, particularly oil concerns, as well as with the actual situation in Palestine.

Those opposing Jewish Statehood were found particularly

⁴⁶ Abba Hillel Silver to Matthew J. Connolly, Secretary to the President, August, 15, 1947, Truman Papers Official File.

⁴⁷ Ben Ami, p. 419.

⁴⁸ Menachem Begin, The Revolt, p.316.

⁴⁹ Cable from Bergson to Truman, August 23, 1947, Truman Papers, Official File.

within the State Department. They feared that American relations with the Arabs and with the Moslem world would be irreparably damaged. They believed that such alienation was not affordable since Europe depended upon Arab oil which was essential to the Marshall Plan. American oil companies in the Near East would be hurt. The State Department also urged Truman to resist his desire to help the Jews because of the need for U.S. military access to the area and, particularly, to the base at Dharam in Saudi Arabia. It was feared by Truman's Defense Secretary, James Forrestal, that an energy crisis would result and create the need for four cylinder motor cars in America. It was also feared by the State Department that the Palestine problem would become a permanent irritant in international politics, to which the United States would continually have to contribute both financially and militarily. It was also believed by the opponents of Statehood that a Jewish State was contradictory to American ideals of concerning self determination as well as being in contradiction to the United Nations charter. It was felt that increased tensions between Jews and Gentiles would result in the United States. Further concerns emphasized the possibility of growing extremism in the Arab world and even Arab alliance with the Soviet Union.⁵⁰

Pro-Zionists argued that partition was the fairest solution. Both

⁵⁰ Spiegel, p. 26.

the Arabs and the Jews would have a state, while the holy sites in Jerusalem would be protected by international law. The Jewish refugee problem would be solved as well.⁵¹

Truman hoped that the United Nations would be able to resolve the problem without his personal involvement. He waited for the UNSCOP report before finally endorsing the plan for partition. When he eventually decided to sign on the State Department was not happy. Representatives of their department stated that

Probably no American President has ever disregarded expert advice so thoroughly and with such relish. In acting to establish and later to support the Jewish State in Palestine, Truman ignored the objections of his Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal, and three of his Secretaries of State: James Byrnes, General George Marshall, and Dean Acheson.⁵²

The Irgun Delegation and the New Zionist Organization were firmly opposed to partition. In October, 1947, the Irgun's mouthpiece, "The Voice of Fighting Zion," warned that if the U.N. decided to partition Palestine it would not provide an international force to implement the action, that the British would evacuate the area but retain a blockade by sea, leaving the Jews defenseless and unable to receive reinforcements or arms. On November 16, 1947, "The Voice" broadcasted another warning to Jews in Palestine. It

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Richard H. Curtis, A Changing Image: American Perceptions of the Arab-Israeli Dispute, p. 26.

warned the public of harboring three false illusions. First, that the partition would be implemented by peaceful means; second, that if war broke out in Eretz Israel, the United Nations representatives in Jerusalem would restore peace; and, third, that if the United Nations representatives failed in their mission the Security Council would intervene to stop the war.⁵³

It is essential that the people be called upon to prepare themselves for war and not for repose . . . The creation of even this ghetto inside our Homeland will be carried out amid flames. . . and rivers of blood.⁵⁴

On Saturday, November 27 the United Nations voted thirty-three to thirteen in favor of partitioning Palestine into two states, an Arab State and a Jewish State. The State Department immediately called for a U.S. embargo on weapons to the Middle East. On November 30, 1947, the "Voice of Fighting Zion" said, "The partition of the Homeland is illegal . . . Jerusalem was and will be forever our capital . . . In the war that is surely coming . . . all the Jewish forces will be united."⁵⁵

During the next two weeks members of the Zionist movement congratulated President Truman and thanked him for "the great support" which he had given to the cause. Abba Hillel Silver wrote,

⁵³ Ben Ami, p. 429.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

“You have won a place of distinction in Jewish history.”⁵⁶

Steven Wise congratulated David Niles. “. . . Did you happen to see my telegram --- one of thousands---that went to the “Boss”? It is his achievement and you helped. With love and gratitude, Yours, Stephen.”⁵⁷

While mainstream Zionists were congratulating the President, Hillel Kook (Bergson) was pressing him to take certain steps to prevent imminent tragedy regarding the Palestine situation.⁵⁸ With the outbreak of fighting in Palestine, the State Department remained Britain’s steadfast supporter. The U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem issued a warning to all American citizens that taking part in the fighting would cause them to lose their United States passports.⁵⁹

Even mainstream Zionists were outraged by this measure. On January 24, 1948 Dr. Israel Goldstein, acting chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council, sent a cable to the President in which he wrote, “Distressed and shocked by report of State Department instructions to the American Consul-General in Jerusalem to withdraw passports and threatening to withdraw the citizenship of Americans volunteering to help in the defense of the Jewish community against Arab attacks undertaken in defiance of

⁵⁶ Cable from Abba Hillel Silver to Harry Truman, December 1, 1947, Papers of Harry Truman, General File.

⁵⁷ Wise to Niles, December 5, 1947, Papers of David Niles, Truman Library.

⁵⁸ Bergson to Truman, December 5, 1947, Truman Papers, Official File.

⁵⁹ Ben Ami, p. 430.

United Nations decision. It is incomprehensible that our government which took a leading part in bringing about the United Nations decision should now contemplate punitive measures against those who uphold the policy of the United Nations and of the United States. Such action by the State Department would be contrary to the best American traditions. . .”⁶⁰ Dr. Goldstein requested the President to intervene and rescind the State Department actions.

The State Department also ordered the Treasury to conduct another investigation of Jewish activities to see if funds were being raised in the United States to “smuggle Jewish emigrants unlawfully into Palestine.”⁶¹ The Hebrew Committee for National Liberation had in fact purchased another ship to smuggle Jewish refugees into Palestine. The 4500 ton U.S. Navy landing craft, classified as an LST, was designed for amphibious invasions to land tanks and men. It was decided to name the ship after Ze’ev Jabotinsky. It was given Jabotinsky’s pen name from his days in journalism, the *Altalena*. Members of the Hebrew Committee in the United States formed the Three Star Line shipping company as a cover for the *Altalena*. Funds were lacking however, and the Committee was unable to sail her to Europe. In the meantime the ship was used as a tramp freighter,

⁶⁰ Dr. Israel Goldstein to President Truman, Truman Papers, General File, January 24, 1948

⁶¹ Ben Ami, p. 430.

flying the Panamanian flag.⁶² It hauled potatoes from New Brunswick to Virginia, then went from Virginia to Florida to haul lumber. During the winter of 1947-1948 the *Altalena* visited ports in Cuba, Italy, France and Casablanca before returning to the United States. Hillel Kook wanted to put the ship at the disposal of the Jewish Agency (Haganah) so that it could be used to transport 6000 refugees to Palestine and be anchored at Tel Aviv by the time of the British withdrawal from Palestine on February 1, 1948. Ben Ami would not agree with this plan. However, by February control of the *Altalena* was transferred to the Irgun while U.S. Revisionists remained responsible for the financial details. In March 1948, Ellahu Lankin assumed command and organized a 5000 man fighting force to bring arms to Palestine.

That month Kook petitioned President Truman to arm the Jews so that American forces would not have to be sent to Palestine to quell the fighting. The Irgun Delegation leader requested "100 small airplanes, 250 armored cars and light tanks, 120 small and medium pieces of anti-aircraft and field artillery, 10,000 light and heavy machine guns, 20,000 rifles, 2,000 jeeps, trucks and other transport, 3 corvettes or similar coastal naval craft and ammunition for the above arms."⁶³ Kook offered to pay for the material on a cash - and -

⁶² Lankin, p. 260-263.

⁶³ Summary of a letter from Bergson to the President, March 27, 1948, Truman Papers, General File

carry basis.

The Irgun's *Altalena* was loaded with arms on the French coast, with the complicity of the French government. It was going to carry one of the largest arms shipments ever to be shipped to Palestine. Supposedly, an agreement had been reached between the Irgun and Ben Gurion's Haganah in which eighty per cent of the weapons would be delivered to the Haganah and twenty per cent retained by the Irgun. However, when the ship arrived on the coast of Palestine it was blown up by the Haganah.

Altalena was also an operation organized by this group of Hillel Kook in France. And especially by a man who worked with this group by the name of Ariel, Shmuel Ariel. . . Ariel had excellent relations with the French government. And by his connections with the French Army, . . . especially with the French Foreign Minister, George Bideau. . . he concluded on behalf of the Irgun, a treaty with the French government for cooperation, cooperation with the aim of supporting the establishment of a Jewish state in Israel. And the first operation in this direction was the organization of this ship, *Altalena*. It was a ship, a rescue ship, with some few thousands of Jewish refugees, young refugees, who have been interested to come to Israel and serve in the Israeli army in this war with the Arabs. And the French army decided to give it a pretty large quantity of arms. This was *Altalena*.⁶⁴

When asked if there was a deal made between the Irgun and Ben Gurion former Israeli Prime Minister, Shamir, replied

⁶⁴ Interview with Yitshak Shamir by Joanna Saidel, October 25, 1993, the Knessett, Jerusalem.

ambiguously.

Yes. Yes. But the initiative was of this group. Ariel, Hillel Kook, all these people. But Begin, here in Israel, informed the government that we will bring such a ship to Tel Aviv in the next few weeks or months and. . . they made a bargain about giving . . . a part of the arms, for Jerusalem . . . because Jerusalem was not yet a part of the State of Israel. According to the United Nations decisions Jerusalem was designed to be an international city. And therefore the Irgun proposed to the Israeli government, it was the provisional government at this time, to give the greater part of arms to the army, to the existing army, Zahal, as we call it. And the part of it, twenty per cent or so, for Jerusalem. The government agreed or not agreed? It's not clear yet. It's not clear. Because there have been talks with, not with Ben Gurion himself, the talks have been with various emissaries of Ben Gurion, that was Galali, and there were others. And before the ship arrived here, on the beach of Netanyah, Ben Gurion changed his mind and asked the Irgun to give up to the army, to give to the army, all the arms! The ship with all the arms, with all the contents of the ship! And well, the people (who) have been with Begin have not agreed and therefore came this confrontation. That's it . . . Well, it was a tragedy. It was a tragedy. It could be avoided.⁶⁵

Former Irgun commander and, later, foreign affairs advisor to Menachem Begin, Shmuel Katz, stated that not only did Ben Gurion know all about the agreement but that he attacked the ship specifically to get rid of Menachem Begin.

Oh! No question. He knew all about it . . . Look. I have written in my book, Days of Fire. . . I wrote deliberately that the Altalena was blown up not because we had so many ships, we could do with one ship less, but because Mr. Ben Gurion wanted to kill Begin who was on the ship. And so I expected to be sued or to be tried for libel. . . There were

⁶⁵ Ibid.

some secret meetings in which I was attacked but nobody came forth to say this is libel, this is slander. And the fact is that I explained why I thought so. . . It wasn't such a great ship. It was the best thing we had. It was offered to the government, it wasn't to say that we were going to use it further. The idea was to bring it . . . this was part of the original agreement with them. . . Once it was taken off (the eighty percent), the ship would be presented to the government . . . I have no doubt about it, as I said I wrote about it. There was nobody else on board. The, all of the people except for a handful, and they were killed by the way, I think sixteen boys were killed on that ship, had been taken off. . . Nobody knows whether we got all the arms off at Kfar Vitkin, because that is where we brought the arms. Why did *Altalena* come to Kfar Vitkin? It wasn't an Irgun center. We wanted to bring the boat to Tel Aviv and get a whole lot of Irgun people to help unload it. But the agreement with the Haganah said, No. Kfar Vitkin, which was a center of the Labor party.⁶⁶

Shmuel Katz was in Paris when the *Altalena* was on its way to Palestine. He was in charge of monitoring the progress of the vessel.

I'd remained responsible for the *Altalena* on its way to Palestine but we lost all contact because our radio didn't work . . . I was supposed to . . . remain in Paris and be the contact man with the *Altalena*. But our radio transmitter didn't work . . . (laughs) So we didn't have contact with anybody!⁶⁷

While the Irgun considered the loss of the *Altalena* to be a tragedy some Labor leaders were quite pleased. Abba Eban believes that the action taken by Ben Gurion consolidated power.

The international effects were certainly beneficial because the fight then was Israel had already been established as a

⁶⁶ Interview with Shmuel Katz by Joanna Saidel, Nov. 1993, Tel Aviv.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

state but the problem of recognition was very sticky. And one of the arguments against was that there was no proof that the provisional government of Israel, as we then called it, really had authority, or full authority, and Ben Gurion 's action was really related to the need to secure a minimal degree of recognition with which to live in the international context. You cannot live as, simply as a state with no international connections, and he asserted really the sovereignty of Israel. And it was one of his most dramatic, one of his most courageous, but also one of his most, I would say, poignant actions and after that the provisional government of Israel became respected as the government of Israel because you can't be a government unless you have a monopoly of violence. Once you have two armies in a country then that means that neither of them can be a government. It becomes a Lebanon with militias like now. And his logic was that unless you have the army under a single jurisdiction you couldn't honestly say that you were a state. Now, he even applied that unto his own camp because he also went on and he liquidated the separate Palmach. In other words his obsession with a unified Israel defense force took him into combat both the left and the right. To the right against what he called the Porishim, the seceders, and to the left to the Palmach.⁶⁸

Mr. Katz vehemently disagrees with Abba Eban's analysis.

Ben Gurion's authority in the State was not consolidated because the Altalena was blown up. He was a Prime Minister after all and nobody was attacking his authority. What Abba Eban may have been hinting at is his acceptance of the idea that we had . . . that the Altalena was an act of rebellion against the provisional government which was nonsense! We had an agreement with them. No. You see Abba Eban is a pathological liar. He always was. And if you were to bring Mr. Abba Eban here I would tell him, maybe he doesn't know. He's a liar. He's dishonest and he's a terrific blower to

⁶⁸ Telephone interview with Abba Eban by Joanna Saidel, September 1993, from New York.

his own trumpet.⁶⁹

Menachem Begin survived the *Altalena* and was, heroically, one of the last people off the ship before it blew up. He refused to leave until his men had gone first. The commander of the vessel, Eliahu Lankin, described the incident. He said that amidst the unabating storm of bullets and mortar fire Begin refused to leave the wounded whom he had been tending on board. When Lankin commanded him to disembark, saying, "I am the commander of this ship and I demand that you go ashore at once," Begin replied, "Eliahu . . . What's come over you? Very well, I'll get off as soon as we attend to the wounded. Now calm down."⁷⁰

The decision of the Irgun Delegation to purchase vessels with money raised in the United States had caused animosity between them and the Irgun High Command in Palestine. Menachem Begin remained angry that such astronomical amounts were being spent for a few vessels, still believing that he could finance a small revolution with such a sum. Begin was also disturbed by plans of the Irgun Delegation to set up a provisional government in the diaspora. This appeared to be a challenge to his authority. Ironically, Begin ended up on one of the Irgun Delegation ships, the *Altalena*, and according to his personal advisor, became the primary target of Ben

⁶⁹ Interview with Shmuel Katz by Joanna Saidel, November 1993, Tel Aviv.

⁷⁰ Lankin, p. 340.

Gurion in the Haganah action to blow up the ship at Kfar Vitkin.

While the Irgun Delegation focused on rescue, they were also highly involved in action to stop partition and to promote statehood. The Revisionist Zionists, particularly Benzion Netanyahu, were also relentless in this pursuit. Mr. Netanyahu was able to penetrate the highest offices of the land by his convincing scenario which took the Palestine problem out of the regional arena and placed it on the world agenda. This was extremely important to the change in thinking of certain State Department officials, particularly Loy Henderson. By pursuing this approach Netanyahu was able to address General Eisenhower, and thereby gain access to other sources which became available to him.

The steadfast work of a few individuals, the Revisionist, Netanyahu, and the Irgun Delegation leaders, Kook, Raphaeli, Ben Ami, Eliezer and Merlin, and those who supported these leaders, made remarkable progress in bringing the Jewish plight to the attention of the nation. Their contributions positively affected the final decision on statehood.

REUBEN HECHT: THE EUROPEAN CONTACT

The archives of Dr. Reuben Hecht (1909-1993) are important to the study of Revisionist Zionism in America because they show, clearly, the place which that group held in the overall scheme of Jewish efforts to save victims of the Holocaust. Hecht's papers point to a major lacuna in the historiography of attempts made to rescue Jews from the Holocaust. The scholarly literature on the subject has been dominated by a tendency to emphasize the rescue efforts undertaken by the "establishment" Jewish and Zionist groups, such as the Jewish Agency, the Institute for Illegal Immigration, and the American Joint Distribution Committee, and not those of their rivals, the "dissident" organizations.¹

Reuben Hecht (not to be confused with Ben Hecht) was the European representative of the Irgun Delegation to the United States headed by Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson). Hecht was instrumental in organizing, with Dr. Willi Perl, the *Sakarya* refugee ship which brought more than 2,000 refugees to Palestine in 1940.

In 1944 Hecht came in contact with the American Consul General, Samuel Edison Woods, who introduced Hecht to Jitschak and

¹Introduction, Archives of the Holocaust, Hecht Archive-University of Haifa, p. ix.

Recha Sternbuch. The Sternbuch's acted as the European executive of the Emergency Rescue Committee (Vaad ha-Hatzalah) which was an offshoot of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada (the Agudah). Reuben Hecht became the only Zionist, non-Orthodox member of the Sternbuch group. He worked intimately with them to effect rescue missions, acquire intelligence and establish contacts in Europe. This work had far reaching results, actually affecting the perceptions of Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer SS².

A remarkable aspect of the activist Zionists was their ability, because of their intense convictions, to produce results with an exceptionally small number of individuals. What Ben Hecht was able to do in America through his ad campaign, Reuben Hecht complimented in Europe through his total dedication to the Zionist cause. He forsook his family fortune and business, enduring the wrath of his father (who later stated that Reuben had been correct), in order to further his convictions.

Hecht was born in Antwerp in 1909, the elder of two sons of the prosperous Jacob Hecht, founder of the second largest shipping company on the Rhine. Before the War (c. 1933-1934) Hecht worked in Paris as a volunteer in the office of the Revisionist World

² The Kastner war trial revealed that Hecht and the Sternbuch group believed that Himmler would agree to a deal to trade Jews for easier post-war treatment of Himmler.

Executive, under Jabotinsky. There Hecht proposed a World Organization of State Academicians, “which means of students and faculty members, and so on, all people who are in the academic life, who are on the political line to create a State.”³ As an emblem for this group Hecht proposed the Yellow Badge, which Herzl had designated as “our highest order.” Jabotinsky approved of the emblem, wore it, and named it “Yavneh Ve’Yodefet.” Hecht explained the meaning, “Yavneh is then spirit. Yodefet was the last fortress of Bar Kochba (leader of the Jewish revolt against Rome, 132-135 C.E.) . . . The last fortress. That means a combination of the Yeshiva at that time, of the intellectual Jewish spirit, and of the forces of defense.”⁴

In the late 1930’s Hecht had played a direct role in the propaganda efforts of the Irgun Delegation.

I was mainly involved in public relations, which means to make political propaganda and diplomacy. I was involved to help the ideas of our illegal radio station, I proposed such things, they were afterwards made, different kinds of putting the idea of the Irgun and of Jabotinsky’s movement and the Hebrew Committee as a Jewish national revival for a State clearly to the non-Jewish and also to the Jewish masses.⁵

Later, during the War years, Dr. Hecht came in contact with Samuel Edison Woods, “the most successful U.S. intelligence gatherer

³ Interview of Dr. Reuben Hecht by Prof. Penkover , January 7, 1982, Haifa, Israel, Archives of the Holocaust , Hecht Archive-University of Haifa, Doc. 7, p. 449.

⁴ Ibid, p. 449-450.

⁵ Ibid, p. 468-469.

of World War II,” and developed a close personal relationship with him.⁶ Woods was the American Consul General, based in Berlin from 1937 to 1941 and in Zurich from 1941 to 1945. There he and Hecht collaborated to rescue Allied airmen and to coordinate efforts to rescue Jews. The primary advantage of this relationship for the Revisionist Zionists in America was that it provided direct contact between the Revisionists and the White House. The general method of communication had been to transmit information through the official intelligence center in Bern. This office was headed by Allen Dulles who opposed the Zionists. Samuel Woods had a brother in the cabinet of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Woods was able to directly transmit reports to Roosevelt by a special code which the President personally enciphered. These transmissions included reports on the expulsion of Jews from Switzerland, on the conditions of Jews in concentration camps, and suggestions for the rescue of Jews from Hungary and Bulgaria.

Hecht's work with the Sternbuchs resulted in the recruitment of the former federal president of Switzerland, Jean-Marie Musy, to the Zionist cause. This “Swiss Catholic reactionary antisemite” and personal acquaintance of Himmler convinced him, toward the end of the war, to release Jews, against the command of Hitler. Himmler was led to believe that by doing so a favorable press campaign would

⁶ Ibid, p. xi.

be generated in his favor.

The fact that Reuben Hecht provided sensitive information to the American government is attested to by the American Consul General in a letter to J. Klahr Huddle, Esquire, Counselor of the American Legation in Bern. Therein, Woods asks for confidentiality concerning Hecht's transmissions. Woods writes, "he (Hecht) has given me interesting information on Hungary and Yugoslavia. . . Dr. Hecht mentioned that it was forbidden by law for a Swiss citizen to furnish representatives of a foreign country with information such as that given in his report and that he would be grateful if his identity as author of the report not be revealed to Swiss officials. . ."⁷

That particular information dealt with the expulsion and extermination of Jews from Switzerland. Hecht urged the United States, in correspondence of August 8, 1944, to uphold its support for a Jewish National Home, writing

Is it not enough, that already on May 15, 1944, 260 railway cars crammed full of Jewish children of 2-8 years of age left Hungary for the extermination camps of Auschwitz? . . . The Mandatory Power at present demonstrates to the persecutors that the Jews have no home, no right to live. . . The Jewish people place their confidence in the Government of the United States which can bring them help.

While pleading with the U.S. for help, Hecht worked through

⁷ "Confidential" correspondence from American Consul General Woods to Mr. Huddle, March 13, 1944, Hecht Archive, Doc. 12.

Muesy, for the release of Jews from the camps. When questioned about Muesy's motivation for helping the Zionists Hecht stated,

Muesy's activity was entirely political, the intention was to explain to those German circles, who already understood that the War was lost, that the persecutions of the Jews created a terrible impression abroad, and to tell this Himmler to his face. In addition, to make it clear to him that the catastrophic impression would be a bit less catastrophic if at least now the remaining 600,000-800,000 Jews would be released, who, according to the famous order of Himmler were to be destroyed as well. These figures are produced by the Germans.⁸

In exchange for the release the United States was to provide surety in the form of cash held in escrow and a promise that in exchange for not destroying the camps, as Hitler commanded, Himmler would be guaranteed by the American army "that the camp guards in the Wehrmacht uniform would receive treatment like the Wehrmacht soldiers, and be regarded as war prisoners and not be shot on the spot, but be put before a military court."⁹ Hecht affirmed that this plan was approved by Roswell D. McClelland, special assistant to the American Minister at the American Legation, who said that Eisenhower had also approved of the plan. According to this plan 1200 to 1800 Jews were to be released every week. The first

⁸ Stenographic protocol of the Interrogation of Reuben Hecht at the Kastner trial, April 6, 1954, Hecht Archive, Doc. 18.

⁹ Ibid.

train, transporting 1200 Jews, actually arrived in Kreuzningen on February 9, 1945. Due to sabotage of the plan no additional trains arrived after that.

The money promised to Himmler, 5 million francs, was acquired from the Joint Distribution Committee and the Rescue Committee in America. Hecht also received money from the Irgun Delegation.¹⁰ The money, however, was not the major temptation offered to Himmler. The Zionists believed that he would be more interested in political advantage. Hecht was questioned on this point by advocate Tamir at the Kastner war trial in 1954.

Q. You wanted to mislead Himmler?

A. It is difficult to answer the question.

Q. Did you tell Himmler the truth? Answer my question: Did you wish to mislead him or on the contrary, awake in him illusions and hopes.

A. We certainly had no intention to do Himmler any favor at all.

Q. I did not ask you whether you wanted to do Himmler a favor, why do you evade answering every single question?

A. It is difficult to reply to those questions yes or no.

Q. It is definitely possible to answer yes or no. Answer the question.

A. We wanted to exploit the political situation in order to explain to Himmler that by releasing the Jews he was approaching

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 17.

more his political intentions.

Q. What were his political intentions which he could have approached more?

A. He wanted to get in touch with the West, and for that he needed some point of connection. And proof for this is that the negotiations with the Jews served him in this.

Q. To approach the West, that means to divide between the Allies, between Russia and the West, is it not so?

A. In our opinion no, but in Himmler's opinion, yes.

Q. So you mislead him at least on this point?

A. Yes. We knew from the Americans that this was out of the question, but they agreed that we should give him this answer.

Q. Did you think that you can deceive Himmler?

A. Yes.

Q. And this without expertness in the international political situation?

A. On the basis of the talks with Woods it was possible to assume this. He explained to us that if it is necessary to pay compliments to the devil in order to save Jews, it is allowed to do so. We shall do the reckoning with him later on.

Q. Instead of encouraging with the Nazis a hope of money, you wanted to awake a hope of political advantage?

A. Yes, because in this manner we wanted to solve the entire problem, whereas with money we would have convinced that there would be every time additional expulsions in order to make additional extortions.

Q. And based on what did you believe that those Nazis, those criminals, after they murdered 6 million Jews- would fall into your trap?

A. Because part of the Nazi criminals were in a great panic and were convinced that the War was lost.

Q. Among them was Himmler?

A. Himmler, if I can believe Muesy, understood that the war was lost.

When Hecht was asked, during the same trial, what he believed contributed to bring the most pressure on the United States to help the Jews he credited the Revisionists and Irgun Delegation, saying, "I think that the great pressure was carried out by the large advertising campaign in the press and the mass meetings of the "Hebrew Committee."

In 1982 Professor Monty Penkover interviewed Dr. Reuben Hecht at his office in Haifa. There Hecht reiterated the importance of Sam Woods in the relationship between the Revisionist Zionists in America and the American Administration.

Dr. Hecht: Sam Edison Woods. You know who he is?

Prof. Penkover: Well, I know the whole story.

Dr. Hecht: Officially he was only Consul-General, but in reality he was much more.

Prof. Penkover: Of course, American Intelligence. . . He was a counter against Dulles.¹¹

¹¹ Interview of Prof. Penkover with Dr. Reuben Hecht, Hecht Archive, Doc. 7, p. 383-384.

Hecht explained how and why he avoided Dulles.

Dr. Hecht: He gave a lot of information which he received from me directly to America, not through the channels of Dulles . . . Dulles was I wouldn't say an antisemite, I don't know, but according to Woods, Dulles was not interested in the Jewish problem in Europe, because he thought that this is a nuisance for the Allied war effort.¹²

In other sections of the interview Hecht mentions the three primary American government officials with whom he was concerned.

Dr. Hecht: . . . Now, there were three Americans: McClelland, Dulles, who was an enemy, and Woods who was the strongest, I could even say, practically the only helping force.¹³

Hecht also discussed the attitude of General Eisenhower with Professor Penkover.

Dr. Hecht: . . . And one day we (Hecht and Recha Sternbuch) discussed, at length . . . that to bombard the railway crosspoints and the stations before Auschwitz and the crematoria, could save hundreds of thousands of Jews. Because till they would repair it especially if several times bombarded, we also brought, through McClelland, these recommendations to Eisenhower who was the Chief Commander of the Allies, our request to make bombardments against this and to make bombardment of the gas-ovens, of the crematoria. Because if a few hundred people would have been killed it is nothing against thousands who were murdered every day. But McClelland was not helpful and the answer of Eisenhower was: We are not fighting a Jewish war, this is not in the way of the war effort, and we do not want that the Germans to think we are fighting the war for the Jews. And Eisenhower was not in favor at all, and McClelland was a bureaucrat, and the Americans put it down!¹⁴

¹² Ibid, p. 385, 387

¹³ Ibid, p. 387.

¹⁴Ibid, p. 426.

When questioned about whom Hecht worked with in Europe he said, “I directly was responsible for the Irgun.”¹⁵ The American Consul General, Samuel Edison Woods, was aware of Hecht’s affiliation and was himself a fervent Zionist as a result of Hecht’s indoctrination. Hecht said of Woods, “He was more Zionist than all the Jews in Switzerland together.”¹⁶ Hecht admired and trusted Woods, crediting him with stopping the British blockade of Palestine after Irgun intelligence informed him of the British plan.

Dr. Hecht: Woods believed everything, and he was a very clear Realpolitiker. And what I gave him was forwarded immediately, dispatched to Washington.

Prof. Penkover: Washington, meaning the Secretary of State?

Dr. Hecht: The Secretary of State and maybe also the White House, because later on a thing happened where he directly telephoned after the War to the White House, and he, Woods, achieved to avoid the British blockade of Palestine against arms and immigration ships.¹⁷

Professor Penkover asked Hecht why the the very religious Aguda joined with the New Zionist Organization.¹⁸ Hecht believed that the only possible explanation was that “the Aguda really wanted to save the lives of Jews,” religious or not.

The Revisionist Zionists were also successful in getting

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 395.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 429.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 405; See p. 406 for details of how this was accomplished.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 415 (there seem to be some interchangeable terminology between the NZO and the Irgun Delegation in this interview which is left unexplained).

intelligence concerning the planned Nazi invasion of England.¹⁹ Woods again dispatched the information to America. Hecht helped Woods in other ways. The Revisionist,²⁰ through him, helped to bring American pilots and captains of the Air Force, who were interned in Switzerland, to freedom,²¹ and to prepare suggestions for psychological warfare against the Germans.²² Woods nominated Reuben Hecht for the American Medal of Freedom.

Could it be possible that the long delayed charges against Hillel Kook in the United States (i.e. regarding his alien status) and the casual attitude toward him by the F.B.I. (their reluctance to investigate his activities and status) were, in reality, because he was seen as an asset to the American war effort? Certainly his European connections, Reuben Hecht and Samuel Edison Woods, were providing useful intelligence to the American government.

As of March 16, 1945 the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, J. Edgar Hoover, acknowledged that “no active investigation has been conducted by this bureau concerning Peter Bergson (Hillel Kook) up to this time.”²³ Two years later still no action had been taken despite various efforts to do so. An official

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 421.

²⁰ Hecht mentions both the New Zionist Organization and the Kook group in the interview and does not distinguish between them.

²¹ Ibid, p. 423.

²² Ibid, p. 424.

²³ Secret F.B.I. document from Hoover to Frank J. Wilson, Chief, Secret Service Division, Treasury Dept..

U.S. Government internal security memorandum attests to this fact; “It is to be observed that recent information received by the Bureau reflects that the Board of Immigration Appeals has taken no action with respect to the deportation proceedings against Bergson and the Department has advised that no action is contemplated.”²⁴ A Top Secret F.B.I. document, dated March 5, 1952 further clarifies the status of Bergson. It states, “In March 1947, records of the State Department reveal that Bergson was in New York City attached to the United Nations working on Palestine matters.”²⁵ By August of 1953 Bergson was still residing in the United States and operating a business which he formed in 1950, Middle East Industries, “for the purpose of interesting American industrialists in the development of an industrial Israel and the development of substantial and profitable commerce between the United States, Israel and the Middle East.”²⁶ This memorandum confirmed that “with regard to any connection he may have with the Israeli Government, Bergson advised that in 1948 he had been a member of the Knessett (Parliament) in Israel as a member of the Freedom Party.”²⁷ This memorandum was followed chronologically by an undated letter to the Director of the F.B.I. which read,

²⁴ F.B.I. Office Memorandum from D.M. Ladd to Mr. Strickland, March 13, 1947.

²⁵ Top Secret F.B.I. Document, March 5, 1952, SAC, New York; Director, FBI.

²⁶ Memorandum to the Director, FBI from SAC, New York, August 24, 1953.

²⁷ Ibid.

Bergson expressed a desire to cooperate with the Bureau in any way possible and was most cordial during the interview. In as much as this interview with Bergson failed to disclose any activity on his past which would constitute a possible violation of the Registration Act of 1938, as amended, and since active investigation to date has been negative in this regard, this case be considered closed, UACB.

Kook's fund raising work in America had been essential to the rescue work of Reuben Hecht and William Perl. Kook's group partially funded the *S.S. Sakarya*, the *S.S. Pencho*, and other rescue missions.²⁸ Kook and Hecht worked hand in hand.

The position of Reuben Hecht proved to be convenient for the Irgun Delegation in America in other ways. The Hebrew Committee for National Liberation needed, for their political work, money in France and other places. Reuben Hecht was essential to the movement of these funds. As he explained in the Penkover interview, one day Reuben Hecht was invited by the Ambassador of Santo Domingo to a dinner party. Uneager to attend, he was encouraged to do so by the American Consul General, Woods.

So I came there, and there was a big dinner- table with candle light and everything, and then the Ambassador introduced me and then they drank champagne on (to) the new Honorary Consul in Basel. And I also raised my glass in honour of the new Honorary Consul in Basel. And I looked round, and I didn't find him. At the end, I understood, I even have a letter of Trujillo. . . It was very funny. I had no idea. Hillel Kook forgot to advise me that he arranged for me to be Consul in order to be able to bring gold from

²⁸ Perl, The Four Front War, p.228, 263, 333.

Switzerland to Paris, and to have a free travel possibility. But I didn't know.²⁹

Hecht told Penkover that this appointment was helpful for the Irgun Delegation in America also in the workings of their illegal transport ships, such as the *Ben Hecht*. Hecht's Swiss passport became invaluable for his IZL (Irgun) - organized "illegal immigration" of Jews to Palestine.

He opened an office in Zurich and exploited his shipping contacts to smuggle Jews, including 2,400 of them in 1940 on the S.S. Sakaria. Once in Romania he won the support of the German ambassador, who attempted to stop a ship with "illegals" from sailing.³⁰

Reuben Hecht's position as Consul was, however, challenged by a certain Consul-General, Mr. Mueller.

Dr. Hecht: . . . And then it occurred to me that a certain Goyish businessman in Basel was the Consul-General. Mr. Mueller. And he complained to the Swiss authorities that now a second Consul is there. And that was very interesting. And then I insisted, and he insisted, and thereafter - I have the photocopies - the Swiss Secret Political Police which officially does not exist (If you would have asked in Switzerland you would have thought it doesn't exist.) made a detailed report about me. That I am a very dangerous political agent of the so-called Revisionist terrorist group Irgun; who once with force fought the British. And that it is dangerous to give me this Consulate because I will use it not in the interest of Swiss neutrality. And so on. I have the document. And then, of course, I didn't receive it, and probably I am the only man in the world, in the civilized

²⁹ Penkover interview with Reuben Hecht, Hecht Archive, p. 437.

³⁰ Obituary of Reuben Hecht, The Jerusalem Post International Edition, April 24, 1993, p. 4.

world, who receives an Honorary Consulate, but not the Exequatur of his government.³¹

When asked, in 1982, what the major contribution of the Irgun and people like Hillel Kook made, and what deserved historical emphasis, Hecht replied, "I think that the battle of the Irgun; not I think, Churchill said it, that the Irgun was one of the reasons that the British left Palestine." Hecht also states his belief in the importance and effectiveness of "the propaganda of the Hebrew Committee in America."³²

This information about the Irgun Delegation to America's links in Europe, Reuben Hecht and Samuel Edison Woods, is essential in understanding the far reaching connections and the importance of that group. They were not the ineffectual renegades described and feared by mainstream Jews in the 1940's, but rather were one of the most important, if not the most important, Jewish groups, when judged in retrospect. They were responsible for some of the most effective rescue work, and for the some of the most effective public campaigning to draw attention to the plight of the Jews of Europe and to the lack of governmental initiative to save those Jews. Their European connections, particularly Woods and Hecht, provided vital information which confirmed the rumored atrocities committed by

³¹ Ibid, p. 438-439.

³² Penkover interview, p. 467-468.

the Nazis and thereby attempted to condemn the Roosevelt and Truman administrations for their inability to affect the condition of those Jews.

There was important collaboration between the American Revisionists and Agudat Orthodox Jews of the United States. This was accomplished with the full knowledge of the United States government and shows quite clearly the division between Zionist and non-Zionist representatives in the government. While Dulles and most State Dept. officials were anti-Zionist, the American Consul General was, in Hecht's words, "more Zionist than all the Jews in Switzerland together."

The Hecht Archive also suggests that the idea of bombing the railways and crematorium at Auschwitz, as mentioned in David Wyman's book, Abandonment of the Jews, originated with Hecht and the Sternbuch group. The plan was proposed to McClelland and recommended to Eisenhower but put down by both.

The joint work of Reuben Hecht and the Irgun Delegation in rescuing Jews even affected the former Prime Minister of Israel, Yitshak Shamir. When asked if he knew Hecht he replied,

Reuben Hecht. Yes! . . . Yes! He . . . had very good contacts. And ties with this group in America and he cooperated with them in Europe. He was active in Europe, in Switzerland. . . He was friends with Hillel Kook, a very good friend of him since they had been together maybe in Paris, in France, these years. And, you know . . . there have been some

contacts between me and this group when I was in Djibouti, French colony, where I got the status of a refugee, a political refugee from the government of France because I escaped from a camp of prisoners in Africa where I was imprisoned by the British. Deported from Israel, from Palestine, to Eritrea. And this group helped me to get the . . . right of asylum, of the political refugee and as such refugee I was brought to France, I came to France, by the provision of the French government; and from France I went to Israel a few days after the establishing of the State of Israel. And this group, especially their bureau, their office in Paris, they helped me a lot in getting these facilities and the support of the French government . . . Yes. Yes. And they helped a lot. They helped the Jewish underground. . .³³

Shmuel Katz, Irgun leader who later became a renowned author and journalist, was also familiar with the work of Reuben Hecht. He offered additional information about the reasons for Samuel Edison Woods' access to the White House. When asked if he knew Reuben Hecht, Mr. Katz responded as follows.

Katz: I was very familiar with him. Sure. I knew him for fifty years.

Saidel: Did you know the American Consul General named Samuel Edison Woods?

Katz: I didn't know him but he worked with Hecht. Now, do you know his story?

Saidel: I've read the Hecht archive. Samuel Edison Woods was supposedly an intelligence agent supporting the Zionist movement, I believe.

Katz: Well, I don't know about his supporting the Zionist movement. Maybe he did, but Hecht worked with him. First of all, during the War, when American airmen, after bombing targets in Germany, sometimes had to land in Switzerland and one of Woods' jobs, he was the consul in

³³ Telephone interview with Yitshak Shamir from Tel Aviv, by Joanna Saidel, June 2, 1993.

Zurich at the time, was to try and get them out of Switzerland and back to America and Hecht helped him in this. Subsequently, my indirect contact with Wood was much later, was in 19... end of '47 or '48 when we had decided, you know after the Partition decision at the United Nations the British continued harassing our immigrants, the so called illegal immigrants. And in the Irgun we decided that we would warn the British that if they continued harassing our boats we would sink their boats. We didn't have much chance of sinking many boats but we had a couple of plans. One, and this was something that I was supposed to be supervising, not that I'm a great boat sinker but (laughs) I was supposed to deal with the subject. We had one plan for Shanghai and we had one plan for South, Portsmouth or South Hampton, I don't know which. But at any rate we decided that we would warn the British and because they knew that our warnings were usually serious, that we didn't make warnings in vain because they'd found out in Palestine that when the Irgun warned them of something that it was carried out. And so we decided to send a message, first of all to the British, to warn them. And so I discussed this with Hecht and Hecht gave Wood the warning to pass on to the British. Wood passed it on to Washington because Wood had, Wood although he was only supposed to be a consul, he had direct access to the White House. And, I may think for a moment and remember why he had access. And so a few days later we had a reply. Hecht gave the reply that he had from Wood, that Wood had had from Washington that this warning had been passed on to the British and the British had notified the Americans that they were stopping the harassment. Now, Wood's status with the White House came because he had established, when he was a consul in Munich, before he came to Zurich he was a consul in Munich, and he made contact with one of the German opponents of the Nazis. To get information from him they used . . . to go to the cinema and get seats next to each other and this man would pass on the information to him there and he would pass it on to the States . . . he was giving them some very

important information, including, if I'm not mistaken, the information about the impending invasion of Russia!³⁴

The connection therefore, between the Irgun Delegation to the United States and their representative in Switzerland, Reuben Hecht, proved to be important, not only for the Zionist cause and for the Irgun, but for the American war effort. This contact provided important information to the United States government, helped in the rescue of American airmen, saved a train load of 1200 Jews, and provided a direct contact between the Jewish underground and the White House.

³⁴ Telephone interview with Shmuel Katz from Tel Aviv, by Joanna Saidel, June 10, 1993.

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CHAPTER 9

BEGIN VISITS THE U.S.

In October 1948 the Irgun Delegation attempted to promote the leader of the Irgun High Command, Menachem Begin, in a new light. Instead of freedom fighter it was desirable to portray him as statesman, scholar and friend of the United States. This was done to gain support for Mr. Begin in the election for Prime Minister in Israel. Controversy developed over a plan for him to visit the United States. While the Irgun Delegation formed a reception committee for a dinner in Begin's honor planned for November in New York, a storm of protest broke out among those who considered him a terrorist. This led to a controversy within the United States government whether to allow him into the United States or not.

Begin had the support of important American figures who were affiliated with the Irgun Delegation, such as Louis Bromfield who called Menachem Begin "one of the great and almost legendary figures of our time." Bromfield credited Begin with great successes.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Irgun Zvai Leumi he led one of the most glorious and successful resistance movements in history. A little defenseless community, a people who, in the course of almost two thousand years of dispersion, had lost the art of military defense was transformed under his leadership into a fighting and heroic

nation.¹

Bromfield noted that Begin had been responsible for giving Jews back their dignity and self-respect and the respect of the civilized world. Bromfield told David Niles that the Irgun was responsible for the collapse of the British regime in Palestine.²

Bromfield tried to persuade Mr. Niles that support for Begin was politically the right choice for America.

Today, Mr. Begin heads a strong political movement in Israel dedicated to western concepts of democracy - Tenuat Hecherut (Freedom Movement) - and thus is the logical and natural candidate for Prime Minister in the coming elections in Palestine. He combines in his personality not only the qualities of a military commander and a political leader, but also of a scholar, a lawyer and a speaker of great repute.³

Bromfield stressed the importance of “establishing a mutual understanding and friendship between the United States and the strategically vital State of Israel” and by asking Niles to add his name to the list of Americans who would welcome Mr. Begin to the United States the following month.⁴

In secret State Department correspondence from Under Secretary Lovett to Clark Clifford for President Truman the controversy over admission of Menachem Begin to the United States

¹ Letter of Louis Bromfield to David Niles, October 1948, Niles Papers, Truman Library.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

was discussed. In this confidential file, dated November 12, 1948, Lovett presented Clifford with the pros and cons of granting U. S. visitors visas to Begin and five associates. Lovett wrote that since Begin was

formerly head of the terrorist Irgun Zwai Leumi and now chief of the Hebrew Freedom Movement . . . The Visa Division, Legal Adviser and the Division of Security agree that Begin and associates are mandatorily excluded from admission into the United States under Act of 1918 which lists specific restriction to admission. We have had this point carefully checked and the aforementioned experts agree that the Irgun Zwai Leumi group clearly falls under the provision of this law on several counts. ⁵

Lovett advised Clifford that under the 9th Proviso of this Act, however, the law could be waived by the Commissioner of Immigration, with the consent of the Attorney General, if it was "in the national interest" to do so. "The Department is under considerable pressure to recommend to the Attorney General that Mr. Begin and his associates be permitted to enter this country under the 9th Proviso clause," wrote the Under Secretary. This was also the opinion of the United States representative in Tel Aviv, Mr. McDonald. In a telegram to the State Department, he urged the immediate approval of Begin's visa application. He believed that, while Begin's presence in the United States might offend Jewish organizations, refusal of the

⁵ Secret State Department correspondence from Under Secretary Lovett to Clark Clifford, November 12, 1948, Truman Library, White House Central Files-Confidential.

visa application might embarrassingly involve the United States in Israeli politics.⁶

A national reception committee to welcome Begin had already been put in place. This committee included many well known American figures including nine governors, eleven Congressmen, including five Senators (Green, Awakener, Capper, Magnuson, and Thomas), many judges, educators, mayors, clergymen, and other notable persons.

Louis Bromfield issued invitations to a dinner which was to be held on November 23rd at the Waldorf-Astoria in honor of Menachem Begin. Under Secretary Lovett mentioned this information to Clifford before stating the pros and cons concerning Begin's admission.

Two main points were presented which favored Begin's admission. First, "Mr. Begin is the head of the strongest opposition party in Israel which is also rightist and anti-communist. It is possible that this party may become the controlling one in Israel in which case if we did not grant visa we would be excluding the future Prime Minister of Israel."⁷ Second, many prominent people were urging admission, as well as the American League for a Free Palestine which was the main supporter of the Irgun in the United

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

States.

Five points were presented in opposition to Begin's admission. The first of these was the fact that the Irgun was responsible for the bombing of the King David Hotel. One hundred mostly British government officials were killed in the attack. The Irgun had also taken responsibility for an incident that occurred on July 30, 1947 in which two British Army sergeants were hanged. It was thought, therefore, that there would be a public outcry in Great Britain if Begin were admitted to the States.

The second point against admitting Begin, similarly, was the uneasiness of the British Embassy regarding admission. This fear, Lovett suggested, could be discounted, as the F. B. I. could be alerted in advance.

The third point was that some Americans, including important Zionist groups would feel bitter about the admission. The risk of alienating such groups needed to be considered.

Also, the admission would increase the strain on U. S. - Arab relations. This could be expected because the Irgun called for the inclusion of Transjordan, as well as all of Palestine, within the borders of Israel.

Finally, allowing Begin to enter the United States could serve as an "unfortunate precedent in future visa cases involving terrorist

organizations such as the Stern Gang.”⁸

On November 29, 1948 correspondence appeared in the Letters to the Editor of The New York Times regarding the visit of Menachem Begin to the United States. This piece reminded the editor, whose name had appeared on the list of reception committee members planning the welcoming dinner for Begin at the Waldorf-Astoria, of the terrorist background of the Irgun leader. It recounted what the signers of the letter considered to be the most negative aspects of the controversial leader. It expressed the complaints and urged withdrawal of support for Begin. It posed a number of questions to the editor. The questions confronted the editor with the most infamous acts of the Irgun including the bombing of the King David Hotel, the kidnapping and garroting of two British sergeants and booby trapping their bodies, the alleged massacre of 250 inhabitants of the village of Deir Yassin, and charged that the Irgun Delegation, masquerading under the front of “democracy,” was a totalitarian group, “as reactionary as the fanatical Muslim Brotherhood” which used the funds it acquired in America to buy arms from Soviet Russia. The letter was signed by Rev. Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, former president of Union Theological Seminary and former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, Father John La Farge of New York, well known Catholic editor, and

⁸ Ibid

Rabbi Morris Lazaron of Baltimore, member of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and a director of the American Association for the United Nations

The events which took place in the village of Deir Yassin cast the most ignominious light upon the workings of the Irgun in Palestine of possibly any action taken by them. On April 11, 1948 The New York Times headlines read, "Jews Attack Village of Deir Yassin. Massacre of civilians reported."

Yitshak Ben Ami, Irgun member and activist in America for the Kook group, claimed that the American press portrayed an incorrect image of the events in the Arab village. He claimed that the village had been, since the late 1800's, a hotbed of Arab extremism and was far from the "peaceful little village" described in the Times. Ben Ami also claimed that the Irgun had the support of other Zionist groups, specifically the Haganah, but that they denounced the incident in the heat which followed. Ben Ami had been faced with "attempted forays into our homes from Deir Yassin" when he was in charge of defending Givet Shaul, a Jerusalem suburb, as early as 1936.

We dug out our "illegal" weapons every night and waited, while the Jewish supplementary police repulsed the infiltrators again and again. Months later, we had a defense position in nearby Motza commanded by Hillel Kook, and he often asked my help to transport men to their night duties in Motza. Driving back and forth to Motza from Jerusalem, I spent many hours lying in roadside ditches after ambushes

out of Deir Yassin.⁹

Ben Ami asserted that, together with the Arab village of Lifta, the “civilian population” of Deir Yassin “tried to choke off traffic to and from Jewish Jerusalem whenever trouble was brewing.”¹⁰

Ben Ami stated that the incident was far more involved than described in the Times. Supposedly, in the beginning of April, Iraqi, Jordanian and some European troops had stationed themselves in Arab villages near Jerusalem.

The night of April 2nd, Deir Yassin opened intense fire on the Jewish suburbs of Beit Hakerem and Bait Vegan. The firing lasted all night. For the next several nights running, Haganah and Irgun troops reconnoitered Deir Yassin; by the seventh of April, the Irgun and Lehi commanders had decided to attack and occupy the village. This would discourage further night attacks, help secure the highway to Tel-Aviv and consolidate Hebrew control of the western area of Jerusalem.¹¹

The attackers, lacking the necessary weapons, advanced under instruction not to fire unless necessary, not to pillage or destroy property but only to secure the village. The attack was

. . . preceded by an armored car atop which a loudspeaker began repeating warnings in Arabic to the inhabitants: ‘The forces of the Irgun and Lehi are attacking you. Run toward Ein Karem or seek shelter below the village. We come to chase the foreign forces in your villages.’ The element of surprise had been sacrificed in an attempt to save civilian

⁹ Ben Ami, p. 440.

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid.

lives.¹²

This was followed by a vicious, bloody battle.

Begin's visit to the United States had come before the hemorrhaging within the underground body, which resulted from this incident, could be stopped. The Jewish establishment opposed Begin's visit and the aims of his political movement. Their objections focused on the Deir Yassin issue. On December 4, 1948 their letter was published in a section to the editor of The New York Times.¹³ It was signed by such prominent individuals as Albert Einstein and Hannah Arendt. This general condemnation of Irgun activities specifically focussed on Deir Yassin.

On April 9 (The New York Times), terrorist bands attacked this peaceful village, which was not a military objective in the fighting, killed most of its inhabitants - 240 men, women and children - and kept a few of them alive to parade as captives through the streets of Jerusalem. Most of the Jewish community was horrified at the deed, and the Jewish Agency sent a telegram of apology to King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan. But the terrorists, far from being ashamed of their act, were proud of this massacre, publicized it, widely, and invited all the foreign correspondents present in the country to view the heaped corpses and the general havoc at Deir Yassin.

One of signers of this protest, Hannah Arendt, was a mover and shaker among American Jewish intellectuals. In March 1942 she had worked with a contemporary, Joseph Maier, to form a group

¹² Ibid, p. 441.

¹³ For complete text of this letter see Appendix M.

called Die Jungjudische Gruppe (“the Young Jewish Group”). This group, like Kook’s, called for the creation of a Jewish Army. However, “while the group members considered themselves Zionists, they were very critical of Zionism.”¹⁴ Arendt attacked the Irgun Delegation in her publication, Aufbau, in which, on March 6, 1942, she “called the Revisionists ‘Jewish Fascists’ and asserted that their effort to raise a Jewish Army was only a part of their larger effort to gain control of the Zionist organization for their own ends.”¹⁵

Arendt favored “the establishment of Palestine as part of a postwar British Commonwealth rather than as an autonomous state.”¹⁶ She rejected Revisionist calls for relocating Arab populations, which she considered would require “fascist organization.”¹⁷ By 1944 however, when the atrocities of Europe were fully verified, Arendt said, “The only difference between the Revisionists and the General Zionists today lies in their attitude toward England, and this is not a fundamental political issue.”¹⁸ By 1948 Arendt supported Count Bernadotte’s proposal for a U.N. trusteeship. It was during this period when she opposed Irgun Delegation efforts to bring Menachem Begin to America to gain support for his Herut political party.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Young-Bruehl, Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World, p. 178.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 180.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 183.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 224.

The attack on Deir Yassin evoked deep emotional feelings on both sides. In his memoirs, Menachem Begin indicated that there was more behind the attack on Deir Yassin than the defense of the Jerusalem road, and that the portrayal of the incident in the press was distorted. Begin explained that the village was located at a strategic position.

Dir Yassin, lying some two thousand feet above sea-level, was an important link in the chain of Arab positions enclosing Jerusalem from the West. Through Dir Yassin Arab forces from Ein Kerem and Bethlehem crossed to the Kastel front, whence they attacked Jewish convoys along the only road from Jerusalem to the coast.

Begin refuted the charge that Deir Yassin was not a military objective. He stated that, to the contrary, it was a vital security interest in the War of Independence. The plan, agreed upon by the Haganah, called for the creation of an airstrip in that location.

After the capture of Dir Yassin . . . the Haganah commander in Jerusalem announced that its capture was of no military value and was, indeed, contrary to the general plan for the defense of Jerusalem. We had, to our regret, to refute Mr. Shaltiel with the aid of a letter from - Mr. Shaltiel. Raanan, the Irgun commander in Jerusalem, radioed to us the following letter he had received from the Haganah Regional Commander:

'I learn that you plan an attack on Dir Yassin. I wish to point out that the capture of Dir Yassin and holding it is one stage in our general plan. I have no objection to your carrying out the operation provided you are able to hold the village. If you are unable to do so I warn you against blowing up the village which will result in its inhabitants abandoning it and its ruin and deserted houses being

occupied by foreign forces. This situation will increase our difficulties in the general struggle. A second conquest of the place will involve us in heavy sacrifices. Furthermore, if foreign forces enter the place this will upset the plan . . .'

When we published this letter we ended with those three points after the word 'plan.' The national interest required that we should not reveal what that plan was. Today those three points are superfluous. It can be revealed that in their place in the original letter there came the highly significant words: 'for establishing an airfield.' That airfield was established at Dir Yassin and, for a time, served as the only means of communicating between besieged Jerusalem and the coast.¹⁹

Menachem Begin stated that the village had been warned, as Ben Ami described. Many inhabitants had fled and been unharmed. Once the battle began there were heavy casualties on both sides. Begin contends that the results of the battle were exaggerated by the enemy.

To counteract the loss of Dir Yassin, a village of strategic importance, Arab headquarters at Ramallah broadcast a crude atrocity story, alleging a massacre by Irgun troops of women and children in the village. Certain Jewish officials, fearing the Irgun as political rivals, seized upon this Arab *greuel* propaganda to smear the Irgun. An eminent Rabbi was induced to reprimand the Irgun before he had time to sift the truth. Out of evil, however, good came. This Arab propaganda spread a legend of terror amongst Arabs and Arab troops, who were seized with panic at the mention of Irgun soldiers. The legend was worth half a dozen battalions to the forces of Israel. The "Dir Yassin Massacre" lie is still propagated by Jew-haters all over the world.²⁰

¹⁹ Begin, p. 162-163.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 164, note.

Whatever the truth of the matter, one thing is certain, the descriptions of the incident in the world press destroyed any remaining credibility the Irgun might have had.

Menachem Begin was allowed into the United States despite the outcry against him. On November 30, 1948 The New York World Telegram commented on an announcement which was made at the dinner for Begin at the Waldorf-Astoria. It chronicled the dissolution of the American League for a Free Palestine, the group which Yitshak Ben Ami had directed from 1946 to 1948.

Announcement of the American League, which has been bitterly opposed by leading Zionist groups and condemned by the British government, came last night. Ben Hecht, co-chairman, told 1200 guests at a dinner in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, at which Mr. Begin was guest of honor, that the league's job was done, adding its story "ends at least as nicely as a Jewish story can end. . . Against the calumny of its own people, against the pitiless skulduggeries of British propaganda and against thousand-to-one power of the British army, Irgun fought for the right of Jews to strike back at their destroyers and oppressors."

The year, 1948, marked the end of the separatist action by the Irgun. The effect of that action upon the foundation of the Jewish State is controversial. While some detested the actions of this underground group others considered it the essential ingredient in the Jewish national liberation movement.

The visit of Irgun High Command leader, Menachem Begin, to

the United States came as a fitting close to the activities of the Irgun Delegation in America. They had worked for almost a decade to gain public support for the creation of a Jewish Army, for the rescue of Jewish Holocaust victims, and for the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine. Although their efforts had, at times, been in direct confrontation with Begin, the aims of both branches of the Irgun had remained basically the same. With the dissolution of the Irgun Delegation a new united effort was birthing in which the focus of activity was Israel. There the Irgun was transformed into the a legitimate political party, Herut, which became the heart of the right wing political faction and eventually was voted into power. As party leader, Menachem Begin became the Prime Minister of Israel. Today's Likud party was created as a direct result of Begin's work in the Irgun. It is now led by Benjamin Netanyahu, the son of the Revisionist's New Zionist Organization leader, Benzion.

A QUESTION OF TERMINOLOGY

The term "Revisionist" has, in the course of this investigation, been highly controversial. Persons interviewed were perhaps most emotional, of all topics discussed, over this term and over whom it was applied to. While the term "Revisionist" had been used by numerous literary sources to describe the Irgun Delegation to the United States this definition is questionable. The term itself seems to be ambiguous. Both the application and the denial of this term, as it applied to the Irgun Delegation to the United States, can be defended under varying circumstances. Certainly both the Irgun and the New Zionist Organization derived from the Revisionist movement created by Jabotinsky. However, after the initial break with the World Zionist Organization, these "Revisionist" groups separated, one forming a political party, the other a military arm.

There has also been considerable controversy and error in separating the work of the Irgun Delegation to the United States from the New Zionist Organization of America. The names of these groups have been used interchangeably and incorrectly in source books, encyclopedias, and even intelligence files.

David Wyman is one of the few writers who has correctly

stated that the Irgun Delegation was “not associated with the New Zionist Organization of America, which was the Revisionist Zionist body in the United States.”¹ The Hebrew Committee and its affiliate organizations were, in fact, secretly members of the Irgun, which was the Jewish armed underground in Palestine. Mr. Wyman stated that “while these men constituted a tiny, American - based wing of the Irgun, they did not conduct underground activities in the United States. During the war, they were almost completely isolated from the Irgun in Palestine.”² That is, they did not conduct aggressively militant activities on American soil. They did, however, operate covert activities such as purchasing arms, undertaking rescue missions, buying visas and consulates.

The dilemma of differentiation appears in a letter from Wallace Murray, Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, to the Acting Secretary of State regarding the assassination of Lord Moyne.

. . . the Stern Gang . . . is one of the two principal secret, illegal Jewish military organizations in Palestine, the other being the Irgun Z'vai Leumi . . . Both of these groups are made up of fanatical young Jews who are completely unscrupulous . . . These groups are offshoots of the extreme right-wing of the Zionist movement, the Revisionists or New Zionists. . . ³

¹ Wyman, p. 85.

² Wyman, p. 85.

³ Memorandum from Wallace Murray to the Assistant Secretary of State, Washington, Nov. 8, 1944- Foreign Relations of the United States- 1944, vol.5, p. 634-635.

While Murray was able to identify the various groups, he was unable to differentiate the distinctions between them.

. . . It is difficult to say today wherein the difference between the two groups lie, and, in fact, we have reason to believe that they are no longer distinct organizations, but rather are two parts of one secret terrorist organization which seeks the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine through the overthrow by violent means of the present administration there. ⁴

While members of the Kook group attest to being delegates of the Irgun they deny being Revisionists. Although they were closely tied to the Irgun, they deviated from the Irgun and became, somewhat, an organization unto themselves. Lechi leader, former Israeli Prime Minister Yitshak Shamir, said, "You cannot say that this was a Revisionist movement. It was a very special movement, I would say, that was created by Hillel Kook and his friends."⁵ The confusion over terminology is apparent even here, as Mr. Shamir explains. Although he denies, in the previous statement, that they are Revisionists, he states that they are affiliated with the Revisionist movement.

There have been others, they have been sent to the United States by the Irgun. And the Irgun was, we can say, a certain affiliation of the Revisionist movement. They have been sent to America, Hillel Kook and his friends as delegates of shlihim, that you call in Hebrew, it means

⁴. Ibid.

⁵ Telephone interview with Yitshak Shamir from Tel Aviv, by Joanna Saidel, June 2, 1993.

envoys, by the Irgun. And in this framework of the Irgun, Hillel Kook and his friends have founded the group that was very active in the public world, in the media.”⁶

Dr. Alex Raphaeli, a member of the Irgun delegation to the United States reiterated this view.

Although we considered Jabotinsky our leader and mentor and consulted him as well as other party leaders, we drew a distinction between the party’s view and our own military activities. The public image of the IZL was that it was the military arm of the Revisionist movement, but the truth is that we followed our own independent ways and even came into sharp conflict with Jabotinsky when we failed to accept his suggestions.⁷

Further questions regarding who were Revisionists, and who were not, arose from other sources. When asked whether or not Kook’s group were Revisionists or, rather, a movement unto themselves, author and Foreign Affairs advisor to Menachem Begin, Shmuel Katz stated,

Well, I suppose they became a movement unto themselves, but when we talk of Revisionism, after all you might say that Shamir’s group was also not Revisionist in that sense. Shamir belonged to Lechi and . . . Lechi’s leader, Stern, was in conflict with Jabotinsky. So I don’t know. I wouldn’t say that they were not Revisionists. They were also . . . an offshoot, at least, of Revisionism, very definitely. After all . . . their principle was that there should be a Jewish State in Palestine. Their principle was to save Jews. Their principle was to bring Jews here. At that time what more could

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Dr. Alex Raphaeli, Dream and Action, p. 65-66.

anybody, would anybody need in order to be a Revisionist?⁸

Irgun Delegation member, Dr. Alexe Raphaeli, thinks that the issue of terminology is important and very sensitive. He flatly stated, "We did not consider ourselves Revisionists. Now, that's a very sensitive question."⁹ He had long conversations with Jabotinsky over the issue of control. Jabotinsky often urged the Delegation to work with his political organization.

And there was the answer, and this was the cardinal answer which we in the Irgun felt all these years . . . We felt that Jabotinsky was our spiritual head. He was our logical head. He was. . . Field Marshall of whatever modest forces we had, but we did not consider the military work a political work. We did not want to accept any party or political consideration, right or left.¹⁰

Dr. Raphaeli explained that his group felt, as young people, that they should fight for their independence and protect Jews.

We were very, very small but we were very, very active; and you don't need so many people if you have certain courage and you have certain possibilities and some ideas to do things. And the Irgun did very, very big things. These things they did from (a) military point of view . . . not because we belong to this or other party.¹¹

Jabotinsky was not happy with this approach and continued to

⁸ Telephone interview with Shmuel Katz from Tel Aviv, by Joanna Saidel, June 10, 1993.

⁹ Telephone interview with Dr. Alexe Raphaeli from Jerusalem, by Joanna Saidel, June 15, 1993.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

try to influence Raphaeli in frequent meetings between them in Paris. While Raphaeli completely understood the thinking of the Revisionist party (having been a party member and founder of the Betar movement in the thirties) he, and the rest of the Irgun Delegation, felt that the military work should be separate from the political work.

This was the big discussion and the Revisionists took offense, were very, very aggressive and instead (of participating and helping) they were very critical and felt that we were breaking up the movement, etcetera, but we thought that we were doing military work and not political work.¹²

Dr. Raphaeli stated that, besides the military differences, there were some jealousies and rivalries between the Irgun Delegation leader, Hillel Kook, and the New Zionist Organization leader, Benzion Netanyahu. Raphaeli thought highly of Netanyahu despite their differences.

He was very much admired by me in any case. And with Benzion we worked, he even worked in our office for a little while. But he was a Revisionist, and his mentality, he's a very gifted man, a professor, but we didn't feel that he has military spirit. . .¹³

Why then was Netanyahu so antagonistic toward the Kook group? Raphaeli explains.

Listen. Listen. There are many, many jealousies. Compared

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

with us he was a bit older. He was a professor. We were just youngsters relatively. I mean I was at that time Doctor. I got my doctor(ate) in Heidelberg. But most of the other colleagues were a bit younger than I and didn't have any education. He considered himself important. . . intellectually, maybe that's right, much more important than Hillel or any of the other colleagues. . . ¹⁴

When asked if Hillel Kook would consider himself a Revisionist Raphaeli replied, "if he will hear that you called (his group) Revisionists he will explode! (Laughs.) He will explode but he is, he is exactly, as Netanyahu, emotionally involved. I'm not emotionally involved . . . We are not Revisionists. We were not Revisionists."¹⁵

Dr. Raphaeli agrees that there is a lot of confusion over terminology, and in understanding the differences between these Zionist groups.

Ninety percent of the population in Palestine and abroad, Jews involved in Zionism, considered the Irgun a part of the Revisionist party. . . But this is not the inside truth. This is not the inside truth . . . we're politically not Revisionists. We are a military group acting according to principle (to) liberate the country against the British, protect the Jews wherever they needed physical protection and . . . bring . . . them to Palestine. Period. That's all.¹⁶

Dr. Raphaeli believed that "Revisionists were very good, very loyal, very nice people but this was not their approach. We. . . wanted to put the Jewish problem on the agenda of the world, of the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

international agenda.”¹⁷

The Revisionist New Zionist Organization also aimed at putting the Jewish problem, particularly the British problem, on the agenda, as well as, in the early years, campaigning for a Jewish Army. Their methods included mass campaigning, nationwide advertising, presentation of their views in publications, such as Zionews, and infiltration into the Congress, Army, Navy, and the administration.

Hillel Kook spoke about the Irgun and the Revisionist party. He stated that the Irgun operated independently from the party.

I knew the Revisionist hierarchy because we had to be in touch with them. They were the only party who supported us on an organized basis. This doesn't contradict what I said to you. We were independent. You can receive support from somebody and not be controlled by them. Begin, when he came out of the underground and formed the Herut Party, did not want to include the Revisionists. He did not want to meet the delegation of the Revisionist leadership.¹⁸

Despite the fact that the Revisionists and the Irgun worked separately it should be remembered that their mutual leader, Jabotinsky, personally called both the New Zionist Organization leader, Benzion Netanyahu,¹⁹ and the Irgun Delegation leader, Hillel Kook, to campaign for support in America. Kook testified to the fact that Jabotinsky had personally requested his assistance.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Interview of Hillel Kook by M. Kaufman, Oct. 27, 1981, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Oral History Division, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, p.6.

¹⁹ Jabotinsky's request for Netanyahu to come to the States is documented in chapter two, "Revisionist Zionism Comes to America."

In '39 the war broke out. Jabotinsky decided to go to London . . . I wanted to go back to Palestine. Jabotinsky told me not to go. He said . . . The only place to do something is among the great American Jewry. . . .²⁰

Kook came to the United States shortly before Jabotinsky died in 1940. Kook agreed with Netanyahu's assessment that Jabotinsky was a broken man because he had failed to mobilize American Jewry. However, Kook did not mention the successes that Netanyahu and the NZO had achieved with Jabotinsky during the campaign that spring and summer. To the contrary, Kook contends that Jabotinsky "took over a delegation of about five members of what they call the presidency of the NZO with him . . . to move to the United States and mobilize American Jewry. And they failed miserably."²¹

Kook claims that there was some joint activity between the two groups to raise funds; "It was the only sort of joint activity that was organized by the Irgun and the Revisionists. It was an open delegation . . . It was headed by Colonel John Henry Patterson . . . and Robert Briscoe."²²

For various reasons the two organizations drifted apart. The Irgun delegation was criticized for establishing an open organization when it was supposed to be working strictly underground.

There was a big fight going on between these guys and the Revisionists. They said, "You have no right to have an

²⁰Kook interview with Kaufman, Ibid, p. 13.

²¹ Ibid, p. 14.

²² Ibid.

organization. You are Irgun people. Irgun is an underground (organization). You cannot be an open organization. It was the first time that the Irgun was in control of an open organization.²³

While Benzion Netanyahu stated that he joined the Kook group briefly after Jabotinsky's death, Hillel Kook stated the same thing in reverse.

In New York, under the shock of his death and the shock of the war, and the very desperate situation all around, and being cut off from the Irgun, we as a group agreed that I should become a member of the 'nesiut' (executive) of the Revisionist Party. So, when I say that I was never a Revisionist it is not true. I was a Revisionist and I was a member of the 'nesiut' sometime between September and November of 1940. After about three or four meetings I saw that we had no common language whatsoever.²⁴

Benzion Netanyahu agreed that he had found little common language with the Irgun delegation when he was a member of the Committee for a Jewish Army.²⁵

Another point of misunderstanding was the relationship between the Irgun in Palestine and the Irgun Delegation. While Menachem Begin was angry that the Delegation wasn't sending funds to the Irgun, Kook felt that the Irgun was non-operative since it had decided not to attack the British during the war.

To the best of my recollection I don't think we sent a single penny to the Irgun here between the time I arrived there,

²³ Ibid, p. 17.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 20.

²⁵ Conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, November 1993.

which was July 1940, and until we sent Ben-Eliezer (1946) As far as we were concerned the Irgun existed only in name. What did the Irgun do? We were the only Irgun that was doing something.²⁶

Confusion over terminology is evident in many sources. The majority of sources writing on the subject have used the terms Irgun and Revisionists interchangeably and therefore incorrectly. This analysis was even apparent in intelligence circles. For example, in a 1943 report from the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) such an error is made. Here the New Zionist Organization is confused with the Irgun Delegation to the United States.

. . . the New Zionist Organization has . . . been vociferous out of all proportion to its actual strength. Its activities in this country are being directed by a delegation of Palestinians, headed by Peter Bergson and including Eri Jabotinsky, son of Vladimir, and Alexander Hadani. . . The Committee for a Jewish Army . . . the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe, the American Resettlement Committee for Uprooted Jewry, and a newest venture, the American Legion for a Free Palestine . . . all of these groups, through interlocking leadership, are Revisionist sponsored and are connected with the New Zionist Organization. . .²⁷

It was not well known in those days that the Kook group was directly affiliated with the Irgun in Palestine, since it promoted itself as an American organization which was not specifically Jewish.

²⁶ Kook interview with Kaufman, p. 28.

²⁷ CIA file, Office of Strategic Services, Foreign Nationality Branch, report No. 160, November 20, 1943, "Aftermath of the American Jewish Conference," p.8-9.

There is some ambiguity here. The Irgun Delegation organizations did in fact operate to rally a diverse following. This non-sectarian appeal made it appear to be different from Jewish mainstream groups because it brought the problems and the campaigns out of a strictly Jewish milieu and integrated them into American society.

We were not a Jewish organization. The Committee for a Jewish Army was an American organization. The first chairman was Pierre Van Passen the writer, who was not a Jew. He was a Zionist but not a Jew. He was very active.²⁸

The Committee for a Jewish Army was only one of the Irgun Delegations organizations which sought non-sectarianism.

. . . this little committee that we had called American Friends of Jewish Palestine which, by the way, was non-sectarian. It was not a Jewish organization, it was an American organization whose chairman was a non-Jew by design, not by accident. Not that we thought there was anything wrong with Jews organizing it, but already in '39 we instinctively didn't see ourselves as a body functioning within the American Jewish community on a Jewish basis. The decision was that this had to be an effort to mobilize the sympathy not only of the American Jews but also of the American people for our Zionist aspirations.²⁹

Such sympathy was, by these efforts, forthcoming from a variety of groups, not only in America but in distant regions of the world. The Irgun Delegation was able to secure the support of "Bible

²⁸ Kook interviewed by Kaufman, p. 36.

²⁹ Kook interview with Kaufman, p. 20.

people,” ideological sympathizers, and supporters of national liberation movements like the Irish.

There were people of Irish descent who hated the British and who liked the idea of another nation wanting to free itself. We were a national liberation movement. We were the first unequivocal formulation of a national liberation movement that followed after war.³⁰

Various other groups also supported Kook’s movement.

Actually we collaborated with, we organized, we helped the Indians because we had more support. Later on, when we had quite a bit of support, we helped the Koreans. Syngman Rhee was on our payroll. We used to pay him \$50 a month. . . The Indians (Ghandi’s) we helped a great deal. . . We also had the support of the American Indians. . . The main supporter in the House of Representatives was Congressman Will Rogers, who was part Indian, son of the famous Will Rogers.³¹

This outreach to all ethnic peoples of varying religions helped to alleviate interracial tensions in a time when the general assumption was that antisemitism dominated the American scene. During the 1940’s, the general feeling of Americans turned to sympathy for the Jewish plight.

There was tremendous sympathy in America for Zionism in those days. There was some antisemitism in America but I would say the vast majority of the American people, if you could reach them, would sympathize. We had the Bible people, who were very strong, from the Bible belt in the Middle West. From there we mostly got our Senators and Congressmen, and we could hold on to them because they

³⁰ Ibid, p. 22.

³¹ Ibid.

didn't yield.³²

The effort by the Irgun Delegation to present itself as an American, rather than a strictly Jewish, organization was paralleled by the efforts of the New Zionist Organization of America. Rather than trying to appear to be an American organization, they presented the Jewish and Palestine problems in a global scenario. This effort was one of the most successful aspects of their campaign. While administration officials and congressmen were, at first, hesitant to support the Jewish cause, the executive director of the NZO, Benzion Netanyahu, a brilliant and eloquent speaker, was able to present the situation as having far reaching global effects which could alter the post war world. The basis of his thesis was that only a democratic Jewish State in Palestine would be strong and determined enough to stave off the coming surge of Soviet influence which Netanyahu was sure would sweep the region after the war ended. The force with which Professor Netanyahu conveyed this assumption resulted in changing the Palestine problem from a regional problem to a global concern.

While both the Irgun Delegation and the N.Z.O. appealed to Americans on a non-sectarian basis, both were intensely committed to Palestine. It eventually became known that Kook's organizations

³² Ibid, p. 21.

represented the Irgun in America. The O.S.S. recognized this relationship in a 1944 report.

Relationship between the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation and the Irgun in Palestine has not been admitted, but there is sufficient circumstantial evidence to justify the charges that have been made.³³

The Office of Strategic Services also acknowledged the differences between the Revisionist Party and the Irgun in 1944. However, they were still unsure whether or not the two organizations were working together secretly while maintaining that they were divided for tactical purposes.

Their report stated that although there were indications of connections between the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation and the Irgun in Palestine, the Committee denied that it was a Revisionist organization. The Zionist Revisionist Party had recently disassociated itself publicly from the activities of the Bergson committee. The views put forth by the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation represented a departure from certain aspects of the Revisionist program, particularly their view that Transjordan should be considered an inseparable part of a Jewish state in Palestine. While this was the opinion reported in the O.S.S. file, Transjordan was really not a major issue at the time. The main issue

³³ CIA file, Office of Strategic Services, Foreign Nationality Branch, report No. 191, June 6, 1944, "The Hebrew Committee of National Liberation and Its Background," p. 5.

was the policy toward the British.³⁴ The report further remarked that

their militant and nationalistic attitude, particularly with respect to the Arabs, has often led them to be called "Jewish Fascists" and their military organization, the Irgun Z'vai Leumi, has committed acts of violence in Palestine. According to some observers the avowed organizational and ideological separation between the Revisionists and the Committee of National Liberation is designed primarily for tactical purposes, although there may be personality differences involved.³⁵

The supposition that the New Zionist Organization was working secretly with the Hebrew Committee proved to be unfounded; and the characterization of the Revisionists as Fascists was an extreme inaccuracy. The label, Fascists, had been attached to the Revisionists by leftist opponents.³⁶ By June 1944 the OSS was better able to differentiate between the New Zionist Organization leadership and that of the Irgun Delegation.

In the United States an American branch of the Revisionist Party was formed in 1926. It has always been a small group with approximately 500 members. Present president is Colonel Morris Mendelsohn, Executive director and editor of the organization's bimonthly English - language magazine, Zionews, is B. Netanyahu.³⁷ Like its parent in Palestine, this American branch of the New Zionist Organization has in the past refused to cooperate with the general Zionist organizations . . . Recently, since the program of the American Zionists now places its greatest emphasis on the

³⁴ Conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, January 23, 1995, from New York.

³⁵ CIA file, Office of Strategic Services, Foreign Nationality Branch, report No. 191, June 6, 1944, "The Hebrew Committee of National Liberation and Its Background," Ibid, p. 6-7.

³⁶ Conversation with Benzion Netanyahu, January 23, 1995, from New York.

³⁷ Netanyahu was actually head of political activity.

establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine and closely approximates that of the Revisionists. The NZO has at times sought to collaborate.³⁸

Perhaps the major point of contention and division between the New Zionist Organization and the Irgun Delegation to the United States resulted over a point of ideology. While the two groups did not work together they did not attack one another until a policy of Hillel Kook was published which distinguished between "Jews" and "Hebrews." While Kook held this view, it was not accepted by all members of the Irgun delegation. Dr. Alex Raphaeli and Yitshak Ben Ami opposed the idea.³⁹ This distinction was pointed out in an F.B.I. report in 1945. It reported Kook's demand for a democratic Hebrew nation in Palestine.

The Bergson group makes a distinction between Hebrews and Jews. By Hebrews it means those who wish to be Hebrews by nationality, as a part of a nascent nation in Palestine, rather than Hebrews by religion. Jews are properly so called only when referring to their religion, they assert.⁴⁰

By Kook's definition Jews living in Europe as of 1945, together with the Jews of Palestine, constituted the Hebrew nation, and owed allegiance only to that nation. Palestine was the Hebrew nation by

³⁸ Ibid, p. 7.

³⁹ Telephone conversation with Dr. Raphaeli from Jerusalem, by Joanna Saidel, February 1994.

⁴⁰ FBI Confidential Internal Security Report, "Hebrew Committee of National Liberation," January 1, 1945, p. 5-6.

God's will. Palestine was to be "a free state in which the Arabs (who outnumber the Jews in Palestine 3 to 1) and other non-Hebrew residents will share full equality and privileges of citizenship." This ideology distinguished between American Jews and all other Jews. "American Jews are American of Hebrew descent. They are an integral part of the American nation."⁴¹

The O.S.S. likewise reported on Kook's plan for a democratic state in Palestine, reiterating that the terminology used by the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation presented a differentiation between European and Palestinian Jews wishing to live in Palestine and "Jews living in other countries who therefore do not belong to the Hebrew nation. The Committee's ideology divorces the concept of "Jew" and "Hebrew," arguing that the former is a term pertaining to religion, the latter to nationality."⁴² The O.S.S. report compared this ideology to that of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, which maintained that the basis of unity among Jews had to be religion and that Jews should consider themselves nationals of the countries in which they resided. The American Council for Judaism differed, however, in its opposition to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² CIA file, Office of Strategic Services, Foreign Nationality Branch, report No. 191, June 6, 1944, "The Hebrew Committee of National Liberation and Its Background," p. 5.

⁴³ Ibid.

The Zionists maintain that. . . it has never been intended that Jews should owe political allegiance to any country other than to the land of which they are citizens. The relation of the American Jew to the Jewish National Home, according to the Zionists, will not differ from that of any other American toward the land of his ancestors.⁴⁴

This policy was opposed by Kook's foes (and some of his friends) because of its ominous implications for Jews of Europe who wished to remain in their countries of origin, and for American and other Jews who wanted equal rights of return to a Jewish National Home.

Bergson's foes say this distinction has grave implications, because it infers that the Jews of Europe have no claim to citizenship in the countries where they live. Although the Zionists fight for the right of such Jews as wish to go to Palestine to do so, it also believes in and will fight for the right of full and equal citizenship for Jews in any country where they may live. . . Furthermore, they point out that if anyone, Jew or non-Jew, wishes to contribute to the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine he has full opportunity to do so. . .⁴⁵

This issue became the focus of a full fledged attack on the Irgun Delegation by New Zionist Organization leader, Benzion Netanyahu. In the July 1944 issue of his newspaper, Zionews, he wrote an article titled, "The Fiasco of the Hebrew Committee." In this article Netanyahu contended that the Irgun Delegation to the United States had no mandate or authority to represent the Jewish people.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ FBI Confidential file No. 100-61870, New York, 1945, p. 5-6.

They may be able, energetic, and determined. The very fact, however, that a few individuals, relatively unknown in Jewish life, without any authority or mandate from the people, could come and declare themselves the masters of the Hebrew nation, testifies to a mania of grandeur or to some sort of messianic complex that they must have developed during the period of unlimited control which they exerted over the Committees of their creation.⁴⁶

Benzion Netanyahu claimed that Kook's call for a democratic state was based on a "fundamentally false, historically groundless differentiation between Hebrews and Jews." Where, he asked, does one draw the line between Hebrew and Jew? He believed that certain conclusions may be derived from the assumptions of Kook's Hebrew nation policy.

Either we agree that Palestine is not yet a Jewish State, and in consequence no Jews owe allegiance to it, and hence there is no Hebrew Nation; or we agree that Palestine is already the Jewish State, and then even the Jews who were born in Palestine, but are citizens of other countries, must be excluded from the Hebrew Nation. On the other hand, "Arabs and other non-Hebrew residents of the land" - to whom the Hebrew Committee promises "full equality and privileges of citizenship and government" - must be considered members of the Hebrew nation, and I cannot understand why they are called "Arabs and non-Hebrews."⁴⁷

Netanyahu believed that the contentions of Hillel Kook were self contradictory and inconsistent. Such a policy accepted the theory of assimilationists which stated that while their religion is Jewish,

⁴⁶ Zionews, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, July 1944, p. 12.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 13.

their nationality is that of the country in which they live.

I believe, however, that what constituted the main reason for this endorsement of assimilationism by the Hebrew Committee people, came not out of audacity but cowardice, not out of stupidity but “super-smartness.” In short - it was out of opportunism.⁴⁸

Netanyahu stated that just as the Committee was opportunistic with regard to the assimilationists, so it is with regard to the British policy in Palestine. He particularly pointed to the Hebrew Committee policy which stated “that the Hebrew Nation postpones the settlement of the political and boundary problems of Palestine until after victory. Until that time we shall cooperate with and assist Great Britain as the Mandatory for Palestine.”⁴⁹ Netanyahu believed that the Hebrew Committee disregarded the possibility that the political fate of Palestine could be decided before the war was over, as most political problems would be.⁵⁰

An anti-Zionist body, like the American Jewish Committee, found it necessary to demand, in the midst of the war, that Britain relinquish the mandate - the same demand that had been raised by the New Zionist Organization of America. But the members of the Hebrew Committee would not dare do such a thing. They would not embarrass the mandatory power. They would not fight the White Paper or the Land restrictions, or the other instruments of British policy which are employed for the liquidation of Zionism. They will “cooperate with and assist Great Britain as the mandatory

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 14.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 15-16.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

for Palestine.”⁵¹

The New Zionist leader believed that recognition of the Jewish people in the United Nations was imperative for effecting a solution to the “Jewish problem.” He said, “We, the New Zionists, have raised this demand long before the Committee decided to “adopt” it.” This policy was adopted because the New Zionists believed that such a solution would benefit the world, not only the Jews of Europe. They based it on legal and political facts concerning the recognition of Jewish national minorities, and on the granting of Palestine to the whole Jewish people. They vehemently contested the assertion that the Hebrew nation differed from the Jewish nation. They maintained that the League of Nations had granted national minority rights “to Jews, and not to Hebrews; and the Mandate speaks of the Jewish, and not the Hebrew people.”

As far as we are concerned, the names Hebrews and Jews are synonymous terms. Both are dear to us and we are proud of both. But if a differentiation between the two is attempted, such as that of the Hebrew Committee, which can only strengthen the position of assimilationism, then we shall adhere more adamantly to the name Jews - a name denoting the greatness, the heroism and the suffering of our nation, a name which accompanied us through the darkest corridors of history, a name which our enemies have tried so hard to besmirch, and which as Herzl said, we must turn into a symbol of honor in our future Jewish State.⁵²

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 16.

⁵² Ibid.

These arguments represent the fundamental differences between the New Zionist Organization of America and the Irgun Delegation to the United States. There remains however one other question which has been raised by a former Irgun leader, Shmuel Katz. He, with some ambiguity, questioned whether or not the Kook group was actually sent to the United States by the Irgun at all.

I myself have never found any evidence that they were actually sent there, but according to letters that Raziell, who was, in 1940, the head of the Irgun, wrote to Kook, and these have been published now, and he said, What on earth are you doing, we sent you to get money. So that I take as evidence that he was sent there. ⁵³

Mr. Katz explained that Hillel Kook had been in London until June 1940 and he was in a committee representing the Irgun in which Katz was a member. Katz was suspicious of Kook's intentions.

I wasn't sure, but I suspected that he was not representing the Irgun. I knew something about the Irgun, I'd been attached to the Irgun before the war. and I thought he was just putting it on. I don't, I still don't know. ⁵⁴

Katz speculated that perhaps Kook was originally asked by Raziell to go to America and that he went from Poland to England instead. He went on to America in June.

My impression is that he had no real business in London, but that his intention was to get to America in the first place and Raziell's letter rather confirms that. What was he doing in America if he wasn't collecting money? So I, there's

⁵³ Interview with Shmuel Katz by Joanna Saidel, November 1993, Tel Aviv.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

no evidence. You see if you talk to these people, they don't admit anything so you can't get to the bottom of it. . . how is it that they started an organization there before Jabotinsky came which had nothing to do with the Irgun? And he didn't worked for the Irgun. The Irgun had no benefit from it at that time.⁵⁵

Irgun Delegation member, Dr. Alex Raphaeli has rebutted Mr. Katz's contentions that there were no documents to support the belief that the Irgun High Command sent the Kook group to America as their emissaries. Raphaeli feels that Mr. Katz's charges are a bit naive. Raphaeli claimed that, in 1939, when the Irgun delegation came to the United States, the Irgun was an underground organization which didn't write such documents. He said that if a command were given it would be in code and that not many open letters of the type that Mr. Katz required would ever have been written, as the British were hunting them everywhere. Dr. Raphaeli explained that while he admired Mr. Katz's intellectual abilities (Mr. Katz recently produced a monumental biography of Ze'ev Jabotinsky) he felt that Mr. Katz was incorrect in stating that Kook's group may not have been sent by the Irgun. Dr. Raphaeli believes that Shmuel Katz's controversy with the Irgun delegation is the result of Mr. Katz's Revisionist leanings. Raphaeli stated that Katz believed the Irgun should be under the control of the party and resented and objected to their independence. These objections, Raphaeli argues,

⁵⁵ Interview with Shmuel Katz by Joanna Saidel, November 1993, Tel Aviv.

have led to Katz's frequent questions, "Where are the documents?" and "Who sent you?" Raphaeli believes that Katz was a political animal, not a military man.

In further defense of his position, Dr. Raphaeli spoke with two members of the Irgun High Command, Aharon Heichmann, Vice-chairman of the Irgun Veterans, and Mr. Benjamin Zeroni, Irgun commander who also participated in Lechi activities.⁵⁶ Dr. Raphaeli told them of Mr. Katz's charges. Raphaeli was told by them that they would testify to the fact that the Irgun did indeed send a delegation (i.e. Kook's group) to America and that they would provide a joint declaration to such effect to this writer.⁵⁷

These documents were forthcoming and confirmed that the Irgun had indeed sent the delegation to the United States. Mr. Heichman and Mr. Zeroni wrote the following.

We would like to take reference to you letter dated November 29, 1993 to Dr. Alex Raphaeli regarding the question whether the Irgun Delegation, which was active in the USA from August 1939 until the end of WWII was indeed dispatched by the command of the IZL and whether there are any documents confirming this decision.

The implication would be that otherwise the delegation also called the "Committee," the "Bergson Group," was a self appointed body not representing the Jewish underground.

As two surviving members of the High Command of the

⁵⁶ Zeroni's activities in Lechi are recounted in Eliav's book, The Wanted.

⁵⁷ Conversation with Dr. Raphaeli from Jerusalem, by Joanna Saidel,, December 12, 1993.

Irgun of that period, we gladly confirm to you that our fighters headed by Mr. Hillel Kook, including Sam Merlin, Y. Ben Ami, A. Ben -Eliezer, and Alex Raphaeli (Nahshon, Hadani) indeed were appointed by the Irgun to be sent to the USA from the different bases of their work in Europe in order to conduct activities leading to the establishment of a Jewish Army, on the way to the creation of a Jewish State, to do the rescue work, saving as many as possible Jewish people from the terror of the Germans and bringing them to Israel.

Though during the World War II the contact between the USA and Palestine was very difficult, the delegation carried out, to the best of their ability, with a lot of initiative and courage this assignment.

Irgun was an underground organization under the law of conspiracy especially in view of the British efforts to arrest and destroy our organization.

Obviously, there was neither protocols nor written instructions, only in special cases contacting members abroad were coded messages used.

Every member of the Irgun who was supposed to be informed knew exactly about the decision of the High Command and who the members of the delegation were.

When the delegation started setting up the national committee for action in America public leaders, especially in the Jewish community, knew exactly the status of this delegation.

Mr. Jabotinsky, the President of NZO, while in the last months of his life, often addressed the delegation in writing and the title addressed was always "The delegation of the IZL."

These letters have been published and appear in the

published archives of the IZL in 1990, Volume 1, #53-#54, p. 111-114.

There is a possibility that some persons involved in political work, for reasons of their own, might try to delegitimize the delegation, however, the publication of the work of the delegation is in numerous books covering recent Jewish history, research work at the universities, have this point absolutely clear in the spirit of the decision of the High Command.

We wish you success in your important work,

Very sincerely yours,
Aharon Heichman (and) Benjamin Zeroni⁵⁸

While both the New Zionist Organization and the Irgun Delegation stemmed from Jabotinsky's Revisionist movement and, therefore, had Revisionist origins, the path of these two groups separated. The New Zionist Organization retained the political characteristics of the Revisionist Party. The Irgun Delegation deviated from Jabotinsky's leadership, though continuing to respect and consult with him, and became an independent military organ which cut its ties to the Party altogether. The antagonism which existed between the New Zionist Organization and the Irgun Delegation was never totally resolved. The Irgun Delegation's decision to act independently, as a military rather than political

⁵⁸ Letter written to Joanna M. Saidel from Mr. Zeroni and Mr. Heichmann.

entity, and, particularly, to establish a democratic, rather than a Jewish, state in Palestine, were the determining factors in Benzion Netanyahu's decision to launch an all out attack on the Irgun Delegation. The term "Revisionist" and its application remain highly controversial within these groups to this day. It should stand that, while originating from the same Revisionist source, the members of the more militant Irgun Delegation to the United States were not Revisionists (i.e. were not participants in the Revisionist political party), in contrast to the members of the New Zionist Organization of America.

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CONCLUSIONS

The Irgun Delegation to the United States and the New Zionist Organization of America had both failures and successes in their efforts to influence American public opinion. Despite their tireless work, they failed to change the circumstances which affected the Jews of Europe.¹ Nevertheless, the Irgun Delegation succeeded in procuring ships and arms for some rescue missions, providing intelligence to the United States government through their contact in Europe, Reuben Hecht, appealing to the public as non-sectarian (rather than as a uniquely Jewish organization), creating the foundations of the Jewish lobby in America, increasing awareness by stirring and challenging the American public, and possibly forestalling an outright pro-Arab foreign policy.

The New Zionist Organization was particularly effective in publicly confronting and challenging the anti-Zionist British policy in Palestine, in exposing the intentions of the British, and in changing the perception of the Palestine problem within American government circles from a regional problem to a global concern.

The achievements of the N.Z.O. and the Irgun Delegation were primarily educational and political. They affected not only the Jewish community in the United States but the entire nation, broadening the

¹ Raphaeli, p. 112.

understanding of the plight of European Jewry and revealing the results of the silence and isolation which surrounded it.

The bitter truth was that the Allies, after great sacrifices, won the war against Nazi Germany, whereas for the Jewish people the doors of Palestine remained closed, the Jews were isolated, and millions perished.²

The Kook and Netanyahu groups can be credited with creating a successful campaign for public support in the United States. Their contributions have been consistently overlooked in American Zionist historiography which generally credits the mainstream Zionist organizations with any successes achieved in the States. It is now evident however, that the work of the Irgun Delegation and the N.Z.O. was actually the precursor of effective mainstream Zionist activity in America in the 1940's. Support for this analysis can be found in the writings of David Wyman, Monty Penkower, Walter Laqueur, Joseph Schectmann, and in the Hecht Archive. Walter Laqueur wrote that the Irgun Delegation, particularly Bergson and Ben Hecht, "organized a public relations campaign. . . which all but overshadowed the activities of the official Zionist movement."³ Editors of the Hecht archive state that "scholarly literature on the subject has been dominated by a tendency to emphasize the rescue efforts undertaken by the "establishment" Jewish and Zionist groups. . . and not those of

² Ibid.

³ Laqueur, p. 551.

their rivals, the “dissident organizations.”⁴ David Wyman praised the Irgun Delegation for their outstanding accomplishments.

As for Jewish groups in this country, the group that was most effective, I don't think there is any question about it if you look at it objectively, was the Bergson group. Which is not to say that other Jewish groups weren't active in trying to publicize and to build political pressure and to get action taken. . . . But, among the groups involved in that, it seems to me that the group that was most effective and the group that was most finely focussed on the issue was the Bergson group.⁵

For their time, both the Irgun Delegation and the New Zionist Organization operated in a highly innovative manner. Launching a nation wide advertisement campaign was considered new and daring.

It was a new dimension. It revolutionized American Jewry. The criticism was: “How dare you write about Jewish things so big?” And we said, “Because they are big issues!” Who says the Jews are a small issue, or the Jews are a small people? We are not pygmies. We are people. It was an innovation also in American terms, by the way. No American organization had ever run a full page ad asking for money. Today now this is everybody's style. Everybody runs ads.⁶

Another extremely important success for the Irgun Delegation and for the New Zionist Organization was the fact that these groups laid the foundations for the creation of the Jewish lobby in America.

⁴ Hecht Archive, p. ix.

⁵ Interview with David Wyman by Joanna Saidel, Canterbury, New Hampshire, August 20, 1993.

⁶ Kook interview with Kaufman, p. 36.

This accomplishment had long term benefits to Israel which exist to this day. The congressional support garnered by these groups was the start of this activity to lobby Washington. Hillel Kook said, "We had close to 200 Congressmen and close to 40 Senators out of a total of 96. It is a lot of power. We were the real originators of the so-called "Jewish Lobby," the pro-Israel lobby. And that kept us alive.⁷ There was a great deal of congressional support for both groups, as well as high level administrative support, for the New Zionist Organization.⁸

When asked whether the Irgun Delegation founded the Jewish lobby in America, the former Prime Minister of Israel, Yitshak Shamir, stated that the Irgun Delegation was extremely important to the creation of the Jewish lobby in America. He stated that, during and after the war, emissaries of the Zionist movement and Jewish world organizations, such as Weizmann and Abba Eban, came to America and to the United Nations and contributed to the creation of the Jewish lobby, but that the Irgun Delegation pioneered the idea.⁹

. . . they (Weizmann, Eban, etc.) have started also a kind of

⁷ Ibid, p. 72.

⁸ This question represents a major point of controversy between the Irgun Delegation and the New Zionist Organization. Both groups claim that they had the majority of Senatorial and Congressional support and that the other group had little or no such support. It appears, in fact, that at one time or another each group had relatively strong support. As time passed some of the initial support gained by the Irgun was lost to the Revisionists simply by mistakes like the premature Bermuda Conference ad.

⁹ Interview with Yitzak Shamir by Joanna Saidel, the Knesset, Jerusalem, October 25, 1993.

Jewish lobby, but I think that Hillel was the pioneer of this idea. The pioneer, the first to create a Jewish lobby. . . he convinced some congressmen for the first time. Some not Jewish congressmen, to help him, to support him. . . this, I think, it was an achievement of the group of Hillel Kook.¹⁰

One of the most remarkable successes of both the Irgun Delegation and the New Zionist Organization was how much they were able to achieve with an almost insignificant number of organization members. The activist role of both the Irgun Delegation and the N.Z.O. forced mainstream Zionist agencies, which had isolated themselves, to reexamine their position, and, eventually, to end their silence. By 1943 the New Zionist Organization and the Irgun Delegation shamed the majority of American Jews into action. "Bergson and his followers remained an annoying, but perhaps healthy, stimulant for American Zionist leaders . . ." ¹¹

Irgun delegation member, Dr. Alex Raphaeli, stated, "At the very least, it would be fair to say that we helped to place the Jewish problem on the American agenda, thereby making it a matter of international concern."¹² This seems to be a very modest self-assessment.

While the war was going on, the Irgun Delegation focussed on the issue of rescue rather than focussing, as some Zionist groups had,

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Aaron Berman, Nazism: The Jews and American Zionism, Ch. 5, "The American Zionist Lobby 1943-1945," p. 131.

¹² Raphaeli, Dream and Action, p. 97.

primarily upon the issue of statehood. The lobbying efforts of the Irgun Delegation in this area were effective in drawing public attention to the atrocities being committed in Europe.

The Bergson group did, for the most part, move their focuses away from the statehood issue, which they also had been working on until we learn about mass annihilation in late 1942. They transferred most of their energies to rescue and, given the limited size and the limited resources they had, they achieved, I think, quite a good deal both in terms of publicizing the issue . . . which was a big problem because the press didn't do it, and then also in terms of lobbying and getting support in Washington . . . ¹³

These rescue efforts during the war also accomplished positive results in Europe. There Reuben Hecht helped to relay intelligence to the White House through the American Council General and Zionist sympathizer, Samuel Edison Woods, to free captured U.S. airmen, to effect actual rescue missions, and to inform the United States government about Axis war plans.

The Irgun Delegation applied enough public and political pressure, particularly after the failed Bermuda Conference, to demand the creation of the War Refugee Board. The Irgun Delegation was one of the main forces that brought the War Refugee Board into existence.

This has been questioned by some historians and I would have to say they're coming at it from a bias point of view. . . the conflict between the Bergson group back then and the

¹³Interview with David Wyman by Joanna Saidel, August 20, 1993, Canterbury, New Hampshire.

main Zionist groups, the Stephen Wise group and the Chaim Weizmann mainline Zionists, that conflict continues on to this day in certain Jewish circles.¹⁴

Hillel Kook commented about the creation of the War Refugee Board by saying, "The War Refugee Board was our biggest achievement and also our biggest failure. Hitler wasn't killing refugees."¹⁵

Menachem Begin commended the work of Hillel Kook. Begin stated, "His ingenuity in keeping a fierce light of publicity upon the Irgun's struggle was an important factor in the success of the revolt."¹⁶

The tragedy of the activities of the Irgun Delegation and the New Zionist Organization is that American mainstream Zionism feared, resented, and, in fact, were jealous of the independent activities of these fiercely independent groups. Had they been able to work together in a concentrated lobbying effort, their power would have been increased dramatically. A united Jewish effort could have drastically altered the outcome of the fate of millions of Jews.

It is my opinion. . . that if the American Jewish leadership, especially the Zionist leadership . . . would not have hindered our activities, let alone joined with us or let us join with them - which we offered and nearly achieved - then probably as many as half the Jews of Europe would have been saved by governmental action . . .¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Kaufman interview with Hillel Kook, October 27, 1981, p. 49.

¹⁶ Begin, *The Revolt*, p. 63, note.

¹⁷ Kook interview with Kaufman, October 27, 1981, p. 48-49.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Irgun Delegation to the United States and of the New Zionist Organization of America was not the outright success of individual campaigns to raise a Jewish Army, to rescue the Jews of Europe, to establish a democratic Hebrew nation in Palestine, to combat the Mandate through anti-British propaganda, lobbying and boycotting. None of these missions was completely successful. Rather the greatest contribution which these organizations made was their constant struggle to place these issues on the American public agenda and, ultimately, onto the global agenda.

Our public relations campaign was very successful, and our movement included . . . a cross-section of America. It was not a Jewish movement. In fact, the Jews were a minority and people from all sections and all walks of life were represented. . .¹⁸

This resulted in a far greater success than could have been achieved by pursuing individual targets, that is, the establishment of the only democracy in the region, the State of Israel. Had the N.Z.O. and Irgun Delegation not been so aggressive, statehood might have failed to come about. Palestine may have remained in British hands or become an Arab entity. A combination of events which includes the outbreak of the war, the extermination of a huge segment of the Jewish population of Europe, and the outcry which ensued from the

¹⁸Raphaeli, p. 112.

publicity efforts of the Irgun Delegation to the United States and the New Zionist Organization of America, culminated in the long sought dream, a Jewish National Home.

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APPENDIX A

PARTIAL LIST OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST, EXPULSIONS AND
MURDER OF, THE JEWS -720 B.C. to 1969 A.D.

- 720 B.C. Sargon makes Samaria an Assyrian province - Mass deportation of Israelites
- 586 B.C. Destruction of Jerusalem - Mass deportation to Babylon
- 411 B.C. Destruction of the temple of the Jewish community at Elephantine
- 348 B.C. Artaxerxes III deports a number of Jews to Hyrcania
- 167 B.C. Antiochus IV outlaws the practice of Judaism and profanes
- 66 B.C. Massacre of the Jews at Alexandria
- 70 C.E. Destruction of Qumran community; Seige of Jerusalem, destruction of temple; Fall of Masada
- 325 C.E. Christian Church formulates its policy toward the Jews: the Jews must continue to exist for the sake of Christianity in seclusion and humiliatian
- 339 C.E. Constantius II prohibits marriage between Jews and Christians and possession of Christian slaves by Jews
- 438 C.E. Thoedosius II *Novellae* against the Jews and heretics
- 455 C.E. Jews of Babylonia forbidden to keep the Sabbath
- 470 C.E. Persecutions by Babylonian authorities
- 525 C.E. End of Jewish kingdom in southern Arabia
- 612 C.E. Severe legal measures against the Jews of Spain
- 628 C.E. Dagobert I expels Jews from Frankish Kingdom
- 632 C.E. Heraclius decrees forced baptism
- 633 C.E. Severe legal measures against the Jews of Spain
- 638 C.E. Jerusalem conquered by the Arabs
- 638 C.E. Severe legal measures against the Jews of Spain
- 694-711 C.E. Jewish religion outlawed in Spain
- 1012 C.E. Expulsion from Mainz
- 1078 C.E. Jerusalem conquered by Seljuks
- 1096 -1099 C.E. First Crusade
- 1096 C.E. Crusaders massacre Jews of Rhineland
- 1099 C.E. Jerusalem conquered by crusaders
- 1144 C.E. Blood Libel at Norwich, England

- 1147-1149 C.E. Second Crusade
- 1171 C.E. Destruction of the Blois community, France
- 1182- 1198 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from France
- 1187 C.E. Jerusalem captured by Saladin
- 1190 C.E. Anti-Jewish riots in England; massacre at York
- 1195-1196 C.E. Anti-Jewish excesses at Speyer and Boppard
(Germany/Austria)
- 1215 C.E. Fourth Lateran Council, Italy, introduces the Jewish Badge
- 1222 C.E. Council of Oxford, England, introduces discriminatory
measures against Jews
- 1235 C.E. Blood Libel at Fulda (Germany/Austria)
- 1236 C.E. Persecutions against Jews in W. France
- 1242 C.E. Burning of Talmud at Paris
- 1244 C.E. Jerusalem captured by the Khwarizims
- 1249 C.E. Innocent IV issues bull against blood libel, Italy
- 1255 C.E. Blood Libel at Lincoln, England
- 1263-1264 C.E. Jews of London sacked
- 1275 C.E. *Statutum de Judaismo*, England
- 1285 C.E. Destruction of Jewish community of Munich, Germany
- 1288 C.E. Jews burned at Troyes, France
- 1290 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from England
- 1298-1299 C.E. Rindfleisch persecutions (Germany/Austria)
- 1306 -1315 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from France
- 1322-1359 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from the Kingdom of France
- 1348 C.E. Black Death Massacres, Spain
- 1348-1349 C.E. Black Death Massacres, France
- 1348-1350 C.E. Black Death Massacres, Germany & Austria
- 1356 C.E. Charles IV grants the Electors the privilege of taxing the
Jews
- 1389 C.E. Massacre of Jewish community at Prague
- 1391 C.E. Massacres and conversions, Spain
- 1399 C.E. Blood libel at Poznan (Poland-Lithuania)
- 1415 C.E. Benedict XIII (Italy) orders censorship of Talmud
- 1420 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Lyons
- 1424 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Cologne
- 1427 C.E. Papal edict prohibits transportation of Jews to Eretz Israel
in ships of Venice and Ancona
- 1435 C.E. Massacre and conversion of Jews of Majorca
- 1439 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Augsburg

- 1452-1453 C.E. John of Capistrano incited persecutions and expulsions of Jews from Germany & Austria
- 1454 C.E. Privileges revoked; riots against Jews in Cracow
- 1473 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Mainz
- 1473 C.E. Marranos of Valladolid and Cordoba massacred
- 1474 C.E. Marranos of Segovia massacred
- 1475 C.E. Blood libel of Trent
- 1480 C.E. Inquisition established in Spain
- 1483 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Warsaw
- 1492 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Sicily
- 1492 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Castile and Aragon
- 1495-1503 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Lithuania
- 1496-1497 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Portugal; mass forced conversion
- 1499 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Nuremberg
- 1506 C.E. Massacre of Marranos in Lisbon
- 1510 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Brandenburg
- 1516 C.E. Eretz Israel conquered by the Turks
- 1519 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Regensburg
- 1531 C.E. Inquisition established in Portugal
- 1541 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Naples
- 1541 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Prague and crown cities
- 1544 C.E. Luther attacks the Jews
- 1550 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Genoa
- 1551 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Bavaria
- 1553 C.E. Burning of Talmud, Italy
- 1554 C.E. Censorship of Hebrew books introduced in Italy
- 1555 C.E. Paul IV orders that Jews be confined to ghettos
- 1556 C.E. Burning of Marranos in Ancona, Italy
- 1567 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from the Republic of Genoa
- 1569 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from the Papal States
- 1584 C.E. Gregory XIII orders compulsory sermons to Jews
- 1593 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Papal States
- 1597 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Milan
- 1614 C.E. Fettmilch's attack upon the Jews of Frankfurt
- 1615 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Worms
- 1624 C.E. Ghetto established at Ferrara, Italy
- 1648-1649 C.E. Chmielnicki massacres (Poland-Lithuania)
- 1649 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Hamburg

- 1655-1656 C.E. Massacres during wars of Poland against Sweden and Russia
- 1670 C.E. Blood libel in Metz, France
- 1670 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Vienna
- 1687 C.E. Jews of Paznan attacked (Poland-Lithuania)
- 1712 C.E. Jews of Sandomierz expelled after blood libel
- 1734-1736 C.E. Attacks by the Haidamacks (Poland-Lithuania)
- 1745-1748 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Prague
- 1750 C.E. Severe legislation against the Jews in Prussia
- 1775 C.E. Anti-Jewish edict of Pius VI, Italy
- 1793 C.E. Attack on the ghetto in Rome
- 1819 C.E. "Hep! Hep!" riots
- 1824 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from the villages of Russia
- 1826-1835 C.E. Velizh blood libel
- 1839 C.E. Entire community of Meshed (Persia) forced to convert to Islam
- 1840 C.E. Damascus blood libel; restoration of Turkish rule in Eretz Q Israel
- 1847 C.E. Anti-Jewish riots in Prussia
- 1848 C.E. Anti -Jewish riots in Austria-Hungary
- 1871-1872 C.E. Attacks on Jews of Rumania
- 1879 C.E. Kutais blood libel
- 1881-1882 C.E. Pogroms sweep southern Russia; beginning of mass emigration of Jews
- 1882 C.E. Tiszaeszlár blood libel
- 1885 CE. Expulsion of Russian refugees
- 1891 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Moscow
- 1891 C.E. Xanten blood libel
- 1894 C.E. Dreyfus trial
- 1895 C.E. Anti-semitic league organized in Rumania
- 1900 C.E. Konitz blood libel, Germany
- 1903 C.E. Pogrom in Kishinev (Russia-Poland)
- 1905 C.E. Pogroms; mass emigration (Russia-Poland)
- 1906 C.E. Pogroms in Russia
- 1909-1910 C.E. Polish boycott against Jews
- 1910 C.E. Expulsion of Jews from Kiev
- 1917 C.E. The British capture Jerusalem
- 1919 C.E. Pogroms in Hungary
- 1919 C.E. Pogroms in Ukraine and Poland

- 1919 C.E. Abolishment of community organization and Jewish institutions in Russia
- 1924 C.E. Economic restrictions on Jews in Poland; attempt to settle Jews in Crimea
- 1929 C.E. Massacres in Hebron and Safed (Arab riots in Jerusalem)
- 1933 C.E. anti-Jewish economic boycott in Germany
- 1935 C.E. Nuremberg Laws deprived all German Jews (i.e. anyone who was one-quarter Jewish blood or more) of rights of citizenship or intermarriage
- 1936 C.E. Pogrom in Przytyk (Poland)
- 1937 C.E. Discrimination against Jews in Polish universities
- 1937 C.E. Anti-Semitic legislation in Rumania
- 1938 C.E. Anti-Jewish economic legislation in Hungary
- 1938 C.E. Pogroms in Vienna; anti-Jewish legislation; Deportations from Austria begin
- 1938 C.E. Kristallnacht; economic ruin of German Jews
- 1938 C.E. Racial legislation in Italy
- 1938 C.E. Many Hungarian Jews lose citizenship
- 1939 C.E. Pogroms in Poland (after Nazi invasion)
- 1939 C.E. Anti-Jewish laws in the Protectorate (Czechoslovakia)
- 1940 C.E. Formation of ghettos in Poland
- 1940 C.E. Discrimination laws of the Vichy regime
- 1940-1945 C.E. A total of 139,000 Jewish victims from the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Scandinavia, Switzerland
- 1941 C.E. Pogroms against Jews in Kaunas and Lvov, massacres by Einsatzgruppen in occupied Russia; expulsions of Jews from the Reich to Poland; first death camp established in Poland at Chelmno
- 1941 C.E. Pogrom in Jassy (Rumania)
- 1941 C.E. Anti-Jewish laws in Slovakia
- 1941 C.E. Jewish emigration from Germany prohibited
- 1941 C.E. Opening of concentration camp at Drancy (France)
- 1941-1944 C.E. 83,000 Jews of France deported from and murdered
- 1942 C.E. Massacres in occupied Russia continue, death camps at Auschwitz, Maidanek and Treblinka begin to function at full capacity; transports from the ghettos to death camps
- 1942-1944 C.E. Mass transports of Jews to Auswitz from Belgium and Holland
- 1943 C.E. Transports from all over Europe bring Jews to death camps

in Poland; Warsaw ghetto revolt; Annihilation of most of the ghettos of Poland and Russia

1943-1944 C.E. 7,500 Italian Jews murdered

1944 C.E. Extermination of Hungarian Jews began

1944-1945 C.E. A total of 557,000 Jewish victims from Rumania, Hungary, Greece, and Yugoslavia

1945 C.E. A total of 125,000 Jews of Germany murdered

1945 C.E. A total of 342,000 Jewish of Austria and Czechoslovakia murdered

1945 C.E. A total of 4,565,000 Jews of Poland murdered

1946 C.E. Pogroms at Kielce and other places of mass emigration

1948 C.E. Jewish culture in U.S.S.R. repressed and intellectuals shot

1956 C.E. Jews of Egypt expelled

1969 C.E. Jews executed in Iraq

The following is the complete text from the Congressional Record of Senator Mead's speech favoring the creation of a Jewish Army.

Congressional Record
Proceedings and debates of the 77th Congress, Second Session

A Jewish Army
Extension of Remarks of
HON. JAMES E. MURRAY
of Montana
In the Senate of the United States
Wednesday, May 6, 1942 (Legislative day April 30, 1942)

Mr. Murray. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the Appendix of the Record a very able address delivered by the distinguished Senator from New York [Mr. Mead] at a dinner given in New York at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel on May 3, 1942, discussing the proposal for the creation of a Jewish Army.

There being no objection, the address was ordered to be printed in the Record, follows:

Pierre Van Paassen belongs to that small group of men to whom America and world democracy will forever be indebted. For Mr. Van Paassen is one of the most distinguished members of that fellowship of journalists who have been trying to arouse us to what has been happening in the world. With sustained eloquence, crusading fervor, desperate urgency, he has been hammering away at us, "that it was later than any of us thought." If we have finally awakened, Mr. Van Paassen has played an important role in that awakening.

But Van Paassen has done much more than to provide us with mere recital of events. He has helped us to understand the real meaning of those events. He recognized long ago that the vast struggle in which we of the United Nations are now engaged, is much more than a battle for spoils. It is more than a clash of empires. Its

roots lie deeper than the megalomania of a Hitler, a Mussolini, or a Japanese war clique. This war, Van Paassen has been telling us for years, is a total war. It is a total war not simply because it covers the earth and the seas and the heavens; it is a total war because it is a death struggle between civilizations; between diametrically opposed conceptions of life, between those who would preserve for all the opportunity to go forward to greater freedom and greater progress, and those who would impose a system of slavery on all mankind. And because it is that kind of total war, the faiths and the hopes and the ideals of men, are weapons no less important than the arms they wield. We need total mobilization of all our spiritual and moral weapons.

It has taken us a long time to develop that conception of total war. Indeed, the fact that we must meet as late as May 1942 to demand the formation of a Jewish army is distressing proof that we have not even yet fully understood that conception. If we did, there would today be in the Middle East, in Palestine, around Suez, a Jewish army fighting proudly and equally with all other peoples in the cause of liberty and freedom.

We have passed through several stages in our thinking about the war. There was a period that will go down in history as the Munich period, when we thought we could safeguard democracy by bargaining with its enemies, by making a deal with tyranny. September 3, 1939, shattered that illusion. On that day the lesson was written in letters of blood for all to see; in a world that had been shrunk to a fraction of its former size by the achievements of science, democracy and Naziism could not live side by side.

But even after that date we persisted in illusions. There were many of us in this country who thought we could defeat the forces of darkness by helping our friends with materials, by providing them with arms with which to smash the common foe. That, indeed, saved democracy from defeat. But it could not give us victory. The Japanese shattered that illusion for us. On December 7, 1941, we finally learned that we could not save ourselves from slavery merely by building the arms for others to use. We, ourselves, had to take up those arms. We, ourselves, had to man the planes and the ships and the tanks we were building. We had to take our place in the fighting ranks of humanity, shoulder to shoulder with all the brave and gallant peoples who had been facing the fury of the Axis attack.

But even at this late hour, our conception of total war is still inadequate. We are still far from complete mobilization of our material resources. We are even further from total mobilization of our moral strength. And by that, I mean simply this: There are throughout the world, in the ranks of the United Nations, on the side of democracy - yes: and among the conquered peoples of Europe - great reservoirs of strength which we are failing to use. There are sources of manpower and materials we are not enlisting in our battle for freedom. There are powerful ideals and values and aspirations, which we are failing fully to utilize. And those faiths and ideals, as I have already suggested, are no less important to us in this war of "faiths and ideals" than the weapons our factories are producing.

For years we made the mistake of trying to compromise with our sworn enemies. We are paying in blood, sweat and tears for that mistake. Today we are committing another grave error. We are failing to use to the full, the energies and loyalties and abilities of all our friends.

For years, we made the mistake of trying to compromise with our democratic ideals. Today we are repeating that mistake. We are not fully mobilizing our moral resources. We are failing to make imaginative and aggressive use of the dynamic power of freedom and equality. We are failing to give to the peoples of the world a ringing and inspiring affirmation, not merely of the things we are fighting against but of the things we are fighting for.

The need for, the very existence of your committee for an army of stateless and Palestinian Jews - a cause to which I am proud to give my fullest support - is eloquent proof of our failure to understand the meaning of total war. I am no military strategist. I have no access to the plans of the Axis general staffs. I don't pretend to understand Hitler's intuitions. But I do know a few plain and simple facts. Hitler is on the edge of the Caucasus attempting a drive to the east. The Japanese are in Burma driving west. Rommel is in Libya heading for Suez. That to me means clearly one thing: That the Axis forces are making a gigantic attempt to converge on the Middle East; that Hitler wants to grasp with his mailed fist that has crushed so many brave peoples the treacherous hand of the Japanese, dripping with the blood of the heroes of Baatan and Singapore, and Java. And I know one other thing: Suez is virtually the last bastion we command between Malta and Australia. Its loss would be a

catastrophe.

Iraq and Iran are among the last remaining sources of oil - the most vital of all commodities in this war of machines. That oil is no less vital for our victory than it would be for Axis fortunes. My business is not prophesy, at least not prophesying the result of military campaigns. But you don't have to be a prophet to realize that the next major theatre of conflict is bound to be the Near and Middle East.

Again let me repeat, I am no military strategist. But it is absolutely obvious that if we were really fighting a total war, we should be mobilizing every single person in that area, every bit of material that is available there. We should be attempting to inspire democracy's friends in the Near East with the unflinching determination, with the unbreakable resolve, to throw back the assault the Axis is preparing to unleash.

Are we doing that? Are we really applying to the Near East the lessons we learned in Singapore, in Crete, in Hong Kong? The existence of your committee for a Jewish Army is the reply to that question. And it is a negative reply.

For the plain facts are that at this very moment there stands in the Near East, 75 miles from Suez, the modern Jewish community of Palestine. A half million strong. A community pulsating with creative energy; possessed of an amazing degree of special skills and abilities; passionately dedicated to the cause of democracy and freedom; aware to a man that its alternatives are the victory of world democracy or death; desperately anxious to fight back against the oppressor who began his ruthless attack on civilization by attacking the Jewish people. Already, Jewish Palestine has made a magnificent contribution to the cause of the United Nations. It has given of itself, of its men and materials far beyond its numbers and size. The heroism of those Jews who fought and died so bravely in Crete, in Greece, in Libya, on the Mediterranean, will ennoble the annals not only of Jewish history, but the pages of world history.

But there are still many tens of thousands of able-bodied Jews in Palestine who clamour for the opportunity to fight in this common battle for civilization. There are tens of thousands of stateless Jews throughout the world who have been given no place in the ranks of the United Nations. Joined together in the ranks of a Jewish army, these people would constitute a military force that would

immeasurably strengthen the position of the United Nations in the Near East. Fighting under the inspiration of their own symbols, they would be raised to a pitch of enthusiasm that would make them a fighting force second to none. Granting the Jews of Palestine equality among the United Nations in this struggle, would inspire oppressed people everywhere. We would be offering living proof of our determination to restore the freedom of which they have been so cruelly robbed.

I do not want to attempt any analysis of the reasons why we have failed to organize the Jews of Palestine into a Jewish army. Surely we should have realized by this time that in total war nothing less than total mobilization of all our men and materials and energies everywhere will suffice to give us victory. Surely we should recognize that to discriminate against the Jews, living in their national homeland, by refusing them the status and dignity we have granted to all other free peoples, is to set aside the sacred principles for which we are fighting.

Our refusal, I fear very much, is a hangover of an earlier period in our thinking and politics. It is a hangover of the attempt to win doubtful friends and to influence wavering people. Today, we can have no patience with such efforts. Less appeasement and more vision, less fear and more courage- these are the urgent needs of the moment. And there, in Palestine, is one vital instance where we can demonstrate such statesmanship and vision and courage.

If, we of the United Nations were to say tonight: "Jews of Palestine. You, who know so well the meaning of persecution and slavery, and who therefore so profoundly appreciate the meaning of freedom and human dignity. You who are so desperately anxious to join in crushing the common enemy of all mankind. We want you to join with us in that struggle. We want you to join, not as you already so magnificently have done, as an anonymous entity, as a people whose name the communiques dare not mention. We want you with us as a full partner in battle and, therefore, as a full partner in freedom. And we want you to unfurl in the society of nations, the Jewish banner, that inspiring symbol which through your glorious work in Palestine, you have made synonymous with courage, with heroism, with unbreakable resolve. We will use every man you can muster. We want every resource you can command. We need every atom of energy you possess."

My friends, if we were to say that to the Jews of Palestine tonight, do you think Adolf Hitler would be very happy? I hardly think so-and for a very simple reason. Such a declaration would mean that we of the United Nations are finally determined never again to repeat the tragedy of "too little and too late." It would mean that we are acting in time to safeguard one of the most valuable bastions in our possession by mobilizing every available man, every available resource for its defense. It would mean that we have finally learned that to win this war, we must mobilize democracy's friends everywhere. It would mean that we have determined to use to the fullest the tremendous dynamic of the democratic ideal. It would mean that we have begun to implement our promises to the oppressed and conquered peoples of the world by granting dignity and equality to all people who are fighting with us in freedom's battle.

That a Jewish army will be organized in the Near East, I have little doubt. I know that military necessity, elementary justice, and simple common sense will ultimately triumph. But will we act in time?

That, in Palestine no less than elsewhere, will determine whether we are doomed to years of devastating and costly conflict or whether we shall go forward, speedily, resolutely, efficiently, to that certain victory on which the future of civilization depends.

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APPENDIX C

Extension of Remarks
of
Hon. James M. Mead
of New York
In the Senate of the United States
Thursday, May 7, 1942

Mr. Mead. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have inserted in the Appendix of the Record a notable address delivered by my distinguished colleague, the junior Senator from Montana [Mr. Murray], at the testimonial dinner for Pierre Van Paassen, sponsored by the Committee for an Army of Palestinian and Stateless Jews, on Sunday evening, May 3, 1942, at the Waldorf - Astoria Hotel, New York City.

There being no objection, the address was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

Mr. Toastmaster, our honored and distinguished guest, Pierre Van, Paassen of the Committee for an Army of Palestinian and Stateless Jews, ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to be here tonight and to have the privilege of taking part in this program. Like all true Americans, I am proud of the fact that I live in a country which possesses the highest measure of freedom and liberty in the world - a country where it is possible for men and women of all races or creeds to freely assemble, as we do here tonight, and express ourselves openly and fearlessly on any subject relating to human liberty and justice.

Today, the eyes and thoughts of all humanity are focused on that cruel and deadly struggle now taking place on the battlefields of Europe and other far-flung areas of the world - a struggle which will determine the future of civilization and of freedom for centuries to come. In this great sanguinary battle which will decide the shape of things for the future there must be no irremediable mistakes; there must be no failure to mobilize to the fullest degree all the ideological foes of Hitler's totalitarian philosophy, wherever they may be found. All the vital forces of the world, wherever they exist, opposed to the pagan doctrines of Hitler, must be mobilized in this fight for human liberty and justice.

When I first heard through the press of the activities of your committee for a Jewish army, I was frankly skeptical of the proposal. To me it seemed improper to suggest an armed force made up of members of a particular race or religion. It did not appear to me to be in harmony with American principles of common citizenship in this free country of ours—a country where our Jewish fellow citizens have always carried their full share of responsibility as Americans, and where they are today carrying out in the fullest measure their share of the war burden. It had seemed to me at first that there should not be any talk of any special Jewish army. But since I have come to study and understand the plan, I can see that a Jewish army composed solely and entirely of Palestinian and stateless Jews can be made a most effective force for the defeat of Hitler's campaign in the Middle East. It is, of course, not contemplated that this army is to be organized in this country. It will mobilize a substantial force of free men, not now organized, in an area where they are needed, men whose intense feelings have been aroused and who will constitute a fighting force to reckon with our enemies.

In this plan I see no intention whatsoever of differentiating, directly or indirectly, between Americans of Jewish and other stocks in their proper participation in the war effort. The plan is to organize those fighting men of Palestine who are now unorganized and who can, under this proposal, be made a very effective factor in the defeat of Hitler. With this understanding of the proposal, I have no hesitation in saying that I am an enthusiastic advocate of such an army.

The United Nations cannot afford to overlook the offer of a middle eastern Jewish army. They cannot ignore a proposal designed to strengthen physically and morally the democratic forces of the world by the creation of a new army of a couple hundred thousand fighting men who have been uncompromising foes of Hitler ever since his ascension to power.

It is easy to see that on purely moral and Christian grounds an indisputable case can be established for the formation of an army made up of Palestinian and stateless Jews. We all know that followers of the Christian faith for years before the outbreak of the war have stood aghast at the barbarous persecution of Jews by the Nazi regime in Germany. Yet, because of the principles of international law and diplomatic relations between countries, they

were unable to do much about it. But now we are engaged in a life-and-death struggle for the preservation of democracy and of Christianity itself, and to insure victory we must mobilize every available force in the world.

These stateless Jews feel bound by the dictates of honor and the preservation of their ideals, to offer themselves in this struggle. It seems clear to me that we in this country should do everything in our power to remove any technical obstacles to the accomplishment of their purpose and the vindication of their honor. This is the least we can do to atone for the years of inaction and idleness during which we permitted Hitler to expand his military power and carry on his inhuman efforts to annihilate both Jewry and Christendom in Germany and mass his forces for a supreme attack against world civilization.

On moral grounds the case for a Jewish army, as I see it, is a case so logical and unanswerable that there can be no basis for questioning it. I will not undertake to pursue this point further.

But wholly aside from a moral basis for the establishment of a Jewish army, as proposed by your committee, there is a selfish reason for such a plan. That selfish reason is that the United Nations needs a Jewish army in the Middle East as part and parcel of a total pattern of world strategy essential to destroy Hitler. It is not necessary to be a military expert to realize that the Jewish army which is here proposed would be a very substantial reinforcement to the armies opposing Hitler in the Middle East. In that theatre of the war there is an absolute need for all the possible manpower that can be mustered to block the advance of the Nazi forces.

In connection with this matter I am thinking always of the main fact that this war must be won and Hitler must be destroyed. It requires only common sense to understand that the military situation today is such that if we are to win, we must put into the field armed forces in the greatest possible number and at the most strategic points. Right where this army will be assembled is one of the most strategic areas of the war. If, therefore, there is such manpower available-manpower that can be depended upon to fight to the last breath of life rather than surrender - why should there be the slightest hesitation to make use of it? This is especially obvious since these armed forces you are proposing to organize are located substantially right in the area involved, and will, therefore, not

require the use of our extremely limited shipping facilities for transportation.

Thus, for selfish reasons alone, we in this country should have undertaken to encourage this idea of a Jewish army if it had not already been proposed.

As the eleventh hour of this desperate global conflict approaches, no time remains for futile discussion. This proposal is a practical one. The Jewish army is not a theory; it is not a vague idea; it is a fact which can be realized if our ally, Great Britain, wills it so. I feel certain that the British people and their military leaders desire this army, and that their recognized political leaders, Churchill and Cripps, will surely approve it.

We in this country find it difficult to understand why there should be any hesitation by the British Government in giving wholehearted approval to the plan of a Jewish army. If it were a matter to be decided by the American people, I know what the decision would be. A plan which proposes that tens of thousands of intrepid young Jews of Palestine and the Middle East should be given an opportunity to oppose Hitler's bloody march toward India and the subjugation of the world would be instantly accepted. If there were a matter to be decided here, this proposed Jewish army would be mobilized without a moment's delay.

My friends, it is my belief that the establishment of this Jewish army, if carried out, will prove to be of great value - yes, a very vital step in the conduct of our total war against the Axis Powers. I wish your committee Godspeed in your efforts, and I give you my full assurance of unqualified support.

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

The Jewish Army
Extension of Remarks
of
Hon. James A. Shanley
of Connecticut
In the House of Representatives
Tuesday, May 12, 1942

Mr. Shanley. Mr. Speaker, under leave to extend my remarks in the Record, I include the address of Alfred A. Strelsin, chairman of the executive board, Committee for a Jewish army, delivered at the Waldorf - Astoria on May 3, 1942.

It gives a vivid story of the movement which all of us who are fighting the Axis ought to know. It speaks for itself:

Honored guests, ladies, and gentlemen, this dinner is a testimonial to Pierre Van Paassen, well-known author, war correspondent and lecturer: A great humanitarian, a fighter for freedoms and the dignity of man. To Pierre Van Paassen, the chairman for the committee for an army of stateless and Palestinian Jews.

This committee is composed of hundreds of leading American men and women of all walk of life, including Congressmen, Senators, and men of high places in the Army and the Navy, who, with their now millions of followers, are urging England to permit the creation of an army of stateless and Palestinian Jews to fight under allied command.

You might ask "why should we in America be concerned with an army in the Near East?" The answer is very simple. The Near East means one of the largest and richest oil areas in the world - Iraq and Iran. The Near East means the pathway to the world's greatest pincer movement - the Near East means the back door to Russia - and the gateway to the Suez Canal; the life line for supplies that keep all our Allies fighting. The Near East means Palestine, the land of religions and the cradle of civilization; the land that now has become one of

the most strategic center points of the war because of its proximity to the Suez Canal - only 75 miles away - the Palestine that Jewish people, with superhuman zeal, sweat, and blood, have in one generation, transformed from an empty desert into a land rich with fine farms, golden orange groves and swiftly growing modern cities.

These Palestinian Jews, who have conquered the soil, the rocks, and all the natural obstacles, who know the terrain and understand guerrilla warfare, together with their stateless and disinherited brethren scattered through the Near East, 200,000 strong, are offering themselves to be organized into an army to protect the Suez Canal. Ordinarily, 200,000 men would not appear to be very important, but today there are only 350,000 Allied soldiers in the entire Near East, an area larger than the United States; and because of the difficulty of transportation, an additional 200,000 men on the scene may be the deciding factor in the most significant battle of the world's greatest struggle. Only today copies arrived in this country of the London Daily Mirror that contain a statement of General Wavell to the effect that the reason they lost the Far East was due to their use of practically untrained soldiers as they dared not further deplete their already inadequate forces of the Near and Middle East by the transfer of a few much - needed divisions from there.

The now stateless Jews were the first to feel the persecutions and sadistic oppression of the brutal Nazis. It is these men who have seen their homes destroyed, their families murdered, their women mutilated, who want to fight these fiendish Huns; men who would fight with a fanaticism that only the experience of such horrors makes possible, and who, knowing their fate if captured, would fight to the death. These people constitute the only manpower available on the spot and with thousands of them army trained, having escaped from the defeated armies of Czechoslovakia, Greece, Yugoslavia, and other unhappy nations, become the men of the hour. With a background, the results of which may decide this war, America must be and is concerned. With our Allies calling upon us for men and materials for the Near East, some 12,000 miles away, and with a recognized shortage of transports and convoys, it becomes important to America that all existing manpower in any section of the world, who are imbued with the spirit of democracy and world freedom, should be utilized.

Yes, we plead with England to permit the creation of this army

so that they, too, may fight for the universal cause of democracy and for the extermination of the verminous Nazi - Fascist menace, in concert with all other people who are fighting for the emancipation of the world. One doesn't have to be devout to feel that there is some sort of religious destiny in the fact that these 200,000 stateless and Palestinian Jews are now available to prevent Hirohito from shaking bloody hands with Hitler. Perhaps the moral law of retribution is about to come into its own.

This dinner marks the closing of the first chapter of our campaign, known as the formative stage. The second chapter will be devoted to making this army idea a reality. Through the use of the press, the radio, and the speakers' platforms, we hope to impress Great Britain with the American public desire to give concrete expression to Churchill's recent statement that this is not a war for territorial controls, nor subordination of people, but for the freedom of the world, the dignity of man, and equality of all races, colors, and creeds - which utterances were so deservedly lauded by the well - known commentator, Upton Close, last Sunday.

We know that the thinking Americans will help us find the financial means with which to do this, and we fervently hope that before long we shall have another dinner - that one to be held in celebration of the accomplished fact.

And now, I have the privilege of introducing the next speaker of the evening, one of the most distinguished citizens of the State of New York, with a defense record that marks him one of America's leading statesmen, whose constant fighting for humanity has indelibly inscribed him in our heart - the Honorable James M. Mead, United States Senator from the great State of New York.

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APPENDIX E

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD
On the Jewish Army

Extension of Remarks of
Hon. Andrew L. Somers of New York
In the House of Representatives
Thursday, May 7, 1942

Mr. Somers of New York. Mr. Speaker, under leave to extend my remarks in the Record, I include an address delivered by Peter Bergson, national director of the Committee for a Jewish Army, at a dinner given at the Waldorf - Astoria Hotel on May 3, 1942:

The President of the United States, in his striving for truth and righteousness, is looking for a name to baptize this war. The need and difficulty in naming the present war stems from the fact that the question, "When did this war start?" remains unanswered.

Pierre Van Paassen, like any prophet and fighter for justice, does not recognize strictly official data and chronology. Before September 1939 there were bloody rehearsals on many theatres of war on the globe - in China, Abyssinia, Spain, and Palestine. Van Paassen watched and understood the meaning of these rehearsals. Through his books, articles, and lectures, he became a herald and prophet of the fight against fascism and Naziism.

We Palestinian Jews have had the arduous task of meeting the spearhead of the fascist and Nazi tyrants in the Middle East long before 1939. We took up weapons in our hands in order to fight a sub - war, provoked and led by Axis agitators and officers and Arab-Nazis like the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem. For three years there raged in Palestine a ruthless campaign which murdered not only Jewish men, women, and children but also British officials and soldiers. We were forced to meet the enemy with rifles and bombs. We who met these Axis vanguards on the hills of Judea and Galilee, in the slums of Jerusalem and Haifa, on the roads of Tel Aviv and Yafa; we who were forced to answer with force the Nazi provocations against the Jews and the British from 1936; we representatives of

this Palestinian youth are here in full dress at a banquet and conference begging the right to continue this fight against Naziism and fascism we started long ago-now, when the whole of humanity is struggling for survival.

This was the era of the Chamberlains and Daladiers, of Munich and Berchesgaden. Appeasement was at its height not only in London and Paris, but also in Cairo and Jerusalem. And then the time came when the world began to awake and recognize its mortal enemies - a world war was on and millions of people died for blunders of their misguided leaders. The weakened democracies are straining every ounce of energy to stem the tide, and yet, the people standing the brunt of the enemy's attack for years before, single - and empty-handed, without friends or support from the big free world around them, are still denied equal opportunity to fulfill their duty in the crusade for the destruction of the now common foe.

And yet the Jews of Palestine today are submitted to the shameful status of "Schutz-Juden" - protected Jews. Use your imagination, free Americans, and try to understand what 100,000 sturdy Palestinian Jews feel, when submitted to forced passivity - have their parents, wives, and children and their country defended by Americans, Englishmen, Poles, Czechs, and Frenchmen - protected Jews, second-grade citizens of God's earth.

So, my colleagues and I came here with a message, a message to a great people , who have been destined to save the world. "Give the Jews of Palestine and those disinherited Jews of the world guns, airplanes, and tanks. Give them a flag-create a Jewish army."

Nothing can express more concisely the differences between the evil of Nazidom and the justice of the United Nations, than the Jewish army on our side of the front.

One of the greatest battles of history was won with the command "England expects every man to do his duty." Every man did his duty, and England became the mightiest sea power in the world. I know of no more concise a form to express the message we brought to this country than those historic words of Nelson. We Said, "We want to do our duty." Two hundred thousand men want to fulfill their duty in the world that was plunged into a frightful, chaotic, and bloody mess, just because so many people failed to fulfill their duties. It is only because this same world has not freed itself of an unjust and futile discrimination that these 200,000 Jews are being

prevented from fulfilling their duty for their people and dignity and human civilization.

In these United States, the land of human liberties and genius, the reception to our cause was as complete as we had dared hope. First, came a symbol of America's greatness, a giant of letters, a brave soldier, and a prophet of his generation - Pierre Van Paassen, Dutch by birth, Canadian on the field of battle, and yet, so completely and cherished an American.

With prophetic clarity he foresaw the trend of future developments. "The Axis' march around the oceans, the conquest by land of Malaya and Singapore, and the pending climatic battle of the Middle East. Then came other great Americans, admirals, generals, statesmen, presidents of universities, and thousands of everyday stout-hearted Americans, who gave us their blessings and support. If I were to return today to my country, and speak to our men there who are eagerly awaiting the call to arms, it would be a message of great cheer and hope that I could bring them from the Committee for a Jewish army, and the many thousands of its active supporters and millions of followers.

Of course our task is not achieved yet, and the Jewish army has not as yet raised its banner on the field of battle. But no task of great historic magnitude, has ever been easily achieved. We have, however, succeeded in putting the Jewish army question on the map, together with the other problems the United Nations will have to face and solve before victory is achieved.

Bringing you here tonight the feelings and sentiments of 100,000 brave and fearless Palestinian Jews, I would like to assure you, Pierre Van Paassen, and all of your colleagues in the fight for a Jewish army, that the army's formation is a foregone conclusion. No power on earth can now prevent the formation of a Jewish army, as no power on earth succeeded to defeat the army of the Yugoslav Chetniks. But it is up to the democratic powers to determine whether the Jewish army will be a strong, well-equipped and trained army, comprising at least 200,000 Jews, who are Hitler's arch enemies and who have no other or better way to fight him, or that this be a guerrilla army that will do its best behind the lines of the Axis hordes.

The youth of Palestine will fight with determination of people who know that: "Dying on one's feet is better than living on one's

knees.” We will fight because out there has grown a generation that has again learned something that Jews have long forgotten, and that is to kill. For generations we have learned to die a multitude of deaths, the fighting Jews of Palestine have learned to kill a ruthless enemy.

Assuring and pledging the readiness of his gallant people to fight to the last, a great leader has appealed to these United States for tools to do the job. America answered the call - 333 tools were given. As a small man of a great and ancient people, I appeal to these United States, and to the same Mr. Churchill to give us the tools, and we will do our job.

Committee for a Jewish Army List

(Membership list as it appears on their official stationery)

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 Burnet Hershey-*Radio Commentator*
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 Rabbi S. Felix Mendelsohn, Chicago, Ill.
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 Rabbi Max Meyer, Flushing, N.Y.
 Karin Michaelis-*Author*
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 B. Netanyahu-*Author*
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 Channing Pollock-*Author*
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 Dr. Irving Shendell, New York, N. Y.
 Repr. John Edward Sheridan, (Pa.)
 Herman Shuinlin-*Producer*
 Rabbi Julius Silberfeld, Newark, N. J.
 Hans Simons, New School of Social Research
 Rabbi M . K. Skinder, New York, N. Y.
 Senator William H. Smathers, (N. J.)
 Repr. Andrew L. Somers, (N. Y.)
 Rabbi Samuel D. Soskin, Ft. Worth, Texas
 Marcus M. Sperber, K. C., Montreal, Canada
 Willard G. Stanton, New York, N. Y.
 Harry Starr-*Attorney*, New York
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 Prof. Kurt G. Stern, Yale University
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 Lowell Thomas-*Radio Commentator*
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 Prof. Paul Tillich, Union Theological Seminary
 Senator Millard E. Tydings (Md.)
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William Zorach-*Sculptor*

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APPENDIX G

List of names attached to the ad "The Bermuda Conference was a Mockery"

Major Gen. Charles J. Bailey
Rear-Admiral Charles S. Butler
Rear-Admiral Richard E. Byrd
Major-Gen. Fox Conner
Major Gen. William Crozler
Major-Gen. Robert C. Davis
Rear-Admiral Ralph Davison
Major-Gen. George B. Duncan
Major-Gen. Charles S. Farnsworth
Brig.-Gen. Robert C. Foy Brig.-Gen. Ira A. Haynes
Admiral A. J. Hepburn
Major-Gen. Roy A. Hoffman
Major-Gen. C.E. Kilbourne
Rear-Admiral C. P. Kindleberger
Rear-Admiral H. E. Lackey
Gen. Edward W. Lewis
Brig.-Gen. Marshall Magruder
Major-Gen. Edw. M. McLachlin, Jr.
Brig.-Gen. George W. Melver
Brig.-Gen. James J. Meade
Admiral O. G. Murfin
Brig.-Gen. J. Watt Page
Brig.-Gen. John F. Preston
Major-Gen. Charles R. Reynolds
Vice-Admiral S. M. Robinson
Rear-Admiral George H. Rock
Major Homer A. Stebbins
Admiral Joseph Strauss
Brig.-Gen. George Vidmer
Vice-Admiral R. R. Waesche
Rear-Admiral Harry Ervin Yarnell
Sen. John H. Bankhead (Ala.)
Sen. Warren Barbour (N. J.)

Sen. Theodore G. Bilbo (Miss.)
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Sen. Albert B. Chandler (Ky.)
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Sen. Carter Glass (Va.)
Sen. Joseph F. Guffey (Pa.)
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Sen. Harley M. Kilgore (W. Va.)
Sen. William Langer (N. Dak.)
Sen. Francis Maloney (Conn.)
Sen. Burnet R. Maybank (S.C.)
Sen. Kenneth McKellar (Tenn.)
Sen. E.H. Moore (Okla.)
Sen. James E. Murray (Mont.)
Sen. Claude Pepper (Florida)
Sen. George L. Radcliffe
Sen. Robert A. Taft (Ohio)
Sen. Elbert D. Thomas (Utah)
Sen. Charles W. Tobey (N. H.)
Sen. Harry S. Truman (Mo.)
Sen. James M. Tunnell (Del.)
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Sen. Charles L. McNary (Ore.)
Sen. James M. Mead (N. Y.)
Sen. Frederick Van Nuys (Ind.)
Sen. Robert F. Wagner (N. Y.)
Sen. David I. Walsh (Mass.)
Sen. Kenneth S. Wherry (Nebr.)
Sen. Alexander Wiley (Wis.)
Hon. Claude G. Bowers
U.S. Ambassador to Chile
Hon. Joseph F. Davies
Former Ambassador to Russia
Hon. Prentiss M. Brown
Administrator, OPA
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Hon. Dave H. Morris
Former U. S. Ambassador to Belgium
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Chairman War Production Board
Hon. Robert R. Nathan
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Hon. Harlod D. Smith
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Hon. Howard McGrath
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Phillip Murray
President, Congress of Industrial Organizations
Sidney Hillman
Gen. Pres. Amalgomated Clothing Workers of America
Louis Adamic
Ben Hecht
Victor M. Ratner

Arturo Toscanini

William Allen White

*And 3,381 other distinguished American leaders from all walks of
life and
from all sections of the country .*

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APPENDIX H

**“Jerusalem Bomb Kills 41 in Attack on British Offices.”
“Zionist Terror Raiders Accused of Blast in King David Hotel.”
The New York Times, July 23, 1946, p. 1.**

Jerusalem, July 22 - An entire six story corner and basement at the southwestern wing of the King David Hotel were destroyed and at least forty - one British, Jewish and Arab Government officials were killed and fifty-three were injured soon after midday when terrorists , believed to belong to either Irgun Z'vai Leumi or the Stern Gang, blew up a large part of the offices of the chief secretary of the Palestine Government.

Prominent Britons, including British Jews, are among the casualties. The dead include eight unidentified bodies, according to the latest semi-official figures, and fifty-two missing persons are buried under a huge pile of debris. They include twelve senior British civil servants and four senior Palestinian civil servants.

I was on the scene, outside the fashionable hotel - a Jerusalem landmark overlooking the Old City - just after the heavy explosions shattered the southwestern corner. Rescue operations had already been begun by British troops and police sweating under the hot July sun. They were bringing out bodies on stretchers, leaving a trail of blood over the rubble.

People standing outside or just entering or leaving the building were among the casualties. Postmaster General Gerald Donald Kennedy was killed outside the southern wing. The Superintendent of Police, Kenneth Page Hadingham, was badly injured. Richard Mower, correspondent of The New York Post, suffered a leg fracture.

The corner was destroyed by a heavy charge of gelignite planted in the basement by four or five armed gunmen. The six floors included a well known basement cafe called La Regence and consisted of thirty or thirty-five rooms, mostly occupied by the chief secretary's offices. British Army headquarters has the entire top floor of the hotel and only a small section is situated at the southwestern corner. This explains the comparatively small casualties among the British military.

The first detonation occurred at about 12:10 P.M. when a small

smoke bomb exploded near a parked automobile on Julian's Way about fifty yards south of the hotel. It was intended to hold up all cars. Then came several shots from automatic guns.

The second explosion came almost immediately as a man dressed in Arab clothing alighted from a blue limousine and threw a small grenade along a lane on the northern end of the hotel. A military sentry fired at him and the man threw away a submachine gun and limped to the car, which sped off toward the Jaffa Gate - one of the main gates of the walled Old City. The car was found abandoned later at the foot of the Tower of David, not far from the district police headquarters.

Five minutes later came a third, shattering explosion. It was preceded by a mysterious telephone warning to the hotel's switchboard operator by a woman caller who said: "Tell everyone to leave the hotel. It is going to blow up in a few minutes."

A few minutes before the third detonation a truck drove down the sunken driveway at the northern end of the hotel and four or five men jumped out at the service entrance to the kitchen. They assembled all the hotel staff-cooks, waiters and kitchen boys - below the stairs at gunpoint as one man laid several milk cans full of explosives with fuses, wires and detonators. Then the men dashed off and the hotel staff fought to get out at all the exits.

An eyewitness, Maj. Eric Merrill, army public-relations officer who was in the building opposite the hotel, told me: "First there was a great explosion. Then the southwestern corner of the hotel seemed to bulge. It collapsed with a great roar and a huge column of brown-gray smoke billowed up."

A number of Government officials, typists and women clerks who had been standing at their office windows peered out to seek the causes of the first two explosions were trapped and hurtled out as the third went off. E.W. Keys, assistant secretary, was hurled clear across the road into the wall of the W.M.C.A. gymnasium. He was killed.

Men and women staggered from the hotel, dazed from shock, their faces covered with white dust and many streaked with blood from head wounds. Others unable to walk were being helped. Government employees, British military men, messenger boys and hotel guests came out in a long stream. A passing bus was blown off course and every passenger was injured.

The Deputy High Commissioner, Sir John Valentine Shaw, was sitting in his office at the southeastern corner of the hotel when the explosion occurred. He was uninjured, immediately he assumed charge of the rescue work, directing troops, police officers and plainclothes men. A few minutes later the inspector general of the police, Col. W. N. Gray, and other high-military officers joined him.

Executives of the Jewish Agency and the National Council of Palestine Jews issued a statement expressing horror "at the dastardly crime perpetrated by the gang of desperadoes." After expressing sympathy to the victims' families, the statement added: "Jews in Palestine are called upon to rise up against these abominable outrages." This may herald active efforts by responsible Jewish institutions to combat and liquidate reckless terrorist groups.

A detachment of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders arrived with picks, shovels, acetylene blow-torches, portable cranes and first-aid kits exactly fifteen minutes after the explosion. They began clearing the wreckage. At one crevice beneath a twenty-foot pile of wreckage, there was moaning. One man was brought out, followed by two others.

Police worked unceasingly to seek the culprits. I heard orders crackling and snapping over the short-wave police radio. Commands were issued and patrol trucks and armored cars dashed to the scene. Anti-terrorist sirens wailed and halted all traffic. Police cars with loudspeakers went around announcing complete curfew in the whole municipal area of Jerusalem from 12:45 P.M. until further notice. The curfew was later restricted to the central Jewish area only and this will be removed at 5 A.M. tomorrow.

One report said that an automobile abandoned near the Jaffa Gate had two sticks of gelignite, one revolver and one Arab cloak inside. But the small group of gunmen who held up the hotel staff and planted the explosives in the basement got clear away. A taxi containing a quantity of arms believed used by some of the escaping terrorists was found abandoned on Jaffa Road.

Army headquarters declared that the men who entered the hotel basement unloaded several milk cans and trundled them along the corridor to the far end, directly below the secretariat and outside the restaurant. A British Signal Corps officer, hearing the noise, came out to investigate and was shot in the stomach twice and severely wounded by a man dressed as an Arab.

The Palestine radio reported that bodies of five Britons and twenty-three Palestinians had so far been taken from the wreckage of the hotel. Four are still below the wreckage. Hospital reports, however, said that thirty-one bodies had been brought in by 7 P.M.

NATIONAL REVIVAL PRINCIPLES
(Ideological Principles of Lechi)

1. THE NATION

The Jewish people is a covenanted people, originator of monotheism, formulator of the prophetic teachings, standard-bearer of human culture, guardian of a glorious patrimony. The Jewish people is schooled in self sacrifice and suffering; its vision, survivability and faith in redemption are indestructible.

2. THE HOMELAND

The homeland is the Land of Israel within the borders delineated in the Bible. (To your descendants I shall give this land, from the River of Egypt to the great Euphrates River. Genesis 15:18). This is the land of the living where the entire nation shall live in safety.

3. THE NATION AND ITS LAND

Israel conquered the land with the sword. There it became a nation and only there it will be reborn. Hence Israel alone has a right to that land. This is an absolute right. It has never expired and never will.

4. THE GOALS

1. Redemption of the land.
2. Establishment of sovereignty.
3. Revival of the nation. There is no sovereignty of the land, and there is no national revival without sovereignty.

These are the tasks of the organization during the period of war and conquest:

5. EDUCATION

Educate the nation to love freedom and zealously guard Israel's eternal patrimony. Inculcate the idea that the nation is master to its own fate. Revive the doctrine that "The sword and the book came bound together from heaven" (Midrash Vayikra

Rabba 35:8).

6. UNITY

The unification of the entire nation around the banner of the Hebrew freedom movement. The use of the genius, status and resources of individuals and the channeling of the energy, devotion and revolutionary fervor of the masses for the war of liberation.

7. PACTS

Make pacts with all those who are willing to help the struggle of the organization and provide direct support.

8. FORCE

Consolidate and increase the fighting force in the homeland and in the diaspora, in the underground and in the barracks, to become the Hebrew army of liberation with its flag, arms and commanders.

9. WAR

Constant war against those who stand in the way of fulfilling the goals.

10. CONQUEST

The conquest of the homeland from foreign rule and its eternal possession.

These are the tasks of the movement during the period of sovereignty and redemption.

11. SOVEREIGNTY

Renewal of Hebrew sovereignty over the redeemed land.

12. RULE OF JUSTICE

The establishment of a social order in the spirit of Jewish morality and prophetic justice. Under such an order no one will go hungry or unemployed. All will live in harmony, mutual respect and friendship as an example to the world.

13. REVIVING THE WILDERNESS

Build the ruins and revive the wilderness for mass immigration and population increase.

14. ALIENS

Solve the problem of alien population by exchange of population.

15. INGATHERING OF EXILES

Total ingathering of the exiles to their sovereign state.

16. POWER

The Hebrew nation shall become a first-rate military, political, cultural and economical entity in the Middle East and around the Mediterranean Sea.

17. REVIVAL

The revival of the Hebrew language as a language spoken by the entire nation, the revival of the historical and spiritual might of Israel. The purification of the national character in the fire of revival.

18. THE TEMPLE

The building of the Third Temple as a symbol of the new era of total redemption.¹

¹Yaacov Eliav, Wanted, (New York: Shengold Publishers, Inc. , 1984), p. 136-138.

APPENDIX J

List of Voyages¹

Name of ship	Date	Approx. No. of Immigrants	Embarkation and Debarkation Points	Organizer	Remarks
1. <i>Kosta</i>	3-37	16	(Vienna) Athens- Beach near Haifa	Revisionists	Sailboat with auxiliary motor. Wading ashore. No landing organization yet.
2. <i>Artemisia I</i>	8-37	68	(Vienna) Athens Tantura Beach	Revisionists	First time aid of landing organization. Artemisia net tonnage: 115
3. <i>Artemisia II</i>	12-37	120	(Vienna) Korinthos- Tantura	Revisionists	
4. <i>Artemisia III</i>	6-38	386	(Vienna) Inlet near Athens-Tantura	Revisionists	
5. <i>Draga I</i>	9-38	246	Susak-Tantura	Revisionists	Mordechai Katz's group plus those who had escaped to Fiume and Susak landed on Yom Kippur. Draga net tonnage: 277
6. <i>Draga II</i>	11-38	544	(Vienna) Galatz- Netanyah	Revisionists	Draga II and Ely carried the survivors of Arnoldstein transport plus additional immigrants
7. <i>Ely</i>	11-38	620	(Vienna) Galatz- Netanyah)	Revisionists	Ely took Draga II passengers aboard prior to landing procedures.
8. <i>Gepo I</i>	12-5-38	734	(Vienna) Tulcea- Netanyah	Revisionists	Smooth sailing and easy blockade breaking. Arrived, landed, December 18.
9. <i>Katina</i>	1-18-39	775	(Vienna) Balchik-		

¹This chart is from The Four Front War: From the Holocaust to the Promised Land, by William R. Perl, Crown publishers, Inc., New York, 1979, pp. 367-371.

			N. of Netanyah	Revisionists	
10. <i>Gepo II</i>	2-20-39	750	(Vienna) Balchik-N. of Netanyah	Revisionists	<i>Gepo II</i> sinks in Mediterranean. <i>Katina</i> rescues all on board and lands them near Netanyah.
11. <i>Astir</i>	3-6-39	720	(Danzig) Vama-Al Jura, Palestine	Revisionists	Transferred to & debarked by S.S. <i>Marsis</i>
12. <i>Atrato I</i>	3-9-39	386	Bari-Palestine	Mossad	
13. <i>Sandu</i>	approx. 3-15-39	269	Constanta. Captured off Palestine coast on 3-23	Private	Ship captured by British Left Palestine 3-26. Arrived Constanta with all aboard 4-2-39.
14. <i>Assimi</i>	3-20-39	260	Constanta-Palestine	Members of Mizrahi & Ha Noar Ha Zioni. Ship "adopted" by Haganah.	Captured by the British (4-1). Turned back. Returned Palestine and landed June 7.
15. <i>Aghios Nicolaos</i>	Late March 39	750	Constanta-Palestine	Private (Mr. Flesch)	Fired at by British patrol. One passenger killed. Immigrants landed anyway on 4-39.
16. <i>Atrato II</i>	Late March 39	400	Susak-Palestine	Mossad	Immigrants first embarked on S.S. <i>Colorado</i> : then transferred.
17. <i>Aghia Zioni</i>	Late March 39	600	Marseille, Fiume-near Rehoboth (Palestine)	Revisionists	420+ evaded arrest, 173 arrested "near Isdud," of whom 44 escaped after arrest. (Landed 4-22-39).
18. <i>Panagai Conasteriu</i>	Late March 39	80	Korynth-Palestine	Revisionists	Jews from Austria & Germany who were stranded in Greece after having escaped individually to Athens.
19. <i>Aghios Nikolaos II</i>	4-20-39	600	Burgos-Palestine (Haifa)	Private (Mr. Flesch)	Passengers transhipped to S.S. <i>Nichola</i> . Landed by <i>Nichola</i> 5-19. Arrested & later released: 308.
20. <i>Atrato III</i>	4-39	400	Susak-Palestine	Mossad	Passengers first embarked on SS <i>Colorado</i> .

Then transferred to Atrato. Short voyage, fast, successful landing.

21. <i>Liesel</i>	5-17-39	906	Tulcea-Palestine	Maccabi-Revisionists	Captured by British 6-2; Master of <i>Liesel</i> : 9 mo. prison; crew acquitted; passengers released in Palestine 6-4.
22. <i>Atrato IV</i>	5-20-39	430	Constanta-Palestine	Mossad	Captured 5-28-39 by H.M.S. <i>Sutton</i> . Passengers released in Palestine after short detainment.
23. <i>Colorado I</i>	5-19-39	266	Constanta-Palestine	Mossad	Was observed by British intelligence passing Istanbul 5-22, yet succeeded; landing undetected.
24. Unnamed sailboat	Late May '39	26	Yugoslavia-Palestine	Private	Landed 6-7, near Akko
25. <i>Berlitsa Maria</i>	5-27-39	350	Burgos-Palestine	Revisionists (Confino)	Landed 6-8.
26. <i>Frossoula</i>	5-29-39	658	Czechoslovakia-Sulina-Palestine	Private	Long Odyssey. Epidemic on board. Ship fumigated in Beyrouth. From there stranded passengers taken aboard & landed by <i>Tiger Hill</i> .
27. <i>Aghios Nikolaos III</i>	6-39	693	Varna-Palestine	Private	Landed 7-3-39 by transfer to landing ship <i>Nicola</i> .
28. <i>Rim</i>	6-26-39	801	Constanta-Rhodes. See remarks.	Revisionists	Ship caught fire July 4 off Rhodes. All aboard saved. Passengers taken aboard & landed by <i>Aghios Nikolaos IV</i> near Netanyah, 8-20-39
29. <i>Las Perlas</i>	Late June	370	Palestine	Private	
30. <i>Dora</i>	7-39	500	Holland-Palestine	Mossad	Mainly German Jews who had escaped to Holland and were evacuated before German

invasion of Holland.

31. <i>Parita</i>	7-8-39	800	(Poland) Galatz-Tel Aviv	Revisionists	Ran straight through the blockade, up the beach of Tel Aviv. Beached there (8-23-39).
32. <i>Colorado II</i>	7-14-39	266	Varna-Constanta-Palestine	Mossad	Captured on July 28.
33. <i>Rudnichar</i>	8-1-39	305	Varna-Palestine	Revisionists	Passengers landed 8-10
34. <i>Aghios-Nikolaos IV</i>	8-8-39	809	Constanta-Rhodes-Palestine (Near Netanyah)	Revisionists Agudat Israel	After loading immigrants at Constanta, ship pick-up the shipwrecked from <i>Rim</i> in Rhodes. Landed all 796 by landing ships <i>Tassos</i> and <i>Rosetta</i> .
35. <i>Tiger Hill</i>	Mid-August 39	1,417	Constanta-Beyrouth-Tel Aviv	Mossad	Included in the 1,417 when landing were passengers of the <i>Frossoula</i> (see <i>Frossoula</i> No. 26). While breaking the blockade, the <i>Tiger Hill</i> was, on 9-1-39, fired at and two of the immigrants were killed.* Repeated the <i>Parita</i> feat. Beached in Tel Aviv.
36. <i>Krotova</i>	8-20-39	650	Fiume-Palestine	Revisionists	Relatively smooth sailing.
37. <i>Syros</i>	8-22-39	593	Fiume-Palestine	Revisionists	Last transport sailing from Italy before outbreak of war.

*They were the first persons to be killed by British bullets after the outbreak of World War II.

38. <i>Noemi Julia</i>	8-29-39	1,136	Constanta-Palestine	Revisionists	September 19, '39 ship sailed openly into Haifa and demanded admission for those on board.
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With war on, in wake of furor over British killing of *Tiger Hill* refugees, British hesitant to shoot at *Noemi Julia*.

39. <i>Rudnichar I</i>	8-30-39	368	Varna-Constanta-Burgos-Palestine (near Herzliya)	Revisionists	All aboard landed by landing boat S.V. <i>Bapha</i> and 4 small wooden boats 9-19-39.
40. <i>Rudnichar III</i>	10-27-39	457	Sulina-Palestine (Sydne Ali, near Tel Aviv)	Revisionists	Passengers transhipped for landing to schooner <i>Kooperator</i> and small boats.
41. <i>Hilda</i>	12-9-39	729	Balchik-Sulina-Palestine (Haifa)	Mossad	Ship captured 1-24-40 by Royal Navy. Brought to Haifa. Passengers first detained, then released.
42. <i>Delpa</i>	12-24-39	224	Constanta-Varna-Palestine	Revisionists	A youth transport, almost all from Betarim from Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria.
43. <i>Sakarya</i>	2-1-40	2,175	Sulina-Palestine (Haifa)	Revisionists	Captured by H.M.S. <i>Fiona</i> and escorted to Haifa 2-13-40. Largest ship, largest load, fastest trip of all. Ship seized but later released to owners due to legal quirk. Passengers to detention camps. Released 8-12. Eri Jabotinsky, the <i>Sakarya's</i> C.O., brought to Akko fortress & imprisoned there until death of his father, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, 8-6-40.
44. <i>Pentscho</i>	9-21-40	514	Sulina-Mytilene (Greek island, Stampalia, Rhodes)	Revisionists	Ship faltered near Kamili Island (actually uninhabited rock). After almost perishing of hunger, picked up by Italian warship and taken to Rhodes, then Italy. Interned but miraculously

survived the war and returned to Palestine.

45. <i>Libertad</i>	5-40	390	Burgos-Palestine (Zikhron Ya'acov)	Revisionists	Bulgarians, mostly, with some Yugoslavs, Rumanians.
46. <i>Atlantic</i>	10-7-40	1,771	Tulcea-Sulina-Cyprus-Haifa	Mossad	Those arriving in Palestine on the <i>Pacific</i> plus 80 from <i>Atlantic</i> were transferred by the British to their S.S. <i>Patria</i> . The <i>Patria</i> blew up and rapidly sank in Haifa Harbor. 254 perished in this catastrophe. 1,584 survivors, most from <i>Atlantic</i> and <i>Milo</i> , were deported to fever-stricken island Mauritius. Survivors of this climate and epidemics received permission to enter Palestine five years later.
47. <i>Pacific</i>	10-11-40	1,000	Sulina-Haifa	Mossad	
48. <i>Milo</i>	10-19-40	880	Tulcea-Haifa	Mossad	
49. <i>Salvador</i>	12-40	(327)	Burgos-Istanbul sinks in Sea of Marmara.	Private	204 die as <i>Salvador</i> sank. Survivors reached Istanbul. From there on 3-19-41 the <i>Darien</i> , another refugee ship, picked them up and landed them in Palestine.
50. <i>Struma</i>	12-11-41	(767)	Constanta-Istanbul Turks towed the unseaworthy ship out into the Black Sea on 2-23-42 where she sank 2-24.		One sole survivor. All others drowned. Militant Irgun Zvai Leumi declared this sinking to have been "murder" and initiated violent action against the colonial power.
51. <i>Darien II</i>	2-19-41	878	Constanta-Vama-Palestine	Mossad	Ship sailed from Constanta with 380. In Vama 370 more boarded. In Istanbul 128 survivors of <i>Salvador</i> boarded.
52. <i>Vitorul</i>	9-42	120	Constanta	Private	The 60 ton unseaworthy ship is not

known to have arrived.

53. <i>Euxenia</i>	4-42	12	Sulina-Casne (Turkey)	Private	Sailboat with auxiliary motor. Foundered in Aegean Sea. All 12 saved; land in Turkey.
54. <i>Milka I</i>	3-44	410	Constanta-Istanbul. Continued by land to Palestine.	Mossad- Revisionist cooperation	Due to <i>new</i> policy, those who on their own craft reached neutral Turkey could from there legally enter Palestine by land.
55. <i>Maritsa II</i>	4-44	244	Constanta-Istanbul- Palestine	Mossad and Revisionist cooperation	See remarks re: travel from Turkey, above.
56. <i>Maritsa II</i>	5-44	266	" "	"	"
57. <i>Milka II</i>	5-44	433	" "	"	"
58. <i>Morina</i>	7-44	308	" "	"	"
59. <i>Maritsa III</i>	7-44	318	" "	"	"
60. <i>Bulbul</i>	8-44	410	Constanta-Istanbul- Palestine	"	See remarks re: travel from Turkey, above.
61. <i>Salah-A- Din</i>	8-44	547	Constanta	"	
62. <i>Mefkurie</i>	8-44	(350)	Constanta (torpedoed)	"	Ship torpedoed, survi- vors machine-gunned in water. 345 perished.

*Total number of those tabulated who reached Palestine**

* Tabulation of Aliya Bet shipping constitutes a most intricate task, as reports about ships, dates, number of passengers vary widely. When in doubt we accept the lower figure. Besides, contemporary news reports and intelligence dispatches mention more names of ships carrying "illegal" refugees than are tabulated above. Careful scrutiny reveals, however, that a good number of these communications erred. The blockade breaking ships often had their names changed. Thus a dispatch might name a ship as loading refugees in some port. Another ship with refugees crammed on board, flying a different flag and showing a different name might be reported passing the Bosphorus. Again another ship was related as hiding in one of the numerous inlets of a Greek island. Still another ship was written up as unloading visaless immigrants in Palestine. Yet it was always one and the same vessel.

On the other hand, as the Jew hunt in Europe increased in intensity, a growing number of individually organized small vessels, mainly sailboats, set out for the only possible point of escape. Those who made it

to Palestine had landing organizations waiting for them. Their arrival was not recorded and they mixed as fast as they could with the population there. The total number of visaless Jews reaching the country during the Nazi reign therefore exceeds the number tabulated above.

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APPENDIX K

List of twelve points made by David Wyman regarding President Roosevelt's treatment of the Holocaust.

1. The War Refugee Board should have been set up in 1942. It should have been better funded and received broader powers.

2. The U.S. government should have made bolder efforts to press the Germans to release Jews.

3. Constant pressure and threat of punishment could have been applied to Axis satellites to release their Jews.

4. Neutral countries should have been pressured to absorb Jews, to by-pass immigration procedures, and to erect reception camps near borders. The U.S. could have funded, encouraged and supplied absorption, food distribution, etc.

5. In the United States immigration quotas were almost untouched. Had the U.S. made a concerted effort to take in displaced Jews other countries might have followed suit. However, in 1942, when Wendell Wilkie urged British leaders to admit Jews "the British high commissioner replied that since the United States was not taking Jews in even up to the quota limits, Americans were hardly in a position to criticize."

6. The excuse that shipping was needed to transfer Jews and that such shipping would interfere with the war effort was unfounded. In fact, some ships returning from Europe actually needed ballast. Jewish refugees could easily have acted as weight in these ships' holds.

7. A campaign (through radio, leaflet dropping, underground communication, falsifying documentation, bribing lower level officials) to stimulate and assist escapes would have greatly increased the number of Jews able to escape.

8. Larger sums of money could have been sent to Europe to facilitate escapes, hide Jews, supply food and essentials, strengthen the Jewish underground and gain non-Jewish assistance.

9. Much more effort should have gone into sending food and medical supplies.

10. The U.S. government could have applied additional pressure on neutral governments, on the Vatican, and on the International Red Cross to push them to take earlier and greater action.

11. The U.S. could have taken military action. The Air Force could have bombed the Auschwitz killing installations and some deportation railroads.

12. "Much more publicity about the extermination of the Jews should have been disseminated through Europe. Allied radio could have beamed the information for weeks at a time, on all possible wavelengths, as the Germans did regarding the alleged Russian massacre of Polish officers at the Katyn forest. This might have influenced three groups: the Christian populations, the Nazis, and the Jews. Western leaders and, especially, the Pope could have appealed to Christians not to cooperate in any way with the anti-Jewish programs, and to hide and to aid Jews whenever possible."¹

¹ David Wyman, p. 331-334.

Appendix L

**To 5,000,000 Jews in the Nazi Death-Trap Bermuda Was a
“Cruel Mockery”**

**“When Will The United Nations Establish An Agency To Deal With
The Problem of Hitler’s Extermination of a Whole People?”**

Somehow, through invisible, underground channels, one ray of shining hope might have penetrated the ghettos of Europe. A rumor might have spread and grown into a whisper among the agonized Jews of Hitler’s hell. A whisper telling of deliverance from torture, death, starvation and agony in slaughter-houses. This ray of hope and this whisper were expressed in one word: Bermuda !

The rumor told of representatives of the United States and Great Britain, the leading champions of the United Nations, the protagonists of the Four Freedoms, assembling to save the hunted and tortured Jews of Europe. On the deliberations of this small convention on an Island in the Atlantic were focused all the hopes of the doomed Jews of Europe: those, too, of the free well-meaning people the world over. Men and women of good will everywhere at last believed that the United Nations had decided to do something about the unprecedented disaster of a people put to death.

Wretched, doomed victims of Hitler’s tyranny ! Poor men and women of good faith the world over! You have cherished an illusion. Your hopes have been in vain. Bermuda was not the dawn of a new era, of an era of humanity and compassion, of translating pity into deed. Bermuda was a mockery, and a cruel jest.

THIS is not our definition. It is the definition of the London Sunday “Observer”- one of the most influential and important newspapers in Great Britain.

Not only were ways and means to save the remaining four million Jews in Europe not devised, but their problem was not even touched upon, put on the agenda, or discussed. More than that-the name “Jews” was banished from the vocabulary of this convention, as PM’s foreign editor, Alexander Uhl, reports: “It was regraded as almost improper to mention even the word “Jew.”

But not only the attention of the victims of Nazi atrocities and

of their friends the world over was concentrated on the meeting at Bermuda: Hitler, too, was concerned with the United Nations' reply to this challenge to the extermination of the Jewish population in Europe. Alas! To him Bermuda was again convincing proof that the United Nations were neither ready nor willing to answer his threat with action. They were continuing to give him "carte blanche" in his extermination process, exactly as in the pre-war days they permitted him to deal with Jews in Germany, with Austria and Czechoslovakia, thus paving the way for aggression, invasion, and war.

Can it be possible that the United Nations do not understand that should Hitler succeed in exterminating the Jews as a people, they by their silence will pave the way to the extermination of the Czechoslovak, Polish, Greek or even the French people?

Now we are witnessing a variety of attempts to justify the Bermuda failure, to wrap it in secret formulae, such as "no dealing with Hitler," or "not to interfere with the prosecution of the war," or "not to undertake anything which would prolong the war," etc. All this is just throwing sand into the eyes of public opinion. All this has nothing to do with the real facts and the harrowing truth.

The facts, plain and simple, are the following: (a) This is a specific problem of Jewish disaster. Hitler did not (as yet) decree the extermination of all the peoples of Europe, he decreed the extermination of the Jewish people in Europe and this process of extermination is unabated and steady. Two million or more have been put to death already! (b) Five million Jews in Europe still live. The government of Roumania, Hungary and Bulgaria, all satellites of Germany, are willing to release their Jews any time the United Nations are willing to take part in the deliverance. By doing so, they hope to find grace and pardon in the eyes of the United Nations whom they consider as the inevitable victors in this world struggle. (c) The United Nations have taken no advantage of these offers. They have not done so for one reason: the British government has prevented them, fearing that public opinion will demand that these refugees be admitted into Palestine - a practical place of salvation only a few days away from the Axis countries by short water route, train or even bus, where the new Hebrew Nation awaits them with open arms.

The Jewish Problem Is Not a Refugee Problem

With the Bermuda Conference a thing of the past, not having

even discussed the problem of the extermination of the Jewish people in Europe, now, more than ever, it is clear that we are dealing not only with a refugee problem, but with the Jewish problem of Europe. These two problems should not be confused. They are entirely distinct. Democracy cannot connive with the slaughter of millions of innocent civilian people - the Jews in Europe. There are ways and means to stop Hitler's wholesale murder and to evacuate those who can be evacuated. *But no one has been assigned to deal with this tremendous problem.* What is necessary is that the machinery for action be created. The United Nations, which have uttered so many words of pity must now *do* something if these words of pity are to be more than empty lies. They must create a United Nations Agency composed of military and diplomatic experts, which should have full authority to define and effectuate a realistic and stern policy of action, to save the remaining millions of Jewish people. *This Agency or Commission will deal, not with refugees outside Hitler's reach, but with the Jewish people under his yoke today.*

A Program of Action (. . . Not Pity !)

There are two broad areas in which this Agency can begin to operate without delay or procrastination.

1. Immediate utilization of all existing possibilities of transfer of Jews from Hitler - dominated countries to Palestine or to any temporary refuge and the initiation of all further possibilities in this program.

2. The immediate creation of a Jewish army of stateless and Palestinian Jews, including "suicide" Commando squads, and Air Squadrons for retaliatory bombing, which will raid deep into Germany, thus participating as an entity in the war and bringing their message of hope to Hitler's victims.

Join the Crusade for Democracy

The crime of Europe calls for the mobilization of every shred of righteousness and spiritual power left in the world. *On the field of battle soldiers die. On the field of massacre civilization dies.* The thunder of civilization against the swamp-like antics of the German government is alone capable of stopping the German crime against life. Such a thunder unleashed by our own representatives and by all the nations that serve the cause of God would strike terror

into the souls of the German people.

Therefore we dedicate ourselves to this fight and we call upon every American to join hands with us in this crusade for humanity and decency.

Every citizen is part of the collective conscience of America; this conscience has never been found wanting. Demand action from your government against the German massacre of the Jews.

COMMITTEE FOR A JEWISH ARMY OF STATELESS AND PALESTINIAN JEWS'

' The New York Times, Tuesday, May 4, 1943, p. 17.

APPENDIX M

TEXT OF NEW YORK TIMES LETTER, DEC. 4, 1948
TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

Among the most disturbing political phenomena of our time is the emergence in the newly created state of Israel of the "Freedom Party" (Tenuat HaHerut), a political party closely akin in its organization, methods, political philosophy and social appeal to the Nazi and Fascist parties. It was formed out of the membership and following of the former Irgun Zvai Leumi, a terrorist, right-wing, chauvinist organization in Palestine.

The current visit of Menachem Begin, leader of this party, to the United States is obviously calculated to give the impression of American support for his party in the coming Israeli elections, and to cement political ties with conservative Zionist elements in the United States. Several Americans of national repute have lent their names to welcome his visit. It is inconceivable that those who oppose fascism throughout the world, if correctly informed as to Mr. Begin's political record and perspectives, could add their names and support to the movement he represents.

Before irreparable damage is done by way of financial contributions, public manifestations in Begin's behalf, and the creation in Palestine of the impression that a large segment of America supports Fascist elements in Israel, the American public must be informed as to the record and objectives of Mr. Begin and his movement.

The public avowals of Begin's party are no guide whatever to its actual character. Today they speak of freedom, democracy and anti-imperialism, whereas until recently they openly preached the doctrine of the Fascist state. It is in its actions that the terrorist party betrays its real character; from its past actions we judge what it may be expected to do in the future.

A shocking example was their behavior in the Arab village of Deir Yassin. This village, off the main roads and surrounded by Jewish lands, had taken no part in the war, and had even fought off the Arab bands who wanted to use the village as their base. On

April 9 (The New York Times), terrorist bands attacked this peaceful village, which was not a military objective in the fighting, killed most of its inhabitants - 240 men, women and children - and kept a few of them alive to parade as captives through the streets of Jerusalem. Most of the Jewish community was horrified at the deed, and the Jewish Agency sent a telegram of apology to King Abdullah of Trans -Jordan.

But the terrorists, far from being ashamed of their act, were proud of this massacre, publicized it, widely, and invited all the foreign correspondents present in the country to view the heaped corpses and the general havoc at Deir Yassin.

The Deir Yassin incident exemplifies the character and actions of the Freedom Party. Within the Jewish community they have preached an admixture of ultra-nationalism, religious mysticism, and racial superiority. Like other Fascist parties they have been used to break strikes, and have themselves pressed for the destruction of free trade unions. In their stead they have proposed corporate unions on the Italian Fascist model. During the last years of sporadic anti-British violence, the IZL and Stern groups inaugurated a reign of terror in the Palestine Jewish community. Teachers were beaten up for speaking against them. By gangster methods, beatings, window-smashing, and wide-spread robberies, the terrorists intimidated the population and exacted heavy tribute.

The people of the Freedom Party have had no part in the constructive achievements in Palestine. They have reclaimed no land, built no settlements, and only detracted from the Jewish defense activity. Their much publicized immigration endeavors were minute, and devoted mainly to bringing in Fascist compatriots.

The discrepancies between the bold claims now being made by Begin and his party, and their record of past performance in Palestine bear the imprint of no ordinary political party. This is the unmistakable stamp of a Fascist party for whom terrorism (against Jews, Arabs, and British alike) and misrepresentation are means, and a "Leader State" is the goal.

In the light of the foregoing considerations, it is imperative that the truth about Mr. Begin and his movement be made known in this country. It is all the more tragic that the top leadership of American Zionism has refused to campaign against Begin's efforts, or even to expose to its own constituents the dangers to Israel from support to

Begin.

The undersigned therefore take this means of publicly presenting a few salient facts concerning Begin and his party; and of urging all concerned not to support this latest manifestation of fascism.

Isidore Abramowitz, Hannah Arendt, Abraham Brick, Rabbi Jesurun Cardozo, Albert Einstein, Herman Eisen, M. D., Hayim Fineman, M. Gallen, D., H. H. Harris, Zelig S. Harris, Sidney Hook, Fred Kabush, BruriaKaufman, Irma L. Lindheim, Nachman Majsel, Seymour Malman, Myer D. Mendelson, M. D., Harry M. Orlinsky, Samuel Pitlick, Fritz Rohrlich, Louis P. Rucker, Ruth Sager, Itzak Sankowsky, I. J. Schoenberg, Samuel Shuman, M. Unger, Irma Wolpe, Stepan Wolfe.

New York, Dec. 2, 1948¹

¹ Ibid, p. 588-590.

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Shmuel Katz, Foreign Affairs advisor to Prime Minister Menachem
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Member, Telephone interview from Tel Aviv, June 10,1993;
personal interview, Tel Aviv, Nov. 1993.

Hillel Kook (Peter Bergson in America) leader of the Bergson Group,
nephew of the chief Rabbi of Jerusalem. Telephone interviews
June 1993. Personal interview, November 1993, Herzliyah,
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Walter Laqueur, historian, the Center for Strategic and International
Studies, Washington, D.C., Telephone interview: Autumn, 1993.

Shmuel Merlin, one of the original group of five delegates sent to
America by the Irgun. Telephone interviews: Summer 1993.

Ambassador Richard Murphy, Telephone interview from the Council on Foreign Relations, New York, September 1993.

Ben Zion Netanyahu, leader of the Revisionist Zionist movement in America, Executive Director of the New Zionist Organization, Professor, author. Telephone interviews were conducted throughout summer 1993. Personal interviews took place in Jerusalem on Oct. 29, 1993, Nov. 1, 1993, and Nov. 7, 1993.

Dr. Alexe Raphaeli, one of the original group of five delegates sent to America by the Irgun. Founder of Jerusalem Pencils, Director of Israel Aircraft Industries, Jerusalem Economic Corp., Zim Israel Navigation Company, Ltd., Dagon Ltd., Haifa. Interviews: many telephone conversations from Jerusalem and a personal interview in November 1993, Jerusalem.

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Yitzhak Shamir, former Prime Minister of Israel, Telephone interview from Tel Aviv office, June 5, 1993.

Yitshak Shamir, Personal interview from the Knessett, Jerusalem, October 25, 1993.

David Wyman, author of The Abandonment of the Jews. Personal interview, August 20, 1993, Canterbury, New Hampshire.

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GLOSSARY

(Note: The purpose of this glossary is to briefly supply a definition as it relates to the dissertation. It is not meant to completely define a term or list the achievements of any group or individual.)

ALIYAH (Hebrew, ascent) the coming of the Jews to settle in Eretz Israel. This term does not only denote immigration, but expresses the essence of Zionism, the return of the Jew to his homeland. The First Aliyah (1882-1903) brought 25,000; the Second Aliyah (1904-1914) brought approximately 40,000 Eastern European Jews; the Third Aliyah brought about 35,000; the Fourth Aliyah (1924-1928) brought 67,000; the Fifth Aliyah (1929-1939) brought some 250,000 Jews, most of which were refugees from Nazi Europe.

ALTALENA - Pseudonym of Vladimir Jabotinsky for his column in the Russian newspaper, *Odessa News*, during the early 1900's.

ALTALENA - Ship purchased by the Irgun which sailed from France with fighting forces, ammunition and weapons for Israel but was destroyed by the Haganah before it was unloaded.

AMERICAN LEAGUE FOR A FREE PALESTINE - Established in 1944 to support a Jewish national independence movement in Palestine to defeat the British Mandatory Government there; directed by Yitshak Ben Ami from 1946 to 1948; co-chaired by Senator Guy Gillette and American author Ben Hecht. The organization was closely affiliated with the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation. Jewish establishment organizations opposed these groups. In 1946 the League produced the Broadway play, "A Flag is Born." The proceeds benefited the Irgun. The League was dissolved in November 1948.

ARLOSOROFF, Chaim - Labor leader whose assassination was

ARLOSOROFF, Chaim - Labor leader whose assassination was allegedly blamed on the Revisionists in order to discredit their growing movement.

BALFOUR DECLARATION - on November 2, 1917, Lord Balfour, in correspondence to Lord Rothschild, promised British support for a Jewish State in Palestine.

BERGSON, Peter - alias for Hillel Kook while working for the Irgun in the United States.

BETAR - Acronym for B'rith Trumpeldor; Zionist youth organization founded by Vladimir Jabotinsky in 1924, dedicated to the formation of a Jewish State in Palestine, and affiliated with the Zionist Revisionist Movement.

BRITISH MANDATE FOR PALESTINE - One of four Mandates established by the League of Nations after World War I; Iraq and Palestine came under British Mandatory Power, Lebanon and Syria under French Mandatory Power. The Mandate for Palestine stated that the Mandatory would be responsible for securing the establishment of a Jewish National Home there.

COMMITTEE FOR A JEWISH ARMY - organized in 1941 by the Irgun Delegation to the United, the Committee aimed to create a Jewish Army based in Palestine to fight under Allied Command. It was opposed by the Jewish establishment but succeeded in heightening public awareness of the plight of the Jews in Europe. It ceased to function in 1944 after the creation of the Jewish Brigade and was succeeded by the American League for a Free Palestine.

Diaspora - the Jewish communities dispersed outside Eretz Israel.

Die Tat- daily newspaper of the Irgun (1938-1939), published in Yiddish in Warsaw, Poland.

EBAN, Abba - Israeli representative to the United Nations. Supporter of the Labor party, opponent of the underground movements (Irgun and Lechi).

ELDAD, Dr. Israel - chief theoretician for the underground movement, Lechi.

ERETZ ISRAEL - Land of Israel.

HADANI - Alias for Dr. Alex Raphaeli while working for the Irgun Delegation to the United States.

HAGANAH- Underground self-defense militia of Jews in Palestine created in 1920 by Jabotinsky for the defense of Jewish settlements against Arab attacks. In 1931 arguments over the effectiveness of the organization led to the split which resulted in the formation of the Irgun Z'vai Leumi.

HEBREW COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION - founded in 1944 by the Irgun Delegation to the United States under the leadership of Hillel Kook. The group sought to establish a Jewish state in Eretz Israel.

HECHT, Ben - author, journalist, important contributor to the ad campaign of the Irgun Delegation to the United States, writing scathingly critical ads opposing the U.S. policy toward the Jews of Europe during the Holocaust.

HECHT, Reuben - European contact for the Irgun who assisted in the American war effort by helping to free American airmen and by gathering intelligence.

HERUT - Irgun underground newspaper (1942-1948), later the political party of Menachem Begin.

HERZL, Theodore - The father of political Zionism; author, journalist.

IRGUN Z'VAI LEUMI (IRGUN - IZL) - underground Jewish military organization founded in Palestine in 1931 and headed by Ze'ev Jabotinsky from 1937 until he died in 1940; later headed by Menachem Begin. From 1931 to 1939 the Irgun protected Jews from Arab attacks, and retaliated. The British White Paper, issued in May

1939, initiated a new stage of Irgun activities which included attacks and sabotage against the British. The Irgun ceased activities against the British during World War II to join the Allies in the fight against Germany. Under the leadership of Menachem Begin the Irgun resumed its anti-British efforts in 1944. In 1948 the Irgun was incorporated into the Israel Defense Forces.

JABOTINSKY, Vladimir (Ze'ev) - founder of the Revisionist Party; leader and founder of the New Zionist Organization and head of the Irgun.

JEWISH BRIGADE - a World War II British military unit which fought under a Jewish flag.

JEWISH LEGION - a World War I British military unit which fought under a Jewish flag.

KATZ, Shmuel - Foreign Affairs advisor to Prime Minister Menachem Begin, member of Irgun High Command, Knessett member, author, writer for the Jerusalem Post.

KOOK, Hillel - (Peter Bergson) leader of the Irgun Delegation to the United States (also called the Bergson Group), nephew of the chief Rabbi of Jerusalem.

LECHI - (Lohamei Herut Israel, Hebrew for Freedom Fighters of Israel), also known as the Stern Gang, the Jewish underground in Palestine which fought the British from 1940 - 1948, organized and led by Avraham Stern. This group split from the Irgun following the Irgun's decision to refrain from fighting the British during World War II. Lechi also differed from the Irgun in its method of attack, Lechi choosing personal assassinations of British officials rather than military targets.

MERLIN, Shmuel - one of the original group of five delegates sent to America by the Irgun.

NETANYAHU, Benzion - leader of the Revisionist Zionist movement in America, Executive Director of the New Zionist Organization,

Professor, author, editor of Zionews.

NEW ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA - the Revisionist political party in America, headed by Ben Zion Netanyahu.

PALMACH - The striking units of the Haganah; dominated by socialists

RAPHAELI, Dr. Alexe - one of the original group of five delegates sent to America by the Irgun. Founder of Jerusalem Pencils, Director of Israel Aircraft Industries, Jerusalem Economic Corp., Zim Israel Navigation Company, Ltd., Dagon Ltd., Haifa.

REVISIONIST PARTY - See Union of Zionist Revisionists.

"SEASON"- ("The Hunting Season") A campaign (Nov. 1944 - Oct. 1945) organized by Haganah, under Ben-Gurion's leadership, to inform on, kidnap and interrogate Irgun and Lechi members in an attempt to stop them from attacking the British. Most of those captured were turned over to the British and were imprisoned in Palestine or exiled to prisons in Africa.

SHAMIR, Yitshak- Former Prime Minister of Israel; leader of Lechi following the assassination of Avraham Stern.

UNION OF ZIONIST REVISIONISTS - Zionist political movement founded by Vladimir Jabotinsky in 1925 with the goal of establishing a Jewish State in Palestine on both sides of the Jordan. In 1935 the Revisionists left the World Zionist Organization and established the New Zionist Organization.

UNITED RESISTANCE MOVEMENT (UMR) - coordinated anti-British military actions of the Haganah, Irgun and Lechi which lasted from November 1945 to August 1946.

WHITE PAPER OF 1939 - official British rejection of the partition plan; a proposal for a Palestinian state having an Arab majority. Under the plan Jewish immigration and rights to purchase land would terminate within five years.

WYMAN, David - author of The Abandonment of the Jews, which criticized the actions of the United States government during the Holocaust with regard to the lack of effort to save the Jews of Europe.

ZIONISM - the political movement which called for the return of the Jewish people to Eretz Israel.