

PAUL NOVICK

SOLUTION FOR PALESTINE

**The Chamberlain
White Paper**

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SOLUTION FOR PALESTINE

By **PAUL NOVICK**

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"There could be no greater calamity than a permanent discord between us and the Arab people. Despite the great wrong that has been done us, we must strive for a just and lasting compromise with the Arab people. In face of the common foe that confronts us both, this goal must be accessible. Let us recall that in former times no people lived in greater friendship with us than the ancestors of these same Arabs."

—(Professor Albert Einstein, in a radio broadcast May 27, 1939).

PALESTINE CRIES OUT FOR A SOLUTION

2,857 killed, that was the price paid by the population of Palestine during the three years of unrest ending April 19, 1939 (Arabs, 2,287; Jews, 430; British, 140). Thousands were wounded. Economic life has been all but paralyzed. Jewish immigration drastically declined from a high of 62,000 in 1935 to 30,000 in 1936, to as low as 10,000 in 1937, and 12,000 in 1938. Those entering Palestine in quest for a haven and peace found turmoil and bloodshed. The population is exhausted. Palestine cries out for a solution.

The fascist axis has been fanning the flames of national hatred in Palestine. Hitler and Mussolini are out to stir

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up trouble in the Near East, as part of their struggle for colonies and for the domination of the Arab world and the conquest of new territories in Africa. They are out to create trouble for Great Britain. They are out to harm the Jews. The agents of Hitler and Mussolini have been stirring up and organizing terrorist bands. The reactionary chief of the Arab High Committee, the Mufti (Haj al Hussein) is an agent of the fascist powers. From Syria whereto he escaped after an order for his arrest was issued by the British in Palestine he has been conducting his terrorist warfare against the Jews with the aid of fascist munitions and funds.

But there was unrest in Palestine in 1920, 1921, 1929, 1933, long before there was a Hitler in power, with Mussolini favoring the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine*. There are factors in addition to the machinations of the fascists which must be borne in mind in order to fully grasp the situation in Palestine. The British Investigation Commission headed by Lord Peel, in its exhaustive report issued July, 1937, admits that:

"The outbreak was chiefly directed and aimed at the government. . . . They (the Arabs) denied the validity of the Balfour Declaration. They have never admitted the right of the powers to entrust a mandate to Great Britain. They hold that the authority exercised by the mandatory is inconsistent with the Covenant of the League of Nations and with the principle of self-determination embodied in that Covenant" (p. 107). "They claim that the Arabs of Palestine are as fit for self-

* The revisionist, William B. Ziff, in his book *The Rape of Palestine* states: "On February 20, 1934 he (Mussolini) urged in *Popolo O'Italia* the creation of a 'true Jewish State in Palestine,' pointing out that a 'National Home' could logically mean nothing else. As late as January 18, 1937, he had written an editorial warmly lauding the Zionist cause." (p. 429).

government as the Arabs of Iraq or Syria" (p. 108).

Later on, we shall acquaint ourselves with statements of responsible Jewish leaders in Palestine who have come to recognize that unrest in Palestine emanated greatly from the fact that the Arab problem was ignored. Clearly, fascist machinations are not the **only** cause for the trouble brewing in Palestine; the axis is **fishing** in troubled waters. **In order to do away with the fascist microbes the healing of long neglected and festering wounds in Palestine was urgent.** A solution which would bring real peace to Palestine and an understanding between Jews and Arabs is the demand of the hour.

CHAMBERLAIN BETRAYS THE JEWS AND THE ARABS

Nobody would expect a Chamberlain to offer a real solution. The present White Paper, however, exceeds the worst expectations. It brazenly starts out by declaring that the Jews were never promised Palestine as a national home. Instead, they were promised a home in Palestine, as stated in the White Paper of 1922, which promise "His Majesty's government has been carrying out." Chamberlain grants that His Majesty's government never discouraged the Zionist leaders from believing that Palestine would be turned into a Jewish state, the truth being that His Majesty's ministers and propaganda agents **themselves** interpreted it this way, indulging in the most grandiloquent "historical" and "poetic" declamations. The White Paper closes the doors of Palestine to the Jews at the end of a period of five years, during which time ten thousand Jews per annum will be admitted, with an additional 25,000 Jewish refugees during the entire period. At the end of five years the Jewish populations of Palestine will be "frozen" into a permanent minority of one-third of the population (it is now less than

one-third, 430,000 Jews, compared with one million Arab Moslems and 110,000 Christians, many of whom are Arabs). The sale of land to Jews for the purpose of colonization will come under the control of the British high commissioner, who will be in a position to prohibit such sales in certain areas.

This is what the Jews are getting for relying on the promises of British imperialism and for building on these promises, investing in the tiny country nearly \$500,000,000 since 1920. There is no mention in the White Paper of any autonomy for the Jews in districts where they constitute a majority. There is some talk in the White Paper about safeguarding the "essential interests of each community," Jewish and Arab—whatever that may mean.

The Arabs are told that they are mistaken in "interpreting" the pledge given by Sir Henry McMahon in 1915 on behalf of the British government to mean that Palestine is to become an Arab state. However, they are now given another promise: independence of Palestine in 1949, after a transition period of a rather indefinite "ten years," provided peace and good relations are established. A constitution will be embarked upon "at the end of five years from the restoration of peace" by an "appropriate body representative of the people of Palestine and His Majesty's government."

The White Paper is clearly a betrayal of the promises the British government gave to the Zionists in 1917. True, the majority of the Jewish people never really put any great trust in these promises, but the British government did give such promises to the Jewish people. The retreat is brazen and shameful. During the February conferences with the Zionists and Arabs in London there was talk on the part of Arab representatives about autonomy for the Jews, but Chamberlain is as merciless as when he betrayed

Czechoslovakia in Munich. No wonder his "white" paper has aroused such resentment among the Jewish people. And this testimonial of betrayal comes at a time when millions of Jews in Europe are the victims of most barbaric persecutions, which Chamberlain, through his Munich pact helped accentuate.

The intricate line of introducing self-government to Palestine, drawn out over a period of indefinite ten years, is predicated on "the security of, and freedom of access to, the holy places and the protection of the interests and properties of various religious bodies," "the protection of the different communities in Palestine," and "requirements to meet the strategic situation as may be regarded as necessary by his Majesty's government."

To recapitulate, the White Paper:

1. Promises independence in 1949 provided peace is established. (Note: British imperialist agents can be counted upon to see to it that peace is disturbed when needed).
2. Does not provide Jewish autonomous rights.
3. Stops Jewish immigration after five years from the issuance of the paper and "freezes" the Jewish population into one-third of the general population.
4. Abolishes the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.
5. Safeguards British positions.

SHOULD WE FIGHT FOR THE BALFOUR DECLARATION?

The Chamberlain White paper, as it stands is clearly no solution. What then? A "return to Balfour?"

On November 2, 1917, the late Lord Balfour issued the following document:

"His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the

achievement of that object, it being understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in any other community."

Obviously, this declaration carries in itself the germs of dissention and betrayal. How can the civil rights of the existing communities in Palestine not be "prejudiced" without granting them some (elementary at least) self-government? How can self-government of the Arab majority be granted without prejudicing the "National Home?"

The Mandate over Palestine received by Great Britain from the League of Nations contains article 2 providing for the development of the Jewish National Home and article 6 providing for Jewish immigration "under suitable conditions." But the mandate, in its first paragraph states that it has as its purpose to give "effect to the provisions of article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations" which article stipulates that "the wishes of the communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of a mandatory." Another inconsistency which is a source of trouble.

The inconsistencies of the Declaration and the Mandate emanate from the double set of promises given by Great Britain during the war, one to the Arabs and another to the Jews. The Balfour Declaration was openly admitted by the Peel Commission to have been "issued in 1917 in order to enlist Jewish support for the Allies" (p. 24). It had nothing to do with the poetic license certain British spokesmen indulged in when the document was issued. The Declaration was brought about by the exigencies of war, coolly calculated to help the cause of the Allies in their struggle against Germany and Turkey, which were fighting side by side during the World War. Because of similar

calculations, Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner for Egypt in 1915 wrote his famous letter to King Hussein of Mecca (in that same year) which the Arabs understood to mean independence of Palestine as part of an Arab Federation. Similar generous promises were given by Colonel Lawrence (of doubtful fame) in order to enlist Arab soldiers and officers of the Turkish army in the cause of the Allies.

This double set of promises and the fact that British imperialism was interested in keeping the strategic position of Palestine for itself was the cause for the double dealing on the part of British rule in that unhappy land ever since the legions of Lord Allenby entered Jerusalem (in December, 1917). British imperialist machinations were greatly instrumental in the bloodshed between Arabs and Jews. Unity between both nationalities was considered dangerous to the imperialist interests, not to speak of unity between Jewish and Arab workers. The Histadruth (Jewish Labor Federation of Palestine) in a memorandum submitted to the Peel Commission stated:

"The government authorities have not only not encouraged joint Jewish-Arab trade union activity but have in most cases placed obstacles in the way of such activity."

WHITE PAPERS, COMMISSIONS, REPORTS, ETC.

The White Paper issued by the Chamberlain government is but a continuation of a line held unto ever since the Churchill White paper was issued, in 1922. In fact the present Paper bases itself on the Churchill epistle. But that document was but an introduction. The outbreaks in 1929 brought forth a veritable shower of documents: the Report of the Shaw Investigation Commission, the Simpson Report, the Passfield White Paper which practically nullified the

Balfour Declaration. (Be it remembered that this document was issued by a Labor government). These anti-Zionist documents were followed by the pro-Zionist Ramsey MacDonald Letter, to be in turn followed by the anti-Zionist Lord French Report. As a result of the unrest begun in 1936 there came the Peel Report (1937) which, although pro-Zionist admitted that the double set of promises cannot work. The Peel Commission recommended the partitioning of Palestine as a "final solution." The subsequent Woodhead Commission which was to undertake the partitioning undid this "solution" by issuing a report to prove the impossibility of the Peel plan. Thereupon came the London Conferences (February-March, 1939) between the British government and the Zionist representatives and between the same set of government officials and the Arab representatives. The mood of the Chamberlain government as expressed by chance remarks of Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald was decidedly anti-Zionist.

The Chamberlain edition of the White Paper, therefore, did not come as a surprise to the initiated, rude and shocking as it was. It is the result of a line which began with the Balfour Declaration. Consequently, it is idle and harmful to demand a return to Balfour. The fact of the matter is that the leadership of the World Zionist Organization (Weizmann, Ben Gurion, etc.) despaired of the Declaration and the Mandate when they accepted the partitioning of Palestine, only to give up the idea when the Chamberlain government dropped it.

RETREAT FROM MUNICH AND THE ARABS

The present White Paper like the Balfour Declaration is due to exigencies of war. Nobody is fooled by the sop thrown to the Arabs, not even the Arabs themselves. Yet the factors motivating the issuance of the paper cannot be

overlooked. While in dealing with the Jews Chamberlain displayed some of his "best" Munich qualities the Paper itself is basically due to the (temporary at least) retreat from Munich. This may sound contradictory; so are the conditions, with a Chamberlain forced to do (partly, at least) the will of the British people. Great Britain is strengthening its positions in a struggle against the fascist axis due to the stand of the British people against "appeasement." Great Britain is mending her fences in the Near East, around the Suez Canal, along the Life Line to India. It has concluded a pact with Turkey. It aims to win the sympathy of the nearly fifty million Arabs in the Near East and on the African continent, along the coast of the inflammable waters of the Mediterranean.

It would be a tragic mistake to think that "appeasement" would have been better for Palestine. The policy to "appease" the fascists has wrought havoc among small nations and would unquestionably have had its deadly effect on both Jews and Arabs. The continuous bloodshed of the last three years was in part due to this policy which prepared the ground for the fascists, inciting them to ever greater activity. That the interests of both Jews and Arabs run counter to "appeasement," of this there can be no doubt. (Not to speak of Jews all over the world who were most tragically hit by the policy of appeasing the fascists). Palestine depends on an England which holds to a policy of stopping the fascists.

A line must be drawn between Chamberlain and England, between British imperialism and England. Palestine, like other small countries cannot exist alone in the present international setup. One must face realities. The peace and the security of Palestine as that of Iraq, Egypt, etc., will have to be "guaranteed" (if we may so term it) by the democracies, by England.

It was refreshing to hear from Professor Albert Einstein, in his speech delivered in connection with a Zionist meeting at Town Hall, New York, May 27, 1939, the statement on a compromise with the Arabs (quoted on p. 3), as well as the following:

"Remember, in the midst of your justified embitterment that England's opponents are also our bitterest enemies, and in spite of everything the maintenance of England's position is of utmost importance to us.

"Consider further that it is in the vital interests of the Arab world, too, that England's power should not be shattered by the hysterical lust for conquest of the totalitarian adventurers. This elementary fact must and will soon penetrate into the consciousness of the Arabs," (New York Times, May 28, 1939).

While disagreeing with some of Professor Einstein's formulations it would certainly be Don Quixotic, nay, criminal, to overlook the present international setup. A "strong arm" of Great Britain against the Arabs (which is what is demanded by the adherents of a "return to Balfour") would turn the fifty million of Arabs into a reservoir of fascism. The London Conferences have shown that on the question of Palestine Great Britain is dealing with all Arab countries.

At the eighteenth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, D. Manuilsky dealt with the question of independence for colonial countries as related to the general problem of fighting fascism. He stated: "While upholding the rights of the colonial peoples to self-determination, including secession, the Communists, in accordance with the doctrine of Lenin and Stalin, subordinate the realization of this right of secession to the fundamental interests of the colonial peoples themselves, in the interest of defeating fascism, the mortal enemy of the working class, and in the

interests of the victory of the international working class over its exploiters."

Neither the Jews nor the Arabs can overlook realities.

THE SOLUTION: AN ARAB-JEWISH UNDERSTANDING

If not the Balfour Declaration, then what?

For those who really believed that the contemplated National Home would solve the Jewish question, the annulment of the Declaration will most certainly be a source of great disappointment. But, was it a solution for the Jewish problem? Was it a solution for the problems of the four and a half million of American Jews, the five to six million Jews in Central and Eastern Europe?

Zionist leaders themselves have given up such claims. Twenty-two years after Balfour it was clearly impossible to continue as of old. The problem has now been confined to immigration, the finding of a haven for the tens of thousands of refugees from the fascist countries (which in itself is a major problem). We have seen that, due to events, immigration to Palestine has been sharply curtailed. What is more important, **the refugees settling there have not found a peaceful home.** No amount of talk about a "strong hand" on the part of Great Britain and not even a "strong hand" itself would have brought peace to the Jews of Palestine — something which deserves first consideration. (A strong hand was certainly used considering the large number of Arabs killed, both terrorists and innocent).

Peace is of vital importance. How can it be attained?

We have heard Professor Einstein ask for an understanding. We have heard that in more detail from the president of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Dr. J. L. Magnes, who is well known to American Jews. Here is what he said in 1937, when the Peel Commission issued its Partitioning Plan:

"We have been returning to a small, already populated, even if not overpopulated land and despite all 'rights' conferred on us by the states which won the war, these rights are a thousand times less important than the consent, if it is at all to be obtained, of the Arabs who live in the land and of the Arab people who will continue to be our neighbors even after British imperialism may have passed. Moreover, my people have a long and high ethical tradition. We have been incomparable witnesses to ideals of justice for ourselves and for others and we have suffered as perhaps no other people from brute force and the selfishness of nations. Our duty in Palestine to make peace was and remains our primary practical duty as well as the duty of noblesse oblige." (New York Time, July 18, 1937.)

Mr. Magnes minced no words about the Balfour era. "I agree that the present system must go," he stated. "It has proved its inefficiency," it has been a "government by seesaw," favoring or punishing the Arabs or the Zionists as their turn came. Magnes came out for "freely and openly negotiated agreements between Jews and Arabs." He maintains that British imperialist rule under this Balfour era was opposed to a rapprochement between Jews and Arabs. He contends that an understanding with the Arabs could bring about the settling of "many hundreds of thousands of persecuted Jews in various Arab lands" and that "without Arab consent even our four hundred thousand in Palestine remain in jeopardy despite the momentary protection of British bayonets."

There were always elements among the Jews in Palestine pressing for an understanding with the Arabs. The Magnes-Bregmann group, *Brith Shalom*, has been in existence for over ten years. At a certain juncture in the development of the Jewish community in Palestine even the president of the

World Zionist Organization, Mr. Chaim Weizman, came out for a bi-national state in Palestine, with Jews and Arabs on an equal basis, as a means of reaching an understanding. For this heresy he was sharply attacked by various Zionists and made to resign the presidency at the World Zionist Congress in 1931. (Re-elected in 1933). At the last World Zionist Congress in Zurich in 1937 the left-wing faction of the Zionist Organization, *Hashomir Hatzoir* (Young Guardian) favored this idea of a bi-national state. At that congress hopes for success under the Declaration and the Mandate had all but faded, resulting in the stand of the *Hashomir Hatzoir*, counterposing thereby the plea of the Wetmann-Ben Gurion leadership for patriotism.

UNITED FRONT OF PALESTINE JEWS FOR UNDERSTANDING WITH ARABS

As a result of developments of the last three years and of the changing moods and policies at the Colonial Office and in Downing Street in London, there was brought about a new alignment of forces among Jews in Palestine favoring and understanding with the Arabs. One may safely state that this development is of major significance for the Jews in Palestine, as well as abroad.

There appeared recently a magazine of this group called *Al Parashat Derakhenu* (at our cross-roads) participated in by contributors representing a cross section of the Jewish people in Palestine. There are in this group the representatives of the *Haschomer Hatzoir* and of the *Left Poale Zion*; the leader of the *Histadruth* (Jewish Labor Federation), S. Kaplansky, member of the Executive of the Jewish Agency; there are a number of professors of the Hebrew University, a representative of the intelligentsia, the Hebrew poet Benjamin; there is also the representative of the bourgeoisie, or large plantators, Kalwariski. The leit motif of the

magazine is: we have overlooked the Arab problem.

The representative of the Haschomer Hatzoir (Nathan Hofesh) reminds us that for years the Arab problem was simply brushed aside; people looking towards an understanding with the Arabs were considered traitors. Now it becomes clear, he states, that "the fate and the interests of the Jewish people must be linked with the fate and interests of the Arab people." Mr. Kalwariski comes out with a veritable "J'accuse" against the Zionist leadership. He recites a number of instances (in 1919, 1920, 1930, 1931) to show that the Arabs were always ready to come to terms but that in each instance the Zionist leadership broke off negotiations at the instigation of British authorities.

A most serious accusation!

Mr. Kalwariski, who participated in some of the negotiations in the past, is confident that an understanding with the Arabs can be reached.

The leader of the Left Poale Zion, M. Erem, contributes a withering criticism of the attitude of the leadership of the Histadruth towards the Arabs. All contact with Arab toilers was shunned and avoided, he states, citing a number of glaring examples.

The poet, Benjamin, winds up the first issue of the magazine with a call to action. "This magazine," he states, "expresses the mood of groups and personalities in the Zionist camp, young and old, of a variety of classes and parties, amongst them people who consider themselves extreme Zionists. 'Al Parashat Derakhenu expresses opinions which must be turned into deeds."

This group has already held meetings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Again, we consider this development as one of major importance. This united front on a program of understanding with the Arabs may well be the beginning of a broad move-

ment which will help bring about a solution for the long suffering land and its people.

We know little of what is going on among the Arabs. Last year, when the second World Youth Congress was held in Poughkeepsie, New York, we had the occasion to hear the opinions of the Arab delegates whose program for a free and democratic Palestine included autonomy for the Jews. However, we must mainly rely on the Jews living in Palestine who certainly know the attitude of the Arabs. People who have lived in Palestine for nearly half a century, like Kalwariski, as well as leaders like Dr. Magnes, S. Kaplanski and others, some of whom having personally negotiated with Arabs more than once, no doubt have full knowledge of the true state of affairs.

The Arabs are opposed to the Chamberlain White Paper.

FASCISTS — ARAB AND JEWISH

There certainly are fascist elements among the Arabs, particularly among those surrounding the Mufti clique. It is idle, however, to constantly point to this clique as proof of the impossibility of an understanding. It is the mass of the Arab people desiring to live in peace who must be considered. It is the leaders representing the toilers, the small people, the intelligentsia that we must look forward to. It is they who loom largely before the Magneses, the Einsteins, the Kaplanskys, etc. One may be permitted to suspect that the Mufti is deliberately being built up as a bugaboo by people who do not want an understanding and who clamor for a "return to Balfour." The first argument of such people is: "Understanding with whom, with the Mufti?"

The Mufti clique is no doubt going to be a serious obstacle which will have to be surmounted. The same applies to certain forces among Jews, in the Zionist leadership. The same applies to the Jewish fascists, the Revisionists.

Listen to what the magazine of this party in New York, the Amerikaner Yiddishe Zeitung has to say (as quoted in the Zionist New York Morning Journal, May 28):

"For years we have warned the Jews not to insult the fascist regime in Italy. Let us be frank before we accuse others of the recent anti-Jewish laws in Italy; why not first accuse our own radical groups who are responsible for what has happened?"

These Jewish fascists (who were sharply rebuked by the Morning Journal, as well as by the Labor Zionist Kemfer for June 2nd) have certainly contributed their share to the turmoil in Palestine. One can get an idea of their role in the red hot atmosphere of Palestine if they go to the extent of exposing themselves in New York as agents of Mussolini. We have it on the authority of the well-informed London paper, *The Week*, which stated in its issue for July 13, 1938:

" . . . Terroristic bands of both people (Jewish and Arab) are being financed from Rome and Berlin. . . . The Italians, for instance, now frankly assert that the success of certain groups of Jewish terrorists in Palestine is due to the fact (they say) that the Italian government placed at the disposal of a well-known revisionist organization a training ship."

It is obvious that an understanding between Jews and Arabs will not be easily attained. More serious than the fascist cliques and die-hards are the deep-set hatreds and prejudices among the two nationalities born out of years of chauvinistic propaganda and bloody strife. **It will not be easy** but there is no other way out. **An understanding offers a solution.**

How is it going to take shape? Will the Jews remain a minority? What about immigration?

MAJORITY-MINORITY PROBLEM

It is of course not for us to go into the details of the agreement to be arrived at by the representatives of the Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Such details can hardly enter into the preliminary discussions among Jews and Arabs in Palestine themselves. What is necessary first is good-will, the realization that an understanding must be reached. The details will have to be worked out. Many a compromise will have to be made by either side. Some preliminary steps will have to be taken which might not even be directly connected with the negotiations. For instance, the building of Jewish-Arab trade unions and the abolishing of all racial picketing and boycotts would be an essential step to create the proper **atmosphere** for an understanding.

However, it is clear that the following questions will come up for discussion: Status of the Jewish minority; immigration; land purchases; relations with Great Britain. Inasmuch as the attitude of the Jews outside of Palestine, as well as the attitude of the people of the United States and Great Britain will have considerable influence on the negotiations, it is important for us to be clear on these subjects.

The minority-majority question came up only recently. For years Zionist leaders themselves denied the intention of majorizing the Arabs. More than once these leaders in attempting to allay the fears of the local Arab population denied any such intentions on the part of the Zionist movement. For instance, in 1931 the president of the World Zionist Organization, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, stated before the **World Zionist Congress**:

"I have no sympathy or understanding with the demand for a Jewish majority in Palestine. . . . A majority is not required for the development of Jewish civilization and culture."

As stated above, in those days Dr. Weizmann favored the idea of a bi-national Jewish-Arab state.

No majority, be it Jewish or Arab, can look with favor upon deliberate attempts to turn it into a minority. It is for this reason that the Weizmanns made such statements then. The same reasons hold true now. It will do nobody any good to overlook realities. Regrettable as certain figures may be, they must be considered. It is for this reason that Dr. Magnes states (in his letter to the New York Times quoted above) that it would be best to leave out the majority-minority question from the negotiations, meaning that negotiations are to base themselves on preserving the status quo during the duration of the agreement.

Dr. Magnes insists on an agreement for a limited period. The idea is to introduce peace and neighborly relations into the country without obligating anybody to pledge himself for eternity. **Under conditions of peace and good-will the Majority-Minority question will lose its acuteness.** We may add that under democracy and the free play of forces the minority question is bound to fade into comparative insignificance as is the case in democratic and free countries. Particularly, since in Palestine the districts where Jews constitute a majority will enjoy special rights.

The Jewish minority, because of its economic and cultural preponderance, will wield an enormous influence upon the country as well as nearby Arab states if peace and neighborly relations are attained. Which brings us to the subject of immigration.

REFUGEES — WHERE ARE THEY TO GO?

Nearly one hundred thousand Jews left the former Austrian territory in 1938. Palestine admitted during that year no more than 12,000 immigrants from all countries. No more than 6,000 Austrian Jews went to Palestine out of a 100,000 leaving.

No doubt many more than 6,000 might have gone to Palestine had there been less restrictions, yet it is clear that anybody pointing to Palestine as the only possible haven for refugees is **not doing them any service.** Anybody leaving out of the picture countries like the United States, Canada, the Latin-American countries, etc., is simply not trying to find a haven for the refugees, since it is clear that these countries will have to take (and do take) the bulk of those groups fleeing the fascist hell.

Palestine will have to be one of the countries providing a haven for the refugees **only under conditions of peace and neighborly relations.** Without that even those few thousand which can be brought over will find **no haven.**

Immigration will no doubt be a major problem during the negotiations. Superficially the Arabs may be justified in pointing out that Palestine is a very small and very poor country (the size of the state of Vermont, with no minerals except for the potash deposits of the Dead Sea, without forests, with comparatively much barren and swampy land). Nevertheless, Palestine will continue to attract Jews, particularly religious Jews and others with an attachment for the spot which **did** play a part in Jewish history. This has nothing to do with the claim of "historic rights" of many centuries ago which we must reject when they come in conflict with realities (which they invariably do). While realizing that the world cannot be redivided and nations shifted in order to satisfy such claims, the particular appeal of a certain country to certain groups of people must be recognized. This the Arabs will have to take into consideration when the fear of becoming "majorized" will be gone.

The argument that an understanding will limit immigration, compared with immigration prior to 1936, is not valid. Not merely so because it is idle to overlook what **did** take place

since 1936; because refugees arriving under conditions of turmoil are not much helped. The truth of the matter is that by fighting an understanding one is fighting immigration!

We have seen what Dr. Magnes has to say on this subject: "With Arab consent (he states) we could settle many hundreds of thousands of persecuted Jews in many Arab lands. That is worth a real price." As if to concretize this statement, the Iraq delegation to the London conferences in February, 1939, stated that there would be room in Iraq alone for 300,000 Jewish immigrants (according to a Jewish Telegraphic Agency cable, February 11). And here we may be permitted to repeat the statement of Professor Einstein: "Let us recall that in former times no people lived in greater friendship with us than the ancestors of these same Arabs." One of the most glorious chapters of Jewish history was written in Spain under Arab rule.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF PALESTINE

In appraising the forces favoring an understanding one must not overlook the Communist Party of Palestine, which constitutes quite a force, both among Jews and Arabs working for an amicable solution.

In August, 1938, the Communist Party of Palestine submitted a memorandum to the Woodhead Commission (which was supposed to take up the Peel plan for partition). In that memorandum the Communist Party states:

"They (the Jewish masses) are interested in the solution of their national, social and economic problems, and they are prepared to accept any solution which will grant them national, social and economic rights in Palestine as in every other country of the world. On such a basis there is a way to an Arab-Jewish understanding in Palestine.

"According to proposals put forward at various occa-

sions by the representatives of the Arab people in and outside of Palestine the Arabs would be prepared to come to an understanding with the Zionists on the following basis:

"Abolition of the Balfour Declaration. Full democratic rights for the entire population of Palestine. National, cultural and religious autonomy for the Jewish section of the Palestinian population. Observation of the existing numerical ratio between the Jewish and Arab sections of the Palestinian population. Protection of peasant and tenant farmers against dispossession.

" . . . Once the nightmare of British imperialist domination and the partition of the country is taken from the Arab people, the present period of suspicion and hostility would give way to a new era of friendship and trust. The Arab countries would again throw open their doors to Jewish refugees from countries of Fascist suppression as they have done many a time during the past centuries." (emphasis mine).

There is some similarity between this program and the (vague) plan outlined by Magnes and the ideas expressed by Einstein. The Communist Party, which unites both Arab and Jewish toilers, and is wielding quite an influence over Arabs and Jews, is speaking the language of the broadest masses of the population.

The Communist Party has from the very beginning adopted the position that the struggle in Palestine is basically that of a colonial people for its liberations and independence. We have seen that the Peel Commission was forced to grant that. Dr. Magnes, in the aforementioned letter, calls the outbreaks on the part of the Arabs "rebellion" ("it is the proper term," he parenthetically adds). The united front around *Al Parashat Derakhenu* admits the mistake of ignoring Arab demands. The *Haschomer Natzoir* is ready for

a bi-national state; so was Dr. Weizmann in 1930-31. The Communist Party, from the very start of the "Balfour era" did not overlook the basic character of the unrest in Palestine. Considering that the Arabs of Syria and Egypt fought for independence — and there were bloody struggles in those countries — one must not wonder when Palestinian Arabs do likewise. In fact, it would have been unnatural to expect them to be different from all colonial peoples.

Al Parashat Derakhenu is now recognizing that Zionist leadership was too subservient to the Colonial Office in London: the Communist Party has been accusing the Zionist leadership of playing the game of British imperialism in Palestine, thereby contributing to the cause of turmoil. **Al Parashat Derakhenu** now openly states that anybody expressing sentiments for an understanding was branded a traitor; the Communist Party of Palestine has shared this fate with all people looking for an amicable solution. The main object of the Communist Party has been all along to build the unity of all toilers, Jews and Arabs, in order to liberate the country from under imperialist oppression, which is the main source for national discord and bloodshed.

The Communist Party did not overlook the new elements introduced into the Palestinian struggles by the fascist axis. The clearest statement on this point is to be found in an editorial in the January, 1939 issue of the Communist International (English edition) where the machinations of the Nazis in Palestine and the entire Far East is reviewed. The editorial places the blame for the unrest: 1) on British imperialism and the Chamberlain line of appeasement; 2) on Hitler and Mussolini, who are incited to further aggression because of this line; 3) on certain Jewish bourgeois leaders who follow the line of British imperialism; 4) on the "reactionary elements among the Arabs who constantly betray the interests of their own country" (the editorial particularly

singles out the Mufti who is branded "a bought agent of German fascism"). Fascism in Palestine cannot be fought by siding with British imperialism and relying on its "strong hand," but by **uniting** the people, Jew and Arab.

While outlining the role of the Communist Party of Palestine — a clear cut role of a party fighting for the interests of the broadest masses of the population, Jews and Arabs, we are not unmindful of the fact that there have always been attempts to misrepresent this role. We do not claim infallibility for the Communist Party of Palestine; the Zionist or any other party cannot claim that. One must not forget that the Communist Party of Palestine works under conditions of **illegality** (the only party of the people to enjoy such privileges at the hands of British imperialism). Its leadership is hounded, persecuted, too often arrested by the British rulers and replaced by the masses with inexperienced workers and peasants. That mistakes should occur under such conditions and in an atmosphere of violent national struggles, suspicions and prejudices, is to be expected. However, it is the **correct and unswerving line** of the Party as outlined above which has made it so unpopular with British imperialism and the reactionaries and fascists of all camps.

That misrepresentations (and worse means) should be employed against the Communist Party of Palestine is to be expected. Such methods are used against all communist parties.

It might be said in passing that in all British and Zionist documents, reports, investigations and all kind of official papers (and there has been quite a crop of them) **not one word** is mentioned about the Communist Party as a factor adding to the causes of national strife. And no wonder; the **reverse** has been the case.

THE ROLE OF LABOR ZIONISM

The above mentioned editorial of the Communist International states:

"The native Jewish population in Palestine lived for centuries in brotherliness and friendship with the Arabs. The workers and peasants among the Jewish emigrants and the entire working class Jewish population can and wish to live in peace with the native Arabs. If the Jewish workers can compel the reactionary leaders of the Histadruth trade unions to finish with their policy of disunion and create a united workers' movement, this unity would deal British imperialism and German and Italian fascism a serious blow. Such unity is a guarantee of brotherliness and friendships between the Jewish and Arab workers. It alone can lead to the restoration of peace in Palestine and to the withdrawal of German and Italian fascist influence."

The Histadruth (Jewish Labor Federation) can truly play an historic role in bringing about peace and understanding. Unfortunately, the Ben Gurion leadership of the Histadruth has been following a policy of disunion. This has not been the policy of the entire leadership. S. Kaplansky, who is to be found in the *Al Parashat Derakhenu* united front for an understanding, is but one of those who are in disagreement with Ben Gurion's pro-imperialist and chauvinistic leadership which has kept Jewish and Arab workers apart and has introduced racial unionism and racial picketing to Palestine.

A cable in the *New York Times* of June 1 (1939) states that even in the charged atmosphere following the issuance of the White Paper, the picketing against Arab workers was decided upon at a conference in Tel Aviv. This might have come as a blow to many a sincere Labor Zionist who

has been denying the fact that such things existed in Palestine. We do not blame Labor Zionists for refusing to believe such facts, or the fact that Arabs are not admitted into membership in the Histadruth. However, **one must face realities** no matter how unpleasant. Only then can they be rectified.

Those Labor Zionists refusing to believe that Arabs are not admitted into the Histadruth would do well to know their own literature. The authority of Labor Zionism, A. Revusky states in his pamphlet *The Histadruth* (published by the League for Labor Palestine, New York, 1938):

"The methods to be adopted in organizing Arab workers is one of the hardest problems confronting the Histadruth. Some of its members, particularly those of the Left, strongly urge the Histadruth to open its doors to Arab workers who are ready to join its trade unions. The majority of Palestine's labor leaders are, however, of the opinion that the Histadruth because of its specific function, the building of the Jewish National Home, is not suited, as such, to accept the Arabs in its own unions." (p. 36).

The Histadruth leadership has evolved an intricate system of separate Arab unions, to be affiliated with the Histadruth through a super structure to be known as *The Workers Alliance of Palestine*. Mr. Revusky admits that this system does not work.

"The opinion has been frequently expressed (he states) that the unsatisfactory results of the Histadruth's attempts to organize the Arab workers are due primarily to the devious and complicated organizational methods adopted for this purpose. In any case, the Histadruth has not yet reached a final conclusion, and a new effort to solve the problem in a practical and brotherly spirit may be expected. Until the unionization of the Arabs,

and the raising of their standard of living close the gap between the minimum wages acceptable to the workers of both nationalities, the Histadruth, striving to facilitate and to accelerate the further upbuilding of the Jewish National Home, will continue to adopt special means to establish Jewish labor in all branches of Palestine's Jewish economy." (p. 37).

"Special means" . . . picketing "for 100 per cent Jewish Labor" as the cable in the New York Times states and similar methods; purely racial unionism. . . . What effect these means had upon national relations in Palestine is obvious. The Jewish writer, Dr. Ch. Zhitlowsky states in the New York Yiddish Daily, The Day for June 11 (1939) that due to such means which he warned against twenty-five years ago "all our relations with the Arabs have since that time become saturated with poison."

Truly, the Histadruth leadership must finish with the policy of disunion and hostility. The adoption of a policy of real (international) unions would go a long way to introduce peace into Palestine. Labor must constitute the backbone in any rapprochement between Jews and Arabs, particularly so since labor holds a dominant position among the Jews.

Labor Zionism has certainly done constructive work among Jews in Palestine. Jewish workers everywhere have shown ability to build. However, we are not reviewing the general role of Labor Zionism or of Zionism as a whole, nor of the first settlers in Palestine, Zionist and non-Zionist. We are concerned here with one problem, that of introducing peace to Palestine.

Too many well-meaning people have committed the serious mistake of overlooking the larger problem because of achievements in the building of institutions and in the field of colonization, important as these achievements may be. The political problem of Palestine, that of a colonial country, and

the problem of Arab-Jewish relations overshadow all achievements. Without solving these problems all construction is shaky and may come to naught.

The communists have long ago stressed the role the Histadruth must play and the importance of turning the trade union movement in Palestine into a bona fide movement of united trade unionists irrespective of nationality, race, creed or color. This is testified to by a program outlined by the Jewish Bureau of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., in December, 1935, containing the following points:

1. All workers, regardless of race and nationality, shall be accepted into the unions of the Histadruth.
2. Likewise, all agricultural workers, Arab tenant farmers, should be organized together with Jewish tenant farmers in one body.
3. The Zionist leaders must declare that they are for a truly democratic parliament in Palestine which should safeguard the full equality and all rights for the Jewish minority and its national development.
4. Struggle against British imperialism, for a free Palestine.
5. Free immigration under conditions 1 and 2.
6. No land shall be bought without the previous consent of the peasants working the land.

This program was outlined at a time when the hand of fascism was not yet felt in Palestine, which explains the absence of any point on this score. The program also contained a point on the abolition of the rule of the Church and the cancellation of the then existing transfer-agreement between the Zionist organization and the German government. The six points quoted here are basic and as valid now as they had been when they were originally formulated, with the addition, of course, of fighting fascism alongside with British imperialism and the agents of fascism among Arabs (the Mufti-clique) and Jews (the revisionists). These

points testify to the fact that the Communist Party has all along been bending its efforts for the purpose of bringing about an understanding, with the **unity of all toilers as a primary step**. In this the Histadruth must play the main role, a role cast for it by history.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

The main job will have to be done in Palestine. But Jews over there look forward to the Jews abroad and the sentiments of these Jews, particularly in the United States, will have considerable weight. Once Jewish public opinion in the United States and other countries will favor an understanding with the Arabs it will be difficult for the Weizmann-Ben Gurion leadership to maintain the old line or to maintain itself in a leading position. Most important of all, our sentiments for an understanding, openly expressed, will have an encouraging and stimulating effect upon Jews in Palestine, as well as upon Arabs.

There are over 50,000 Arabs in New York. The sentiments for an understanding when crystallized would no doubt bring together Arabs and Jews in New York, in some way. This would again have a direct influence on Arabs and Jews in Palestine. An Arab-Jewish committee in New York may even take the initiative in starting negotiations over there, though there seems to be no lack of contact between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. Dr. Ch. Weizmann himself has been negotiating with the Egyptian-Arab leaders concerning Palestine affairs.

Jews in the United States, Great Britain and other countries must align themselves with progressive forces generally for a solution of the Palestinian problem. Jews in Palestine, as well as Arabs have as their allies the peoples of Great Britain and the United States. As stated above the struggle

against Chamberlain and British Imperialism does not mean a struggle against England. Jews and Arabs in Palestine must rely on British Democracy and must strive for a working-agreement or pact between a free and democratic Palestine and Great Britain.

This is most essential. It would be idle to repeat slogans which are not adopted for present day emergencies. Nowadays one cannot talk about removing British influence from Palestine altogether; small countries, if these countries do not want to be devoured by the fascists must orientate themselves on the great democracies. Jews and Arabs in Palestine must orientate themselves on the people of Great Britain and the United States. With the aid of the people of Great Britain even a Chamberlain government can be forced to make concessions and the **White Paper rectified to guarantee democracy in Palestine and to facilitate an Arab-Jewish understanding**.

Progressives in the United States were aroused over the White Paper. They are concerned with conditions in Palestine. It was a serious mistake, however, to direct the assistance of progressives like Senator Wagner, Mayor La Guardia and numerous others into the channels of Balfourism. The slogan "a return to Balfour," as shown above is both misleading and dangerous. So is the speculation on what a Labor government would do. **The Passfield White Paper annulling Balfourism was issued by such a government.**

The "assistance" of people like Congressman Hamilton Fish can only arouse suspicion. In the name of Jewish refugees they howl for an open door in Palestine **in order to slam before them the American door**. When a Republican reactionary clamors for the Balfour Declaration (and nothing but) there **must** be something wrong.

The good offices of progressive leaders and the influence

of the New Deal Administration can be instrumental in initiating negotiations for an understanding.

The realization on the part of many Jews that it is in the interests of the Jews themselves to consider the Arab demands is a hopeful sign. At no time since the issuance of the Balfour Declaration was there such sentiment for an understanding. The communists are not alone any more, neither is Dr. Magnes. There is Professor Albert Einstein. There is the United Front of *Al Parashat Derakhenu*. There is the realization that the line of the Weizmann-Ben Gurion leadership must be abandoned. The sentiment against this line is growing among Zionists in the United States. Rabbi Moshe Blau of Jerusalem, President of the Palestine Agudath Israel organization, in a statement to the correspondent of the New York Times, appealed "for the genuine reversal of Zionist policy in Palestine toward a true Arab-Jewish understanding" (New York Times, June 26, 1939). According to the Times correspondent Rabbi Blau speaks for about 25 per cent of the Jewish population of Palestine.

There is a solution — an understanding. This will bring peace. This will offer a real haven to the refugees already there and will open many if not all Arab countries to the victims of fascism.