

Conflict over Palestine

Zionism & the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 1945-1947

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ABSTRACT

Shai M. Tamari – Conflict over Palestine: Zionism & the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry,
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The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry was charged in 1946 with finding solutions for the Jewish Holocaust survivors still lingering in displaced persons' camps across Europe, and with proposing ways to end the continuous friction among Jews and Arabs in Palestine. The paper addresses the impact that Zionism had on both the Jewish Holocaust survivors in the displaced people's camps, and the Zionist leaders who preached its validity to the Committee. The paper makes a distinction between the *idea* of Zionism and the *practice* of Zionism, and argues that the idea of Zionism was needed by the Holocaust survivors as it gave them hope, but that the practice of establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine endangered the possibility for a safe and prosperous life for the Jewish people, because the Jewish state would be established in a hostile environment. It argues that the need for cooperation between Jews and Arabs, rather than competition, is still valid today.

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"...Any man [or woman...] who denies justice to someone he hates prepares the way for a denial of justice to someone he loves."

Wendell Willkie¹

¹ Bosworth, Patricia. *Anything Your Little Heart Desires: An American Family Story* (New York, N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1997), p. 186.

Introduction

“There are some who want the State for the State’s sake. They are State mad, not realising that the State is something these days that perhaps needs revision in its old conception and practice of the State...”² These were the words of Dr. Judah Magnes, head of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, as he testified in front of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on March 14, 1946. The State he was referring to was the Jewish State planned for Palestine, and the people at whom he was aiming his accusations included the Jewish Agency, the official representative of the Jewish people in Palestine. Dr. Magnes told the Committee that the Jewish people did not require a Jewish state, either in order to assist the Jewish survivors in displaced persons’ camps in post-war Europe or to meet the needs of those Jews living in Palestine already. Indeed, he claimed, all that the Jewish people needed was the ability to immigrate to Palestine and to live a peaceful life. He did not believe in partitioning Palestine or of having a majority of any kind rule over a minority, both of which he predicted would lead to endless friction between Jews and Arabs. Thus, Dr. Magnes was able to distinguish between what many Jews really wanted – to practice Zionism by establishing a Jewish state, and what they must have – a peaceful and prosperous life. He understood that the two were incompatible, simply because the establishment of a Jewish state would happen in an area populated by non-Jews, the Arabs of Palestine. He predicted that the practice of Zionism would not meet the needs of those who advocated its ideology. His arguments were convincing to the Anglo-American Committee, which had just been charged with determining the fate of Palestine.

² Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Jewish Problems in Palestine and Europe. *Public Hearings, 1945-1948* (Switzerland: Zug, 1977), p. 31. Hearing took place in Jerusalem, Palestine, on March 14, 1946.

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (henceforth the Committee) was established at the end of 1945 by the British and American governments, and conducted its investigation in the early months of 1946. The Committee was charged with finding solutions for the Jewish Holocaust survivors still lingering in Displaced Persons' (DP) camps across Europe, and with proposing ways to end the continuous friction among the various groups in Palestine, and between them and the British Mandatory government.

This paper addresses the impact that Zionism – Jewish nationalism, which aimed at protecting the Jewish people from anti-Semitism – had on both the Jewish Holocaust survivors, and the Zionist leaders who preached its validity to the Committee. It makes a distinction between *needs* – what people must have to live a prosperous life (such as physical safety, the freedom to practice one's religion and culture without fear, and to be free from domination by another power), and *interests* – what people really want, even though it is not necessary for a prosperous life. When Jewish Holocaust survivors followed the *idea* of Zionism, they were attempting to meet their needs for a secure and prosperous life after years in Nazi camps - they believed that Zionism could provide them what they so desired. When Jews who arrived into Palestine *practiced* Zionism, they were attempting to meet their interests by establishing a Jewish state. The practice of Zionism – the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine - endangered the possibility for a safe and prosperous life because the Jewish state would be established in a hostile environment. The Arabs of Palestine, like the Jews, also *needed* to not be governed by others after centuries of occupation by the Ottoman Empire and the British. However, like the Jewish Agency, Arab leaders had an interest in establishing their own state in Palestine, if only to guarantee self-governance in the twentieth century nation-state module.

The Committee understood that the Holocaust survivors needed an ideology to pull them out of the depths of despair to which they had sunk after the war, but that the practice

of an ideology, which provided rights and benefits to one people on a land where two peoples lived, could only end in disaster and an ever-lasting conflict. The Zionist leaders in Palestine, through the Jewish Agency, were interested in having a Jewish State on the entire area of British-mandated Palestine. Considering that there was an Arab majority in Palestine, this would mean that the Jewish minority would then govern the majority - an idea and practice that would not be tolerated by the Arabs, and thus end in conflict.

The argument this paper poses is simple and straightforward: When the Committee recommended allowing 100,000 Jewish Holocaust survivors into Palestine, but did not allow for the creation of either a Jewish or an Arab state in all or part of Palestine, the Committee was acting on its understanding that the *needs* of the Jewish Holocaust survivors in the DP camps and the Jews in Palestine, were inconsistent with the *interests* of these same people. The Committee thus followed Dr. Magnes's recommendations. They, like Dr. Magnes, attempted to see all sides of the conflict, and find a resolution to benefit both Jews and Arabs without being biased in favour of either side, and without considering the interests of outside forces, including their own governments. Although the interests and needs of the Arabs of Palestine, the British, and the Americans would have a great impact on the eventual decisions on the future of Palestine, this paper focuses on Jewish needs and interests. It does so because it was the interests of Zionist-Jews to have a state in Palestine that was the root of the conflict, and it was the Zionist leaders' insistence on controlling Palestine that set in motion Arabs' suspicion and hostility towards the Jewish population of Palestine.

The Committee's recommendation that the Arabs and Jews should not be separated in Palestine, but rather brought together to cooperate towards working for a better life, are still valid today, over sixty years later. The Committee members were driven by a sincere desire to inquire and understand the conflict between Palestinian-Arabs and Palestinian-

Jews.³ By going back to the “basics,” as they understood them, one might be able to comprehend better a conflict that has gone on for too long, and is in much need of a resolution.

Although many secondary sources have been used towards this research, this paper relies mostly on records of the Committee’s hearings, the perspectives of various parties to the conflict, and the memoirs of Committee members. I have focused particularly on Richard Crossman’s memoir, *Palestine Mission – A Personal Record* (1947) because it addresses many of the central questions of this paper. Crossman’s attempt to understand the conflict is the backbone of this paper.⁴

³ During the British Mandate, which lasted from 1922 until 1948, all inhabitants living in Palestine, except for the British, were considered Palestinian. The two groups were divided between Palestinian-Arabs and Palestinian-Jews. After the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, Palestinian-Jews became “Israelis,” and Palestinian-Arabs became “Palestinians.”

⁴ Prior to becoming a Cabinet Minister in the British Parliament, Richard Crossman served in France and Germany as Deputy Director, Psychological Warfare Division, Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF). Crossman was a student at Oxford and the University of Berlin of philosophy. He was the assistant editor of the Labor Party Weekly, the *New Statesman and Nation*, and joined the Ministry of Information when the WWII erupted. In 1940 he became the director of the German section, Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, where he organised the BBC German broadcast, and then moved to Algeria for similar psychological warfare techniques against the Germans. Crossman became a Member of Parliament in 1945. He was 38 years old when he joined the Committee, and was chosen due to his experience (Podet, 1986:85-88).

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry

The preface of the final report issued by the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on April 20, 1946, stated its four objectives:⁵ The first was to examine the political, economic and social conditions in Palestine “as they bear upon the problem of Jewish immigration and settlement therein and the well-being of the people now living” there. The second was to examine the position of Jewish people in those European countries where they have been the victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution, and “the practical measures taken or contemplated to be taken in those countries to enable them to live free from discrimination,” whether in Palestine or in countries outside of Europe. The third objective was to “hear the views of competent witnesses and to consult representative Arabs and Jews on the problem of Palestine,” and to make recommendations to the US and British governments based on those hearings and other investigations. The fourth and last objective was to make recommendations to the US and British governments for corrective action in those European countries, where Jewish refugees recently liberated from concentration camps had opted to remain, or to facilitate their emigration and settlements in countries outside Europe.

The reasons for the establishment of the Committee were numerous, and each side, the American and the British, had their own goals. From the American perspective, when WWII ended, US President Harry Truman saw the need for a speedy and positive solution for the tragic situation of Jewish refugees in Europe, whether due to his compassion for the suffering of the European Jews, his guilt that the US did not assist earlier in protecting Jews from Nazi prosecution, political pressure from within the US, American immigration laws that prevented Jewish immigration into its borders after WWII, or a combination of

⁵ Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. *Report to the United States Government and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, Lausanne, Switzerland, April 20, 1946*, p. vii.

all of the above. British Prime Minister Clement Atlee was under US pressure to allow 100,000 Jews into Palestine, and pressured from within to solve the problem of Palestine, where his troops were under daily attacks by Jewish brigades.⁶

The British had received a mandate to govern Palestine from the League of Nations in the 1920 San Remo conference, charged by the League to prepare Palestine for independence. The failure of the British to move Palestine towards independence was frustrating its inhabitants (both Arabs and Jews), who felt they had to fight the British for what they considered to be their rights. British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was interested in involving the US government in forming a policy on Palestine for two primary reasons: to reduce the pressure the British government was receiving from the US to allow Jewish refugees into Palestine, and to reduce the growing popularity of the Soviet Union and its influence over Jews in Europe and the population living in Palestine. Bevin told his cabinet colleagues that American agitation over the Palestine issue “was poisoning British relations with the United States Government on other issues.”⁷ Bevin accused the US of using the plight of Jewish Holocaust survivors for political gain, and accused Zionist propaganda in New York of diminishing the possibility of bringing Jews and Arabs to the negotiation table. By involving the US government in Palestine, Bevin hoped to prevent the US from returning to isolationism, as happened after WWI, and increase the possibilities of the US adopting a British course in the Middle East. And so a committee was formed with twelve members, six British and six Americans, to inquire, investigate, and provide solutions to the dilemmas these two nations faced in a region both knew

⁶ The figure of 100,000 was due to a report written by Earl Harrison, who was commissioned by President Truman to survey the DP camps in Europe.

⁷ Kochavi, Arie J. *Post-Holocaust Politics – Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945-1948* (Chapel Hill, NC & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 102.

would become the new “battlefield” over opinion and oil.⁸ The formation of the Committee was not an intellectual exercise by the US and British government, but a sincere attempt to solve the settlement problem of the Jews in the DP camps, and to end the disaster that was Palestine. The Committee was promised by British Foreign Secretary Bevin that if they reached their solutions unanimously, the recommendations would be followed through.

It was Bevin who decided on the qualifications of the Committee members: No Arabs, no Jews, and no women. Each member had to be a person of “sound common sense and integrity,” and most importantly, none of them could have committed to one side of the issue of Palestine.⁹ The original plan was to find experts to become members of the Committee, but none could be found who had not already taken a public position on the issue. And so, on the British side, the members were mostly politicians - a judicious balance of various shades of political opinions – A Labour peer, a Labour MP, a Conservative MP, an academic, an international labour organiser, and an economist. The British team was in stark contrast to the American team, who were predominantly Democrats, but did not hold government office.¹⁰ They included a Court of Appeal judge, the editor of the Boston Herald, a former chairman of the board of the Foreign Policy Association and High Commissioner for Refugees, an academic, a career diplomat, and a San-Francisco lawyer. Richard Crossman, MP, remarked that “our committee had several unusual features. It was Anglo-American and it was composed of men who were not

⁸ There was a deliberate attempt by both the US and Britain not to involve the Soviets in the Committee, as both the US and Britain wanted to minimize any influence the Soviets may have on the Middle East. Ivan Maisky, the former Soviet Ambassador to London, commented to the Committee that, “Your country [the US] has made the situation rather difficult by not insisting that Russia be represented on your committee of inquiry. The fact that Russia is not represented can only lead to delay” (Crum, 1947:64). Maisky was warning that because of Britain’s activities in the Middle East, it may make it impossible for Russia to accept the Committee’s recommendation.

⁹ Podet, Allen H. *The Success and Failure of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 1945-1946 – Last Chance in Palestine* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), p. 82.

¹⁰ Ibid.

specialist but representatives of the man in the street. We were more like a jury than a commission.”¹¹

Although Allen H. Podet argues that the Committee members maintained their integrity throughout, developing wise and informed assessments of a complex problem, others were less impressed with the committee’s project.¹² One of them was Omar DeJany, a young Palestinian-Arab who testified in front of the Committee in Jerusalem, arguing that,

Killing a man and walking in his funeral is a known proverb, but harming a man and inquiring from his people about the cause for their sorrow is a case which no vocabulary has yet known, but... should be added to the English one... There is nothing more strange on behalf of the English than appointing committees of inquiry as though they do not know the causes and remedies... as though they are not... responsible for our difficulties.¹³

Nachmani argues in *Great Power Discord in Palestine* (1987), that one of the differences between the American and British teams was that the Americans were much more aloof from political entanglements in Palestine. “They could maintain the stances of objective observers, feeling sympathy for the enterprising spirit of the Jewish pioneers and contempt for the imperial power which was caught in the middle.”¹⁴

The Committee assembled in Washington, DC, on Friday, January 4th, 1946. Its inquiries would take them from the US capital to the British capital, then into Europe, where they divided into sub-committees, and conducted investigations in Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Italy, and Greece. In Europe they talked to British and

¹¹ Crossman, Richard, MP. *Palestine Mission – A Personal Record* (New York & London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1947) p. vii.

¹² Podet, Allen H. *The Success and Failure*, p. 11.

¹³ Nachmani, Amikam. *Great Power Discord in Palestine – The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry into the Problem of European Jewry and Palestine, 1945-1946* (London: Frank Cass, 1987), pp. 87-88. Ironically, DeJany was referring to the Arabs of Palestine, yet the same could have been argued by the Jews in Europe, who were forbidden by British forces to immigrate to Palestine.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

US commanders, leaders of nations, religious leaders, and many Jewish Holocaust survivors. From Europe they travelled to the Middle East, and visited Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi-Arabia, Trans-Jordan, and of course, Palestine. They spoke to sheikhs, presidents, kibbutz farmers, British intelligence officers, Haganah members, Zionist leaders, and advocates for an independent Arab nation in Palestine. They left for Switzerland on March 28th, 1946, and less than a month later, produced their report.

The Committee was the seventeenth to investigate Palestine, so it was no wonder that Albert Einstein declared the Committee a “smoke screen,” when he was questioned by the Committee in Washington, DC, arguing that the Colonial office would impose its own policies, and that he was “absolutely convinced that the council [Committee] will have no effect.”¹⁵ One did not to have come up with the theory of relativity to understand that nations tend to pursue their own interests, even in the face of opposing recommendations from their own representatives.

The “death” of the Committee’s report occurred on July 25, 1946, just three months after its publication. It was the day the British government announced it was going to hold discussions in London on the Committee’s recommendations with Arab, Jewish, and American leaders. The Jewish delegation refused to attend, and the Arab delegation, which needed to be prompted to attend, showed signs of discontent with the recommendations. The British were already looking at other options, which would better please the warring Arab and Zionist sides, and find a way out of the hole into which the British had dug themselves.

The Committee’s report, comprising 92 pages, was unpopular with the British, the Arabs, and the Jews. Its ten recommendations dealt with immigration, land policy, equality of standards, economy, and education. Not surprisingly, the second

¹⁵ Crum, Bartley C. *Behind the Silken Curtain*, p. 26.

recommendation called for “100,000 certificates (to) be authorised immediately for the admission into Palestine of Jews who have been the victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution.”¹⁶ This recommendation responded to the immediate need to save and/or improve the lives of those Jewish survivors in the Displaced People’s camps. The third recommendation dealt with the need to prevent future conflicts in Palestine, and the Middle East; it was titled: *Principles of Government: No Arab, No Jewish State*, and read:

In order to dispose, once and for all, of the exclusive claims of Jews and Arabs to Palestine, we regard it as essential that a clear statement of the following principles should be made: I. That Jew[s] shall not dominate Arab[s] and Arab[s] shall not dominate Jew[s] in Palestine. II. That Palestine shall be neither a Jewish state nor an Arab state. III. That the form of government ultimately to be established, shall, under international guarantees, fully protect and preserve the interests in the Holy Land of Christendom and of the Muslim and Jewish faiths... because it is a Holy Land, Palestine is not, and can never become, a land which any race or religion can justly claim as its very own.¹⁷

Through this recommendation, the Committee stressed the importance of calling off any claims either side had for dominating the land, which could only result in war. The report argued that the “Jews have a historic connection with the country,” yet, “Palestine is not, and never can be, a purely Jewish land. It lies at the crossroads of the Arab world. Its Arab population, descended from long-time inhabitants of the area, rightly look upon Palestine as their homeland.” And so the third recommendation concluded: “It is therefore neither just nor practicable that Palestine should become either an Arab State, in which an Arab majority could control the destiny of a Jewish minority, or a Jewish state, in which a Jewish majority would control that of an Arab minority. In neither case would minority guarantees afford adequate protection for the subordinated group.”¹⁸

¹⁶ Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. *Report to the United States Government and His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom, Lausanne, Switzerland, April 20, 1946*, p. 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The report quoted a Palestinian-Jew as saying that in the hearts of the Jews there has always been a fear that some day Palestine would be turned into an Arab State and the Arabs would rule over the Jews. “This fear has at times reached the proportions of terror.” But now he recognised this same feeling of fear had started up in the hearts of the Arabs, “fear lest the Jews acquire the ascendancy and rule over them.”¹⁹ And so the Committee recommended that Palestine be established as,

A country in which the legitimate national aspirations of both Jews and Arabs can be reconciled... In our view this cannot be done under any form of constitution in which a mere numerical majority is decisive, since it is precisely the struggle for a numerical majority which bedevils Arab-Jewish relations. To ensure genuine self-government for both the Arabs and the Jewish communities, this struggle must be made purposeless by the constitution itself.²⁰

The “constitution” the report was referring to was one that would be approved by a combination of the United Nations Trusteeship and British Mandate that would rule over Palestine, until some time when both Arabs and Jews could co-exist together.

What brought the Committee to this conclusion? Why did they refrain from recommending partition of Palestine into a Jewish and Arab State, as the 1937 Peel Commission had? What made them realise the differences between Jewish needs and Jewish interests? It was their travels to, and encounters with, those Jews who were left behind, while their loved ones perished in Europe that most influenced their conclusions. Their interviews with Holocaust survivors played the decisive role in convincing the Committee to differentiate between the need to cling to an ideology for survival, and the danger of its practice.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

²⁰ Ibid.

Zionism and the Displaced Persons' Camps

Following their hearings in Washington, DC, and London, the Committee travelled to Eastern Europe, and conducted its investigation in DP camps, where Jewish survivors were waiting for solutions to their situation. The Committee noticed immediately the influence of the Zionist ideology on the camps inhabitants. The idea of Zionism was extremely attractive to the Jewish survivors in the DP camps, for many reasons: It offered hope and motivation, suggested meaning to the death of their loved ones, and provided meaning for their own survival. They *needed* the ideology of Zionism to lift them up from a place they have been laying for too long; it was simply a question of survival. Edward Shils explains why ideologies are so important to some:

[The] need for an ideology is the intensification of the need for a cognitive and moral map of the universe... An ideology arises because there is a strongly felt need for an explanation of important experiences which the prevailing outlook does not explain, because there is a need for firm guidance of conduct which similarly, is not provided by the prevailing outlook, and because there is a need, likewise strongly felt, for a fundamental vindication and legitimating of the value and dignity of the persons in question.²¹

Mankowitz argues that for Holocaust survivors, Zionism stood for warmth, unquestioning acceptance and security of home; and for the more politically minded, it signified the only real hope for the rescue and rehabilitation of the little that remained of European Jewry, and in the long term, a promise of the Jewish future. Zionism thus was a shared effort to bring order into the survivors' disrupted lives, to make sense of what had befallen them and to find a way of moving forward. In the debilitating context of the survivors' lives, they desperately needed to restore their sense of human worth which had

²¹ Cited in Mankowitz, *Life between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p. 69.

been so mercilessly trampled by the Nazis. “Their Zionism was an attempt to reconstruct their chaotic lives, a bid for meaning and dignity.”²²

If an ideology was *needed* to “rescue” the survivors, why then was it Zionism? Why not Communism, or Socialism, or religious Orthodoxy? Historian Koppel Pinson explains that the events of 1939-1945 seemed to discredit completely those philosophies of Jewish life prevailing before the war, which were not centred on Palestine. The Zionists were the only ones who had a program that seemed to make sense after the Holocaust. The Zionists were organised, active, and militant. Prospects for immigration to Palestine in the earlier period seemed more imminent, and without the prospect of emigration to Palestine there seemed to be no future for them. “Anti-Zionism or even a neutral attitude towards Zionism came to mean for them a threat to the most fundamental stakes in their future.”²³ The idea of Zionism, therefore, was a life-line greatly needed by Jewish DP camp inhabitants.

“It is one thing to read in the newspaper the story of the deliberate murder of six million people,” writes Bartley C. Crum, an American member of the Committee, “it is another to meet the survivors.”²⁴ Crum, like the rest of the Committee members, was deeply shaken by meeting Holocaust survivors while travelling in Europe. He recalls a man he met who showed him a photo of a pleasant-faced young woman holding a baby,

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., p. 70.

²⁴ Crum, Bartley C. *Behind the Silken Curtain – A Personal Account of Anglo-American Diplomacy and the Middle East* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1947), p. 79. In 1945, Bartley C. Crum was a very successful 45 year-old corporate lawyer in San-Francisco. Born in Sacramento, he received his Bachelor’s degree in jurisprudence in 1922 from the University of California at Berkeley, and entered private practice two years later. Known as a “republican liberal,” Crum became in 1940 the West Coast campaign manager of the Republican Party for Wendell Willkie. By 1941, Crum was the West Coast chairman of “Fight for Freedom,” a group favouring American intervention in WWII. And In 1944, he became the national chairman of the breakaway independent Republican ticket for Roosevelt, due to the weak stand, in Crum’s opinion, Dewey showed in foreign affairs. Crum opposed American policy towards Franco, and had volunteered to join a panel of lawyers to defend two Spanish anti-Fascists, but withdrew his assistance when he was called upon to serve on the Committee in 1945 (Podet, 1986:112).

with another child by her side. “This is my wife and children,” said the man. “They killed the baby with a bayonet and she and the child were burned in the crematorium.”²⁵ The man’s voice did not change from introducing the photo to what occurred to his family. “The Nazi’s purpose was to kill life, and kill the desire for life for those temporarily spared, by making each survivor realise that he or she alone was alive of their family,” writes Crum. Committee members were able to see first hand the psychological harm which the survivors were suffering, and their desperate need for something to cling to.

When the Committee visited the DP camps, the British were aware that the Zionist leadership had sent special delegations from Palestine to Europe to instil the idea of Zionism within the Jewish DP camps inhabitants, and to prepare them for the practice of Zionism once in Palestine.²⁶ In *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* (1979), Bauer argues that it was due to Jewish-Palestinian units within the British army, and through *shlichim* (messengers) who worked in the illegal immigration program, that the Jewish DP camp inmates were influenced to desire Palestine as their destination. “The Jewish units [within the British army]... discovered Holocaust survivors in the liberated concentration camps of Austria and south Germany in June 1945. Their influence on the survivors was tremendous – with their Jewish insignia they inspired confidence and self-assurance among people whom the Nazi had tried to dehumanize for years.”²⁷ It was under the influence of Palestinian-Jews and rabbis who served as chaplains in the US army, that the survivors organised as a group and identified with the struggle of a Jewish state, writes Bauer.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Kochavi, Arieh J. *Post-Holocaust Politics – Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945-1948* (Chapel Hill, NC & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 107.

²⁷ Bauer, Yehuda. *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), pp. 71-72.

But when the Committee members visited the DP camps the strong influence of Zionism did not matter to them, at least not then, as Crossman recalled: “They [the Committee members] had smelled the unique and unforgettable smell of huddled, homeless humanity.” The Committee members understood for the first time what it meant to be isolated survivors of a family deported to a Nazi concentration camp or slave labour. The whole abstract argument at this stage about Zionism and a Jewish state seemed very remote while they witnessed such human degradation. It was only then that the Committee could really appreciate the “patient impatience” of the witnesses in Washington and London who had tried to so hard to explain to the Committee what had happened in Eastern Europe.²⁸

When the Committee conducted its hearing in Zeilsheim, a DP camp near Frankfurt, the sound of marching came to their ears. Men and women, still wearing their striped uniforms, marched, three and four abreast, towards them. They were holding signs that read: “Open the Gates of Palestine.” While the Committee continued with their hearings, the men and women persisted in standing outside, at attention, while the rain was beating on their heads. Sir Fredrick W. Legget, a British member of the Committee, asked a United National Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) official if those men and women were Zionists.²⁹ “It is impossible to organize this camp along any line without accepting that fact,” the official replied. “If you organise a boys’ club to read, to talk, to

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Sir Fredrick W. Legget was 61 years old during the Committee’s investigation. He began working for the British government as a parliamentary civil servant from the age of 20, and was a skilled mediator. His positions included: Private Secretary to the Parliamentary Services of the Board of Trade (1915), and to the Minister of Labor (1917); Assistant Secretary of the Minister of Labor (1919); Principle Assistant Secretary (1931); and Undersecretary and Chief Advisor on Industrial Relations to the Ministry (1940-1942). As Chairman of the International Labor Office Joint Maritime Commission, he was responsible for drafting in 1942 the Seaman’s Chart for all nations. In 1945, Sir Legget became a member of the British Reparations Mission to Moscow. Sir Legget remarked that “you cannot force a solution to any dispute; solution is a matter of patience until the moment comes when incompatibles can be reconciled.” His mediation skills were the reason he was chosen to serve on the Committee (Podet, 1986:89-90).

debate, to conduct dances, at the second meeting it turns out to be reading Zionist books, debating Zionist problems, and dancing the *Hora*.”³⁰ Zionist officials were organising and preparing the survivors for their future life.

Crossman observed that the morale among the survivors was always higher in the centres where a Kibbutz (a group of community training itself for the new life in Palestine) had been organised. “The Kibbutzim were a moving spectacle,” remarked Crossman. “In an environment of utter hopelessness, the Zionist faith expressed itself in self-organization and self-discipline. Their own civilization and communal life as Jews had been utterly destroyed. Their homes, their synagogues, their libraries, everything had perished.”³¹ But at the camps holding the survivors, a new community was growing up “in anticipation of the new life in Palestine.” To destroy the Kibbutz (and in that sense Zionism), argued Crossman, would be to break the only values which prevented these people from degenerating, “as many in the concentration camps had degenerated, into subhuman beastliness.”³² The preparation of the survivors for a life in Palestine, where they believed they would be free, was enough to lift them from their hours of despair. When no one else seemed to care, Zionism and Zionists were there.

Sir Legget wondered if Zionism was not just another form of Nazism, as he was unsure if people had the right to voice alternative views. “Isn’t it the case that the Zionist elements suppress any minority feelings?” The Camp Director assured him that everyone was free to express their views without harm, but Sir Legget seemed unconvinced. “It strikes me as dreadful that there seems to be no way to make these people realise the

³⁰ Crum, Bartley C. *Behind the Silken Curtain – A Personal Account of Anglo-American Diplomacy and the Middle East* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1947), p. 86.

³¹ Crossman, Richard, MP. *Palestine Mission – A Personal Record* (New York & London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1947), p. 81.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

limitations of Palestine. There is such bitter disappointment ahead for some of them.”³³ In a poll that was conducted in the Zeilsheim DP camp, of 18,311 people, 13 said they wished to stay in Europe, and 17,712 wished to go to Palestine.³⁴ In another poll, the survivors were asked to put down a second choice, other than Palestine. Hundreds wrote “Crematorium.”³⁵ The Jewish survivors were desperate to get out of the camps, but were they truly Zionists wishing to immigrate to Palestine or did they simply opt for Palestine as there was nowhere else to go? The answers to this question are mixed.

Samuel Gringauz, a Holocaust survivor, who wrote extensively on the surviving Jews in the DP camps, referred to Zionism in the camps: “Everything we do is done under the shadow cast by our holy dead. Neither the inhabitants of Landsberg nor those in Feldaing give us our marching orders. We are commanded by the millions of our fallen martyrs.”³⁶ Gringauz then argues that many survivors saw Zionism as a way to give meaning to the catastrophe. Mankowitz confirms in *Life between Memory and Hope* (2002) that the agony of the innocent dead served as the collective conscience of the survivors, their last will and testament constituted a categorical imperative that demanded implicit loyalty. “The primary duty of those who remained alive was to continue their lives as Jews so as to endow those who died with symbolic perpetuity and to serve, thereby, as their ‘living monument.’”³⁷ Thus, it seems from both Gringauz’s and Mankowitz’s perspective, that Zionism was a form of commemoration. The survivors needed to find a way to make sense of what befell them, and practicing an ideology that promised safety for

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

³⁵ Ibid., p 90.

³⁶ Cited in Mankowitz, Zeev, W. *Life between Memory and Hope: The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 79.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 79.

Jews world-wide seemed to make sense to them. Immigration to Palestine and the creation of a Jewish State therefore was a method of making sense of the Holocaust.

Young children, especially, needed to make sense of their world. In the town of Villach, high up between the Yugoslav and Italian frontiers, was another DP camp. The “policeman” of the camp was a sixteen year old Polish boy who had spent his last six years in concentration camps. Crossman asked the boy about any relatives he may have in America. He answered that his mother lived there. Crossman asked if he was in contact with her. “I have cut her off,” replied the boy, “root and branch. She had betrayed the destiny of my nation. She has sold out to the Goys. She ran away to America. It is the destiny of my nation to be the lords of Palestine.”³⁸ Crossman asked him how he knew this was their destiny. “It is written in the Balfour Declaration,” was the response.

In another incident, Crum engaged with a man in the camp on the political situation in Palestine and the idea of a Jewish state. “Why do you wish a Jewish state?” asked Crum. “What kind of a question is that?” replied the man. “The Americans have America. The English have England. The French have France. We want a Jewish state. Palestine is the only state we can order our own existence. If you tell me we are not Jews, but Germans or Poles or Austrians, I give you the testimony of six million dead.” To this Crum asked if he realised there were Arabs in Palestine and that Jews will have to get along with them. “If outsiders will not disturb us, we will get along with the Arabs...” answered the man. When Crum asked the survivor whether he thought it “democratic to impose a new majority on an Arab majority already there?” the man’s response suggested a clear lack of knowledge on Palestine and its inhabitants. “The Arabs have possessed this land for centuries. They have let it become a desert. It has no value for them...”³⁹

³⁸ Crossman, Richard, MP. *Palestine Mission – A Personal Record* (New York & London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1947), p. 80

³⁹ Crum, Bartley C. *Behind the Silken Curtain – A Personal Account of Anglo-American Diplomacy and the Middle East* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1947), pp. 87-88.

What if other states opened their arms to Jewish immigration? What would the survivors then do? Grossman suggests that had the doors to the US been opened earlier, the pressure of large-scale emigration to Palestine might have eased significantly. Due to immigration obstacles, few Jewish survivors were admitted to the US before the 1948 and 1950 immigration reforms. “This assured that the number of Jews demanding entry to Palestine kept growing...”⁴⁰ Ironically, the Zionist project of emigration to Palestine, conducted by Zionist leaders within Palestine, and the US interest in limiting immigration into its own territory, went hand-in-hand. As an American official wrote, “the evacuation of the Jews of Germany and Austria to Palestine will solve the problem of the individuals involved and will also remove a problem from the military authorities who have had to deal with it [i.e. the problem of finding a place for the survivors to go to].”⁴¹

Although the majority of the survivors in the DP camps were *voicing* their desire to go to Palestine, believing it was the only real option open to them, the names survivors had bestowed on the camps’ streets showed that many of them desired to go to the US. These names included *Independence Square*, *Pennsylvania Avenue*, and *Franklin Roosevelt*. In Fohrenwald’s DP camp, streets were named *New York*, *Michigan*, and *Wisconsin Avenue*.⁴² Based on the street names, one may conclude that many survivors had a not-so-secret desire to immigrate to the US, any yet, as it did not seem realistic to them, Palestine was the best option. And so they focused on what seemed practical, real, and achievable.

The Committee, like later historians, understood that Zionist ideology was very popular with the survivors in the DP camp, as it offered them a solution when no other idea and no-one else did. In many ways Zionism was saviour to Holocaust survivors,

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 141.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 141-142.

⁴² Ibid., p. 181.

emotionally, mentally, and physically. A witness to the Committee, who was in charge of vocational re-education, explained that only the Zionist goal could make the survivors work. Because they had done such inhumanly hard labour for the Nazis, it was only Zionism that could change their negative attitude towards work into a positive one. “I, myself,” said the witness “would never have wanted to do a day’s work again in my life if I were not imbued with the ideal of Palestine.”⁴³

Dr. Zalman Grinberg, chairman of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Munich, supported the notion that the *idea* of Zionism was a life saviour for the surviving Jews of the camps. “You must understand the psychological factors. The Nazi SS education of work was something that took from the Jew the love to work – because work meant death. Twelve hours of work a day under malnutrition meant death.”⁴⁴ Dr. Zalman was a strong advocate for the re-education of Jewish love for work, which he argued, could only happen in Palestine. It was only possible there, because of the existence of two factors “absolutely indispensable for such re-education”: The love and comfort of the Jewish people; and the strength of conviction, the discipline of work. “The Jewish population in Palestine has the moral quality to re-educate our people in making them feel that they are working for themselves, for their families, for the future.”⁴⁵ All this was what the survivors, not only wanted, but also deserved, after what they had been through. Love, affection, and warmth from those “just like them” were what they aimed for. The idea of Zionism promised them all that.

However, the opinion of professionals of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) was different when it involved the spread of militant Zionism to youth

⁴³ Ibid., p. 91.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 100.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

who had lost their homes and families.⁴⁶ Although they were able to see the need of survivors for an ideology, they feared its impact. The JDC argued that although Zionism gave meaning to disrupted lives, the JDC mistrusted the indoctrination of damaged minds in political kibbutzim, where children bonded with *Madrichim* (leaders) not much older than themselves, “filled with partisan zeal but not attuned to the psychology (or educational) needs of their charges.”⁴⁷ The JDC worried that the single-mindedness of the Zionist message limited the range of material taught, and feared that the youngsters, who had lost so much already, were being set up for further “cruel disappointment” if their goal was not achieved. As Grossman argues,

Indeed, JDC social workers complained, Zionist passions, verging on the ‘totalitarian’ imposition of ‘disciplined unity,’ disrupted family reunification programs and harshly penalized children who wanted to leave youth groups and camp life to join relatives abroad or who simply did not want to join the Zionist future for which they were being trained.⁴⁸

Although the Zionist activists’ aim was to meet the needs of the survivors, they were in fact confusing the survivors’ needs with the interest of Zionism – the establishment of a Jewish state. The Zionist activists were directly or indirectly infringing on the rights of individual survivors to meet their needs both by not offering alternatives to Zionism, and by discouraging those who were attempting to seek them. Would the sixteen year-old Polish boy Crossman met in Villach be so adamant not to join his mother in the US, had he been allowed to think outside the “box” of Zionism?

⁴⁶ The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee is a relief agency. Its mission statement reads: “Since 1914, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Inc. (JDC) has served as the overseas arm of the American Jewish community. Our mission is to serve the needs of Jews throughout the world, particularly where their lives as Jews are threatened or made more difficult. We sponsor programs of relief, rescue and renewal and help Israel address its most urgent social challenges. We are committed to the idea that all Jews are responsible for one another” [http://www.jdc.org/who_mission.html]

⁴⁷ Grossman, Anita. *Jews, Germans, and Allies*, p. 159.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

The idea of “Palestine” for the Jewish survivors became a magic world, a place they believed they could live freely, a place they could conduct their lives as they wished. Whether or not the Jewish Holocaust survivors wanted to go specifically to Palestine – meaning the region in the Middle East or to “Palestine” – any place which would allow Jews to be free – is debatable. What was not debatable was the desire of Zionist leaders, within Palestine, that these survivors come to Palestine. Bauer writes that the Zionist leadership feared that a large proportion of the many tens of thousands of Jews concentrated in the DP camps in Germany and Austria would seek to reach countries other than Palestine, because at the time, the gates of Palestine were not open. In fact, by 1945, many survivors opted for Western countries; this of course, endangered the Zionist aspiration of creating a majority in Palestine, and thus justifying the creation of a Jewish state.⁴⁹ It was therefore necessary for the Zionist leadership to provide a “helping hand” in increasing the pressure put on the forces in Europe to allow Jews in the camps to immigrate to Palestine.

From 1945 to 1948, no more than 12,000 Jewish DP camp inmates entered the US, due to restrictions on Jewish immigration. Opportunities for these people to emigrate to Britain, South Africa, and Australia were also very limited. Assimilation among Germans or Eastern Europeans was not psychologically possible for the Jewish survivors. The closed borders by many countries, especially those of the US, would explain Crossman’s frustration at American calls for a Jewish state in Palestine.⁵⁰ “By shouting for a Jewish state, Americans satisfy many motives. They are attacking the Empire and the British imperialism, they are espousing a moral cause, the fulfilment for which they will take no responsibility, and most important of all, they are diverting attention from the fact that

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 66.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 67.

their own immigration laws are the causes of one of the problems.”⁵¹ While the American government wanted a solution for the DP camps inhabitants, it did not want to be part of the solution, and so it saw Palestine as the only answer.

The American need for a solution to the Jewish DP camp inhabitants’ problem, and American lack of desire to allow Jewish survivors into its own borders, allowed the Zionist leadership in Palestine to create pressure on the US to allow Jewish immigration into Palestine. When David Ben-Gurion visited Germany in October 1945, he met with General Eisenhower. Ben-Gurion made several demands after his meeting, the main one being that the Jewish survivors in Eastern Europe be allowed to enter American zones of occupation and be granted the status of displaced persons. Ben-Gurion explained this demand in a report to the Jewish Agency on November 21, 1945:⁵² “If we succeed in concentrating a quarter of a million Jews in the American zone, it will increase the American pressure [on the British]. Not because of the financial aspects of the problem – that does not matter to them – but because they see no future for these people outside Eretz-Yisrael.”⁵³ It seems then, that the fact other countries did not allow Jewish survivors into their borders, worked to the benefit of Zionism, and Ben-Gurion knew how to exploit the situation, either for the benefit of the survivors, for the establishment of a Jewish state, or both. A pool of potential immigrants to Palestine was formed under American auspices.⁵⁴

There was a great desire by all parties concerned – the Jewish holocaust survivors, the bodies in charge of the DP camps, the military forces occupying Europe, the Zionist leaders within and out of Palestine - to find solutions for the survivors of Nazi persecution.

⁵¹ Crossman, Richard, MP. *Palestine Mission – A Personal*, p. 38.

⁵² The Jewish Agency was the official organisation representing the Jewish people in Palestine, and which was recognised as such by the British authorities.

⁵³ Cited in Bauer, Yehuda. *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 66.

⁵⁴ Bauer, Yehuda. *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness*, p. 67.

It is debateable whether or not the majority of the Jewish survivors in the DP camps were truly Zionists, or whether they simply supported an idea that would provide them with a solution to their suffering. The fact remained that most countries around the world closed their gates to the Jewish people. Could Palestine be a solution for their plight? Would a Jewish state really be required? Zionist leaders thought it was, regardless of whether it met the needs of the Jewish people.

A Jewish-Controlled Palestine

Through its hearings, the Committee was attempting to understand how Zionist leaders' *interest* in a Jewish state, in all of Palestine, met the *needs* of the Jewish Holocaust survivors and the Jewish people in general. By doing so, they tried to make sense of Zionism's ability to provide what the Holocaust survivors, now followers of Zionism, must have to have a peaceful and prosperous life. The Committee became frustrated in its efforts to understand the needs versus the interests of the Jewish people, as shown in these exchanges between Committee member Judge Joseph Chappell Hutcheson, Jr.⁵⁵ and Nathan Jackson, representing the Jewish Social Labour Party, *Poale Zion*, in London.⁵⁶

Judge Hutcheson: You drew a parallel which I didn't exactly understand. You said that just as Britain is a British state, and France is a French state – in the first place I don't exactly understand what you mean by Britain being a British state. You mean England and Scotland? Is that what you are talking about?

⁵⁵ Judge Joseph Chappell Hutcheson, Jr. was 66 years old at the time of the inquiry. Born in Houston, Texas, he was a son of a Confederate captain and pioneer statesman. He was educated at Virginia and Texas Universities. In 1931, after serving as an attorney, as chief legal advisor of the city of Houston, mayor, and a District Court judge, he was made Judge of the United States Court of Appeal. Judge Hutcheson described himself as an Old Testament Christian. He had a reputation for having sympathy with the oppressed, with minorities and immigrants. He was able to "break the back" of the Ku Klux Klan in Houston, and stopped the US Federal Government in an attempt to harass and deport an immigrant because of his political persuasions. Zionist authorities concluded from his type of questioning during the Committee hearings that he was anti-Zionist, but based on the transcripts, "his challenging questions were an expression of genuine puzzlement as what Zionism was all about." (Podet, 1986:98-99).

⁵⁶ Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Jewish Problems in Palestine and Europe. *Public Hearings, 1945-1948* (Switzerland: Zug, 1977), pp. 22-24. Hearing took place on Monday, January 28, 1946 in London, England,.

Jackson: I mean there are in this country all kind of national groups, English, Scotch, Welsh. The state is British. There isn't such a person as British, unless he takes [deleted] genetically when he goes to Europe.

Judge Hutcheson: This isn't a British, Scotch, or Welsh state. Why then in Palestine should we have a Jewish state? Why don't you have a Palestinian state?

Jackson: Because the position of the Jew in the world is such that for all the reasons I have given both in the memorandum and my preliminary remarks, it is necessary that they have control of their own destiny as a people. May I define their point of view? It has been defined I think.

Judge Hutcheson: Many, many times, but you may have a different variation of it.

Jackson: They are people wanting to be themselves, that is all.

Judge Hutcheson: Why don't the Scottish... be themselves and shove the English out? ...

What I am trying to draw out is this: While I am of Scottish descent, in America we don't want a Scottish state and the English don't want an English state. Why, in your opinion, does the Jew want to have a Jewish state?

Jackson: It is not the name, sir; it is the condition. The words are only an expression of something that we mean. It is the condition of what is contained in the Jewish state. We mean, as I said, Jewish immigration, free Jewish colonization and land settlement, some control by the Jews of fiscal policy in order to make this thing a policy, because they can't depend forever on contributions from American and British Jews. Thirdly, if you grant them these things, they have certain state functions, state powers, governmental powers. That automatically becomes a Jewish state, whether you call it that or not.

Judge Hutcheson: The trouble with me is how people calling themselves Jews or Scotch or Germans or whatnot can expect to come into a land which they do not populate in

anything like the majority, in fact, it was a very small minority and demand that their characteristics and their point of view shall be enforced upon others.

Judge Hutcheson's frustration stems from his inability to see why the Jewish people are any different from those who are not Jewish; why do the Jewish people deserve rights that no other people have? Jackson was arguing that the Jewish people *needed* a state in order to secure a peaceful existence and be prosperous, while Judge Hutcheson only saw that requirement as an *interest*, something the Jewish people really wanted, but not something they *must have* to fulfil their desired prosperity. While all other nations, religions, or ethnicities in Western Europe and in North America were able to have their rights protected without having a state reserved purely for them, Judge Hutcheson did not seem convinced by Jackson's argument that the Jewish people were an exception.

One could argue that Holocaust survivors, Jews and non-Jews alike, should have received privileges not granted to others, simply based on their suffering. But granting a privilege to the entire Jewish population, no matter if they were or were not Holocaust survivors, was difficult for some Committee members to grasp. Wilfred F. Crick, a British member of the Committee, was trying to clarify a previous remark made by Jackson on this subject.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 26-27. Wilfred F. Crick was 46 years old at the time the Committee's investigation took place. Crick was a graduate of the London School of Economics. In 1937 he organised and presided over the International Conference of Banking Economists held in London. In 1942 he received a part-time appointment to the Ministry of Food as advisor on post-war economic problems, and in 1944 he became the Economic Advisor to the Midland Bank, and was a lecturer at the School of Economics. During the Committee's hearing, Crick usually confined himself to questions relating to statistics, demography and financing, and only asked questions regarding national histories to clear up points, as illustrated above (Podet, 1986:91).

Crick: I want to make quite sure I heard right in one of your remarks in your principle statement. Mr. Jackson, you said at one stage that any Jew – anyone who considers himself a Jew – who wishes to go to Palestine, should be at liberty to go there.

Jackson: Certainly.

Crick: Have you in mind particularly the dispossessed, displaced, stateless Jews, or all Jews?

Jackson: Particularly, as a matter of urgency, these people ought to go first, but any Jew wherever he may be.

Crick: That should apply to a Jew like yourself, who is a British citizen or a Jew who is an American citizen?

Jackson: Yes, sir.

Crick: And you went on to say – and here I'm a little doubtful whether I heard you correctly, so put me right if I'm wrong – that any Jew who did not go to Palestine should be free to go where he wanted to go and helped to do so.

Jackson: I was referring particularly to those Jews in Europe who need to go somewhere.

Crick: I thought you were. In other words, you want to give all Jews the right to go to Palestine and the European displaced Jews the right to go anywhere they like?

Jackson: Yes, sir, if that were possible

What Jackson thus asked the Committee to recommend was that all Jews have the ability and the right - whether they suffered from persecution or not - to immigrate to another country, that being Palestine. This type of right was not granted to any other people. Judge Hutcheson was still confused as to the rights Jackson assigned to all Jews, not only to the Holocaust survivors. As far as Judge Hutcheson was concerned, he had no other country, and he had no access to other countries, except to the US. Why then, he

asked Jackson, should the Jewish people have the right to go to the US temporarily and then go to Palestine? “Why should this sort of a double nationality be afforded to one people?” Judge Hutcheson asked. Jackson replied that this was not double nationality, that the Jews had only one nationality and one state. Crossman then interrupted and asked which the nationality was? “Jewish,” replied Jackson. “Would you say the American-Jew is not an American?” asked Crossman. To this Jackson replied that the Jews in the US are American citizens, just like the Swedes, Irish, Greeks, and Poles were citizens of the US. “You don’t think there is an American nation to which he [the Jew] belongs?” asked Crossman. “I believe that it is in the process of creation, in which the Jews will also take their part,” replied Jackson. At this point the Committee broke out in laughter.⁵⁸

It was clear from this exchange that the Committee were irritated at not grasping why Jews not only required different a treatment from others, but in fact that the Jewish people felt and believed themselves to be different. Crossman’s recollection of this exchange is of frustration. “Any Gentile, who is compelled to study Zionism for weeks on end, reached a point where he feels inclined to bang on the table and walk out of the room.”⁵⁹ Arab nationalism was much more intransigent than Zionism, argued Crossman. “Yet we didn’t feel the same peculiar exasperation in studying it or in our discussions with the Arab leaders.” Crossman writes that the Committee never expected the Arab to be other than an Arab, yet the Zionists they interrogated in London and Washington were British and American citizens. “We expected them to behave like us and to accept our basic principles. When they failed to do so and obstinately put forward their own philosophy, we felt annoyed with them for being non-English and non-American.” But when other Jews attacked the Zionists and asserted they were just British Jews and American Jews, the Committee felt “acutely embarrassed.” “I could understand a Jew who

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 28.

⁵⁹ Crossman, Richard, MP. *Palestine Mission – A Personal*, pp. 64-65.

has given up Judaism and become an ordinary citizen just like myself. I could understand a Jew who had chosen to join his own people in Palestine. Who exactly were these people who claimed to be both Jews and English-men and disagreed violently on the issue of whether there was a Jewish nation or not?" remarked Crossman in his diary.⁶⁰ What Crossman and the rest of the Committee were attempting to do was to put themselves in the shoes of those they were questioning, but the line of logic their Zionist witnesses expressed did not fit easily in the minds of the Committee members. Some Committee members could not comprehend the idea that one could be Jewish, but not support Zionism; that a person could have a Jewish identity, be a citizen of a European or a north-American country, but oppose the creation of a Jewish state. This idea simply did not fit in into any of the "boxes" they had established in their heads. It was a shade of grey, rather than a definite black or white.

"This is the very centre of the Jewish problem," writes Crossman, "in a world of nation-states the Jew is in a false position." If the Jewish people try to retain their religion but take on the protective "colour of assimilation," they over-compensate for the difference which separates them from their fellow citizens and often become "a caricature of the Englishman or the American." But if they recognise their own separateness, they are driven to demand a "Jewish commonwealth" in which Jews are nationally Jewish. Crossman believed that "nationalism is the air which we breathe, and a separate Jewish people, if it is to survive, must become a nation."⁶¹ But Crossman did not mean that a nation in fact meant a State, as the Zionist leaders would argue, a nation was not something synthetic which can be constructed by social engineering in any convenient piece of empty land. Jews who felt themselves part of the Jewish nation do so because of

⁶⁰ Ibid., p 65.

⁶¹ Ibid.

their awareness of Jewish history. That is why the traditional religious longing to return to Zion has been transformed, in the atmosphere of the twentieth-century politics, into a political movement for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. “To blame Zionists for their nationalism is to demand that the Jews should feel differently, as a people, from every other people in the world.”⁶² What other alternatives did they have in the twentieth century? There were none. Zionism was simply following the rules established by other nations. The only problem was that a different nationality was being formed on the same land Zionism wanted to be unique – by the Palestinian-Arabs.

But Zionism had another element – The Holocaust. Crossman remarked also that “in our age, the choice for the Jew is between Zionism or ceasing to be a Jew. That is the new situation which has finally been brought about by the Nazi persecution.”⁶³ Was Crossman referring to all Jews, or to just European Jews who were victims of the Holocaust? What about Jews in northern Africa and the Middle East? Was Zionism really that relevant to the continuation of their Jewish lives?

In fact, it was Crossman himself who answered this question, while contradicting his own argument. When talking about Arab opposition to Zionism, Crossman backed Azzam Pasha of the Arab League, who argued that the opposition to Zionism had nothing to do with anti-Semitism. During the Committee’s stay in Egypt, they had hoped to hear representatives of the Egyptian-Jewish community, which numbered some hundred thousand. But they did not dare to appear publicly. “I met one or two of them privately at a friend’s house. Sleek and extremely prosperous businessmen, they were bitterly hostile to Zionism and blamed it for their increasing unpopularity with the Egyptians.” The Egyptian-Jews blamed Zionism for making extensive inroads on Egyptian Jewry, and the non-Zionists found themselves compelled to undertake counter-propaganda against it. “We

⁶² Ibid., pp. 65-66

⁶³ Ibid., p. 66.

were to find similar conflicts among the Jewish communities in all the Arab countries.”⁶⁴

The Jews in Arab countries did not require Zionism to meet their needs for a secure and safe life. In fact, Zionism increased their vulnerability, because Zionism preached for a state where other Arabs lived.

When Dr. Chaim Weizmann, representing the Jewish Agency, sat in front of the Committee, he was questioned about having a state that was aimed at only one people, and named after only one people, when there were two people living on the same land. Weizmann strongly believed that a state dedicated, supported, and run by the Jews, even in an area with Arabs, would meet Jewish needs for survival. The Committee did not seem convinced.⁶⁵

Crum: Do you think the word “Jewish” is necessary, and if so, why?

Weizmann: If you would tell me, you are bringing in Jews.

Crum: What is in my mind is this: You have presently an Arab majority in Palestine... The word “Jewish State” presently implies, does it not, the *imposition* of a new majority upon an existing majority of people, isn’t that right? [Emphasis added].

Weizmann: That is so, yes.

Crum: What I would like to know is how that is justified in democratic practice?

Weizmann: The word “imposition” always means the use of force. Well, if you bring Jews into the country and allow them to settle and allow the country to develop to its maximum, and absorb as many people as can be absorbed, a majority

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 111.

⁶⁵ Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Jewish Problems in Palestine and Europe. *Public Hearings, 1945-1948* (Switzerland: Zug, 1977), pp. 37-38. Hearing took place in Jerusalem, Palestine, on March 8, 1946.

would be created. I don't believe it is undemocratic if it is done without hurting the others.

Crum: May I read to you from a statement in *Foreign Affairs* in 1931. This is what is in

my mind: It is a statement by Mr. Justice Frankfurter:

“Into the whole texture of Palestine life there comes the unflagging realisation that Arab cannot dominate Jew nor Jew Arab, and that only a fellowship of reciprocal rights and reciprocal duties can be realised the distinctive value to the civilisation of Jew and Arab.”

Do you concur in that statement?

Weizmann: I concur in that statement as far as the moral relationship between Arabs and Jews goes. If there is a future Jewish State, I believe the Arabs would have complete freedom of religion, culture, language, autonomy in their municipal organisations, and they would be able to express themselves as well as they can. It does not mean that we would like to dominate the Arabs in the sense of taking away their natural rights or their language or interfering in any way at all with their culture and their civilization... if you remember my chief statement, I would say I admit it implies a certain amount of injustice, but the question is the line of least injustice.

Any ideology, including Zionism, looks at a conflict from a very specific angle, and thus looks at solutions to a conflict from that same particular angle. This tunnel vision, therefore, only allows solutions that fit within the spectrum of that ideology. As Weizmann was focused on the issue of Palestine through Zionist eyes, he was unable to see that a solution to a conflict does not necessarily need to have a certain injustice. But from his angle, in order to have a Jewish state on a land where Arabs sat, injustice must occur,

because he saw it as a simple black or white situation – either there is a Jewish state, or there is not. From his perspective, the idea of not having a Jewish state was unconceivable. The idea of sharing the land with the Arabs was not part of the Zionist ideology, and therefore not part of the list of solutions available.

Crum noted that he had many difficulties with the term “Jewish state,” and shared Judge Hutcheson’s feeling that it suggested a narrow nationalism, which “many of us find abhorrent.” Weizmann nodded. “Yes,” he said, “we are forever explaining that. Surely the world does not think that the Jewish people, who have suffered so much from narrow nationalism, would themselves succumb to it?”⁶⁶ People who go through a trauma once, let alone numerous traumas for centuries, will in fact become defensive when those same traumatised people become a singular unit, in a single space. “Narrow nationalism” is always practiced by those who fear the worse, because they had suffered the worse – it is a defence mechanism, an instinctive mechanism to meet the needs of survival. Zionism was in fact an answer to “narrow nationalisms” of other states; it was simply the other side of the coin.⁶⁷

When Moshe Shertok (later to be known as Moshe Sharet, Israel’s second Prime Minister) was questioned, he was asked by Crossman to imagine trading places with a Palestinian-Arab. Crossman’s purpose was to see if a Zionist leader could see the conflict and its effects on the Arabs from a different perspective, a very different angle than Zionism. Were the needs of the Arabs any different than those of the Jews? Would the

⁶⁶ Crum, Bartley C. *Behind the Silken Curtain*, p. 66.

⁶⁷ Crossman (1947:19) argued that Zionism asserted that the Jews were a nation was really a reflex of anti-Semitism. While Holocaust survivors should have been liberated from the separateness which Hitler imposed, “Zionism actually strengthens the walls of the spiritual concentration camps. It is only the other side of the Nazi shield, the Jewish reaction to the German disease.” Thus, “narrow nationalism” takes its root from the desire to be separate from others, if only as a defence mechanism.

Jews react any differently from the Arabs, if faced with the same dangers, the same obstacles to their secure future?⁶⁸

Crossman: ...You told us how you were brought up in an Arab village. I want you to imagine, by a change to your nature you had grown up an Arab instead of a Jew. What would the Arab Shertok have thought of the remark of the Jewish Shertok, when he spoke of acquiring the soil foot by foot and turning it into Jewish soil...?

Shertok: I can quite conceive his feeling uneasy about it.

Crossman: Uneasy in your word?

Shertok: We are speaking among statesmen.

Crossman: Let us hear the truth.

Shertok: I can quite conceive his being opposed to it; I would say strenuously opposed to it.

Crossman: Can you conceive him leading a nationalist movement against the Jews here?

Shertok: Most certainly.

Crossman: You were telling us about the strenuous efforts at cooperating between Jews and Arabs.

Shertok: Yes.

Crossman: Do you think that particular description of the effort to acquire foot by foot and turning the soil into Jewish soil by purchase, that that is likely to create good relations between Jews and Arab?

To this, Shertok attempted to delay his response, by emphasising that when the Jewish Agency spoke of cooperation between Jews and Arab, they spoke of Jews and

⁶⁸ Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Jewish Problems in Palestine and Europe. *Public Hearings, 1945-1948* (Switzerland: Zug, 1977), pp. 114-116. Hearing took place in Jerusalem, Palestine, on March 26, 1946.

Arabs within Palestine, and that for a Jew to be in Palestine did not mean renting a room in Tel-Aviv. Crossman was not amused by Shertok's delay tactic.

Crossman: I am trying to get a straight answer. I asked whether or not you thought that a policy which can be summed up in the phrase "the soil acquired by purchase is really Jewish" would please Mr. Shertok who is Arab?

Shertok: It would not.

Crossman: And it might create racial strife?

Shertok: It might.

Crossman then insisted that Shertok put himself in the shoes of an Arab.

Crossman: What about the Arab? Has he certain things he cannot give up – the other Shertok I am speaking about?

Shertok: Yes.

Crossman: What happens if the two things conflict?

Shertok: Then there are certain criteria I tried to suggest.

Crossman: What would the other Shertok think about these? I want you to think of yourself as an Arab for a change and think how he would judge it.

Shertok: If the matter were only between the Jewish Shertok and what you are pleased to call the Arab Shertok, then this whole Committee would not have come into being...[the Committee would not be established, because the "Arab" and "Jewish Shertok" would have found a solution to the conflict].

Shertok was clearly uneasy at the line of questioning and even irritated by it, simply because the questions forced him to look outside the “box” of Zionism. When looking from the outside, it is difficult not to see the harm the Zionist ideology did and would cause the Arab population in Palestine; it is difficult not to see the harm that in turn this would cause the Jewish people, who would then have to defend themselves in response to the practice of their own ideology.

Crossman: One last lighter question, you quoted the Book of Leviticus, much to my bewilderment, on the subject of the Jewish Agency’s purchase of land, saying “Thou shalt not sell for the land is mine.”

Shertok: I was speaking of a social aspect.

Crossman: Even Ben-Gurion did not elevate the Jewish Agency to that position, the land is mine.

Shertok: I said the land should not be sold forever.

Crossman: Because the land is Mine – Mine there is a Divine attribute... How does that apply to the Agency?

Shertok: It applied this way. The principle is there laid down that the land shall not be sold forever because the land is God’s and I regard that as a spiritual, ethical if you will, *justification of a policy of national ownership of land* [emphasis added].

What Shertok illustrates above is the internal conflict between religion and politics which Zionism faced. Although Zionism was created as a secular-political ideology, it was based on strong religious roots. The purpose of Zionism is to return to Zion, the *Land of Israel*. Without the strong religious bond, Zionism cannot stand on its own. It is the Jewish connection to the land, both historical and religious, that is the base to the whole Zionist

claim to Palestine. Shertok understood that these religious connotations might not sit well with the Committee, and so he attempted at first to explain his words in a social manner, but religion had to become part of the equation, otherwise the Zionist claim has no basis.

Perhaps the person who could least see the Arab perspective, the impact it would have on them, and in return, the impact it would have on the Jewish population in Palestine, was the leader of the Jewish Agency. In a memorandum sent to the Committee by the Jewish Agency, David Ben-Gurion compared the Jewish people returning to Palestine to people who were once kicked out of a home and were returning. The metaphor was an attempt to show a historical connection of the Jews to the land, a historical justification to the practice of Zionism, and to show that not only will the Jewish immigrants returning home not hurt the Arabs, but in fact the Arabs may even benefit from the arrival of those returning home. “We are here as of right. We are not here on the strength of the Balfour Declaration or the Palestine Mandate. We were here long, long before,” Ben-Gurion proclaimed.⁶⁹ To illustrate this, Ben-Gurion used the metaphor of a fifty-room house, comparing it to the *Land of Israel*. “We were expelled from that house, our family was scattered, somebody else took it away from us and again it changed hands many times, and then we had to come back and we found some five rooms occupied by other people, the other rooms destroyed and uninhabitable from neglect.” Ben-Gurion then explained to the Committee that the Jewish people’s desire was not only to share the “house,” but to assist the other occupants to improve their living quarters. “We do not want to remove you [the Arabs], please stay where you are, we are going back into the uninhabitable rooms, we will repair them.” But it seemed that the other occupants did not desire the presence of their new neighbours. “No, we [the Arabs] are here, we do not want you. We do not live in these rooms, they are no good for any human beings, but we do not

⁶⁹Jewish Agency for Palestine. *The Jewish Case Before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine, as Presented by the Jewish Agency for Palestine – Statements and Memoranda* (Jerusalem: The Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1947), p. 54.

want you to repair them, to make them better.” Ben-Gurion again emphasised that he did not want the other occupants to leave. “You may stay, though you have only been here since yesterday. We are even willing to help you repair your rooms too, if you like; if not, you can do it yourself.” In this metaphor, there are other buildings in the area. “We do not say to them, ‘Please move over to that other big building.’ No, we say, ‘Please stay here, we shall be good neighbours.’ This is our case,” said Ben-Gurion, it is simple and compelling.”

Ben-Gurion saw the conflict and the solution to it through the same Zionist lenses that Weizmann and Shertok did, though his lenses were thicker. While both Weizmann and Shertok saw and admitted some negative impact on the Arabs, Ben-Gurion admitted none. In fact, he saw the Arabs as the invaders, rather than the Jews, and believed that as the Arabs let their own living quarters deteriorate, that it was up to the Jews returning home to elevate the residents’ standard of living. He tried to argue, unconvincingly, that the Jews would cause no harm to the Arab population, and his metaphor gave the impression that the Arabs were temporary residents in this “building,” and that the Jews, now returning home, were graciously allowing the Arabs to stay, even though the house did not belong to the Arabs, as they only arrived “yesterday.”

In 1947, the Arab House in London warned of the establishment of a Jewish state. It argued that if the Arabs of Palestine already felt their existence threatened while the Jewish national home was still in the making, how could they not fear if a Jewish state were to come into existence? The Arabs feared becoming a minority in a state that was *meant* to be exclusively Jewish, and not having adequate representation in Government. “The alarming development in the principles and methods of Jewish nationalism gave full cause for alarm; it is enough to mention the exclusion of Arabs from Jewish enterprises and the prohibition of their employment on Jewish land, the creation of an exclusive

Hebrew culture and the growth of terrorist and para-military organisations”⁷⁰ The Arab Office warned that there was no doubt that these tendencies would continue if a Jewish state was established, as the first aim of the Jewish government would be to strengthen its hold on the land and the economic life of the country, to make it economically possible to bring hundreds of thousands of Jews and to turn Palestine in every way into something “as Jewish as England is English.” It also warned that the ever-increasing Arab population would find itself gradually squeezed off the land and out of employment, and would be faced with the alternative of leaving Palestine or becoming “a degraded urban and rural proletariat.”⁷¹ The testimonies of Weizmann, Shertok, and Ben-Gurion clearly illustrate that the Arab House was accurate in its fears.

In his memoir, Crossman wrote of his thoughts on the Zionist plan to have a Jewish state, saying the more he thought about it the less acceptable it appeared.

The Zionists protested against the White Paper because it laid down that Arabs of Palestine would always remain a majority. This they called unjust and undemocratic. How then could it be just and democratic to rescind the White Paper and announce a new policy which meant nothing less than deliberately turning the Arab majority into an Arab minority?

Crossman argued that if the British allowed the Zionists to have control over immigration into Palestine, the British would be inciting the Arabs to revolt. “Year by year, month by month, they would watch their majority diminish as the immigrants streamed in. Any Arab leader worth his salt would go to war to stop such a process.” Crossman understood the mood of desperation out of which the Zionist program had risen, but he could not see how any government could accept it.⁷² He could not understand it because although the *interests* of the Jewish people of Palestine would be met, the *needs* of

⁷⁰ Arab Office (London). *The Future of Palestine* (Geneva: Imprimerie Centrale, August 1947), pp. 41-42.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Crossman, Richard, MP. *Palestine Mission*, pp. 60-61.

the Arabs not to be ruled by the Jewish people would not. If the needs of the Arabs were not met, neither would the needs of the Jews – A safe and prosperous life. However, the Zionists leaders tried to convince the Committee that the Palestinian-Arabs' needs for a prosperous life would be met by Jewish immigration, as the next section will illustrate.

Jewish Immigration & Arab Life in Palestine

One of the many arguments put forward by the Zionist movement in support of immigration into Palestine, and the establishment of a Jewish state, claimed that the living conditions of the local Arab population would be improved. The twentieth century was in its fifth decade, and it was quickly becoming a globalized era.⁷³ Palestine, in the eyes of Jewish European immigrants, was lagging behind. Whether or not the local Arab population wanted to become part of this globalized time was never discussed, it was just assumed they did and that they lacked the means to become part of it. The Jewish Agency advocated that the practice of Zionism would meet the needs of the Arab population – a rise in their living standards using economical gains. But how could an ideology that advocated for the rights of Jews only, benefit non-Jews and those who were considered the obstacle to the realisation of Zionism? The truth is, that the Arabs did not and could not benefit from the practice of Zionism, but this did not stop the Jewish Agency from trying to convince the Committee that the Arabs would.

In *The Jewish Case* (1947), the Jewish Agency laid down their case for the Committee. The Agency quoted Colonel T. E. Lawrence (also known as Lawrence of Arabia), an advocate for Arab rights in the Middle East, in an interview he gave to the press on November 28, 1919: “Speaking entirely as a non-Jew, I am decidedly in favour of Zionism. Indeed, I look on the Jews as the natural importers of that Western leaven which

⁷³ “Globalised era” refers to the exchange of ideas, finances, commodities, and people between regions and around the globe.

is so necessary for countries of the Near East.”⁷⁴ The Jewish Agency also referred to Robert Graves’ book, *Lawrence and the Arabs*, quoting Colonel Lawrence as saying: “Zionist success would enormously reinforce the material development of Arab Syria [which included Palestine] and Iraq.” By quoting a non-Jew, whose affection for the Arab population was well known, the Jewish Agency tried to convince the Committee that Zionism was also supported by non-Jews who saw its benefits.⁷⁵

The Jewish Agency also remarked on the study of Robert Nathan, a Washington economist, and chairman of the Central Planning Division of the War Production Board, who conducted a survey of the economic potential of Palestine in 1943-1944. His conclusion supported the Jewish Agency’s view, adding that “certain schemes of irrigation and resettlement propounded by American scientists and engineers would... expedite the economic resurgence of the Arabs of Palestine at a pace which cannot be envisaged if Jewish development proceeds at its present rate [arguing for an increase in Jewish immigration].”⁷⁶

Not only will Palestine benefit from Jewish immigration, argued the Jewish Agency, but the entire Middle East too, especially as the region was in economic despair. “This condition of economic depression is unlikely to improve under the influence of time, and the present rate of social and industrial development in the Arab world is inadequate to overtake the present tendency to deterioration.”⁷⁷ The Jewish Agency thus argued that the economic revival in the Middle East depended upon three factors: scientific agriculture, industrialization, and adequate capital to finance rapid and bold developments. “Now these

⁷⁴ Jewish Agency for Palestine. *The Jewish Case Before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine, as Presented by the Jewish Agency for Palestine – Statements and Memoranda* (Jerusalem: The Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1947), p.351

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 351-352.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 354.

three conditions, which any objective critic would accept as the pre-requisites of Middle Eastern prosperity, are precisely the characteristic contributions of Jewish effort to the Middle Eastern scene.”⁷⁸ In the memorandum, the Jewish Agency used King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan to confirm their argument: “I was astonished at what I saw of the Jewish colonies when I travelled from Jenin to Lydda. The entire coast from Haifa to Jaffa is now in their hands. They have colonised the sand dunes, extracted their water, quickened them to life and transformed them into a paradise.”⁷⁹ Not only did non-Jews, such as Colonel T. E. Lawrence confirmed that Zionism would benefit the Arabs of Palestine, but even an Arab, a king that had been appointed by the British themselves, agreed with this estimation. Yet, the Arabs of Palestine had different assessments concerning current and future Jewish immigration and its impact on the Arab population.

Under the title *The Future of Palestine* (1947), prepared by the Arab Office in London, they argued that Zionist settlements had had a negative impact on the Arab population, and that it was naïve to think that the Arabs would give up their land and rights for economic prosperity. “Such an expectation betrayed both a false political psychology and a false diagnosis of the situation. It is absurd to believe that men become less interested in political and national questions and more interested in economic ones the more prosperous they become.”⁸⁰ In fact, the Arab Office argued, the opposite was true, that both the Mandate and the Zionists were ignoring the fundamental cause of Arab opposition: the sense of injured right, the longing for independence, and the desire to prevent their own country from passing into alien hands. “No amount of economic benefit would persuade a normal people to abandon a position taken up from such motives of

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Arab Office (London). *The Future of Palestine* (Geneva: Imprimerie Centrale, August 1947), p. 28.

principles.”⁸¹ The Jewish Agency's calculation that the Palestinian Arabs would simply hand over the rule of Palestine to the Zionists in return for economic gain was preposterous.

The Arab Office did not take the bait that Arab quality of life would be improved by the establishment of a Jewish state, simply because the current reality proved the opposite. The Arab Office stressed that there had been no economic or any other benefit to the Palestinian-Arabs from Zionist immigration “to offset the damage it has done to every aspect of their life.” The reason for this was that the purpose of Zionist immigration was to benefit Jews only. “... The policy of the Zionists has not been to mingle with the inhabitants of the country, to co-operate with them and by doing so to create a spirit of solidarity; it has been to isolate themselves. This policy of isolation can be seen at work in every field of life.”⁸² They cited examples of land bought by the Jewish National Fund, which became the unassailable property of the Jewish people and would never be sold to non-Jews. The pressure which Jewish trade unions put on Jewish employers to only hire Jewish labour provided a second illustration.

The Arab Office claimed in sum, that the Zionist argument was flawed. The economic arguments that the Zionists were putting forward assumed that the Arabs were an uncivilised people whom the Jews would civilize, “or at least they were a stagnant people who needed the Jewish stimulus to set them on the path to progress.”⁸³ Were the Palestinian-Arabs really in such need of “rescue”? Did the Arabs consider themselves uncivilised, or did they consider the Zionist settlers, who were attempting to control the majority of Palestine, as uncivilised?

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 29.

⁸² Ibid., p. 34.

⁸³ Ibid.

An interesting explanation of the Arab fear/animosity felt towards the Jews coming from Europe was provided by Pasha Azzam of the Arab League. Azzam argued that the Jewish people went to Europe and to the West and came back something else. They had returned as Russified Jews, Polish Jews, German Jews, and English Jews. They had come back with a totally different conception of things, Western and not Eastern. That does not mean that the Arabs were necessarily quarrelling with anyone who came from the West. But the Jews, the Arabs' old cousins, coming back with imperialistic ideas, with reactionary or revolutionary ideas and trying to implement them first by British pressure and then by American pressure, and then by terrorism on their own part – they were not the old cousins they knew, and the Arabs could not extend to them a very good welcome. “The Zionist, the new Jew, wants to dominate and he pretends that he has got a particular civilizing mission with which he returns to a backwards, degenerated race in order to put the elements of progress into an area which has no progress.” Azzam points out that this has been the pretension of every power that wanted to colonize and aimed at domination. The excuse has always been that the people were backward and that the colonisers had a human mission to put the colonised forward. The Arabs simply refused. “We are not reactionary and we are not backwards. Even if we are ignorant, the difference between ignorance and knowledge is ten years in school.” The Arabs, said Azzam, were a living, and a vitally strong nation, who were in their renaissance. “We still have our brains. We have a heritage of civilisation and of spiritual life. We are not going to allow ourselves to be controlled either by great nations or small nations or dispersed nations.”⁸⁴

While the Jewish Agency tried to convince the Committee that the Arabs would benefit greatly from Jewish immigration, the Arab population was not buying into it, and utterly refused the prospect that the Arabs' needs would be fulfilled by the new Jewish

⁸⁴ Crossman, Richard, MP. *Palestine Mission*, pp. 109-110.

immigrants. The Jewish Agency's tactic at attempting to prove that the Arabs could benefit from Zionism failed. It failed because the past and current practice proved that Palestinian-Arabs were not part of a society the Zionists were creating in Palestine; it failed, because the interest of the Zionists to establish a Jewish state in Palestine went against the need of the Arabs not to be dominated by others, as they had for so many years; and it failed because the Jewish Agency did not advocate cooperation with the Arabs, but rather one-sided "assistance," or "management". The Committee was not convinced either. Had the Jewish Agency said: "We have the finances, the Arabs have the knowledge of how to work the land, let us have the opportunity to work together to improve the lives of both sides," perhaps then the Jewish Agency would have had a convincing case for the Committee, as only then would the needs of both sides be met. Anything less would only benefit one side temporarily, the Jewish side, until the Arabs would have enough of feeling marginalized in a land they considered theirs, and war would break out. So the question was: what idea would benefit both Arabs and Jews? And who would convince the Committee of it?

“The Only Reasonable Man in Palestine”

Crossman wrote in his diary on March 14th, 1946 of Dr. Judah Magnes: “I have been scared of his evidence for some time because I was certain that it would appeal to most of the committee. Sure enough it did.”⁸⁵ Dr. Judah Magnes was the head of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A native of San Francisco, Dr. Magnes had given up his pulpit as rabbi of Temple Emanu’el in New York during WWI because of his pacifist convictions, and came to Palestine. He was well known for his advocacy of the bi-nationalism plan for Palestine, which proposed that immigration should be controlled to allow the same number of Jews in Palestine as Arabs. He was also in favour of equal representation in the government of Palestine, and formed the *Ichud* (Union) party, which at the time of the Committee’s inquiries was non-political, to pursue this cause.⁸⁶ Dr. Magnes was regarded by British officials in Palestine as a “genuinely moderate Jew who is working for conciliation with the Arabs.”⁸⁷ Crossman never explained why he was afraid of Dr. Magnes’s testimony, but perhaps it was because Dr. Magnes would be able to distinguish between needs and interests of the Jewish people, and would be able to provide a concrete base to his arguments. Perhaps Crossman was afraid that even though Dr. Magnes’ arguments would make sense, he knew that logic would not be the prevailing force in Palestine.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 132.

⁸⁶ Crum, Bartley C. *Behind the Silken Curtain*, p. 252.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

“Our view is based on two assumptions,” Dr. Magnes declared. “First, that the Jewish-Arab co-operation is essential for a satisfactory solution; and, second, that it is possible. The alternative is war, but the plain Jews and the plain Arabs do not want war.”⁸⁸

When Crossman began questioning Dr. Magnes, after other Committee members ended their queries, he started by saying: “I was asking about you this morning, and somebody told me that you were the only reasonable person in Palestine. When I was listening to you, I began to see why he paid you that compliment...”⁸⁹ Crossman questioned Dr. Magnes, not on the details of his bi-national plan, but on the practicality of it. He raised four points that would cause Dr. Magnes’ plan to succeed or fail:

1. Agreement between the political leaders on both sides.
2. Agreement on both sides of nationalistic fervour among the rank and file.⁹⁰
3. Confidence on both sides that the other side is going to keep to its agreement to give up its ultimate desire (a nationalistic Arab or Jewish state); and confidence that they will continue agreeing on that later on.
4. An administration capable of the extremely skilful job of conducting this together.

Crossman wanted to know how Dr. Magnes planned on achieving these four point. Putting aside the last point, Dr. Magnes answered: “...through life, and not just through discussion, through establishing vital interests for both people, by establishing contact, not in debating society, but in boards that have to do with the determination of the absorptive

⁸⁸ Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Jewish Problems in Palestine and Europe. *Public Hearings, 1945-1948* (Switzerland: Zug, 1977), p. 5. Hearing took place in Jerusalem, Palestine, on March 14, 1946.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁹⁰ This point means to find common nationalist interpretations.

capacity of the country.”⁹¹ Dr. Magnes proposed establishing a regional trusteeship council representing both peoples, and going through the various organs of government, “that is the way to bring people together who are at the present time unhappily far apart, and who simply can’t be brought together by appealing to abstract qualities.”⁹² By cooperation, and not by unilateral actions, Dr. Magnes believed, both the Arabs and the Jews would be able to meet each others’ needs. This was in stark contrast to the proposals of the Jewish Agency, who only proposed to “help” the Arabs, rather than work *with* them.

Dr. Magnes admitted that although he had a following for his ideas in Palestine, it was not large, but that “a large part of the inarticulate section of the population believes more or less as we do.”⁹³ He took part of the blame for not organising the population to think the way his party did, but also claimed that a moderate programme did not have the same appeal in days of war as an extreme programme had.

Crossman then asked if he believed Arab-Jewish relations had deteriorated lately, despite efforts of getting both Jews and Arabs to work together, to which Dr. Magnes answered “yes.” Dr. Magnes also did not want to speak on behalf of the Jewish Agency about their reception of his plan for a bi-national state, even though Crossman insisted that the success or failure of such an initiative lay in the hand of an organisation recognised by the Mandate as the representatives of the Jewish people of Palestine. But what about the Arabs – would they be willing to cooperate with the Jews? Not wanting to speak on behalf of the Arab League or the Arab High Committee either, Dr. Magnes suggested making the Jewish Agency and the Arab League parallel. In fact, he wanted to make all Jewish and Arab organisations, in charge of their own population, parallel to each other, so that there

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 17.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 18..

was a counterpoint. By doing so, the Arabs would realise that the Jews did not intend to dominate them, but rather be their equals.

When Crossman returned to the fourth point he made above, “An administration capable of the extremely skilful job of conducting this together,” Dr. Magnes said he believed that collaboration within the Palestine government should take place between Arabs and Jews, while the transition from Mandate to independence took place, and implored the Committee for self-government. Dr. Magnes suggested that the minor positions in the Palestine government be filled by Arabs and Jews, simply because the English were not part of this country, and that it was time for Arabs and Jews to begin heading departments within the Palestine government. The only way to teach self-government, argued Dr. Magnes, was to distribute responsibility. “You can’t get self-government by governing other people.”⁹⁴ How were the British preparing Palestine for independence, as their mandate stipulated, if they were not preparing its inhabitants to govern themselves? What Dr. Magnes was suggesting was the policy that the British should have exercised from the inception of their Mandate, and which they had failed to implement.

The most important point Dr. Magnes made was in response to Crum’s question on partition. It is worth quoting this exchange verbatim, because it emphasises the idea that both the Jews and the Arabs would have to rely on each other for their future success in Palestine, and that their lives would become intertwined, whether they liked it or not.⁹⁵

Crum: Does your organisation reject completely the idea of partition?

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 20

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 22-23

Dr. Magnes: I would like to give you my own opinion. We have no official stand on that. I reject partition absolutely. I think this it is a moral defeat for everyone concerned. It is a confession of failure.

Crum: Let us assume that.

Dr. Magnes: But you mustn't assume that.

Crum: It might be the only answer.

Dr. Magnes: No, it isn't the only answer. You have, in the first place, in these two tiny partitioned States, the same problem *in toto* as you have in this bi-national State. You have a majority and a minority. How are you going to treat them? If you are going to treat them as majorities and minorities – one dominant people and one subservient people – that is one way to do it. If you are going to treat them as we propose, on the lines of parity in the Jewish State or in the Arab State, why not do it in the complete State? Moreover, you would find, I think, that the administration boundaries would be very hard to set up.

And what is the greatest importance to me is this: That you then separate the Jews from the Arabs instead of bringing them together. You separate them as though they were two dogs fighting on the street and you had to put them into separate kennels. That is not the case. Some people may use that figure of speech, but it isn't true. The only way to get people to work together is to get them to live together, to get to know one another, and you can't do that by putting them into separate compartments. If you put them into these compartments, what is going on now in both Arab and Jewish schools will be accentuated to a very large degree. Unfortunately, at the present time you have a large amount of the bitterest nationalism, which you might call chauvinism, being given expression to both here and there.

I dread the day when, in a few years time, after this partition, you will get a group of young Jews and a group of young Arabs, on both sides of this irredentist border, going after one another in just the same way as the militarists today want to have the field for a trial of arms. Why do that? It's a large problem. No one can guarantee its success [a bi-national state], but it is worth trying. It is a great challenge; it is the Holy Land. Why mangle this conception of the Holy Land? Here are two people, descendants of the great Semitic people of antiquity. They can naturally work together. We have to find the way; we have to try to convince everyone that this is just and that it is sound. You don't have to do this partitioning.

Dr. Magnes was able to predict a future that made sense to him, and made sense to the Committee, too. If one separates two people who wish to live on the same land that separation will only cause more strife, and will only cause more animosity, simply because each side will feel they deserve more than the other. The same problem that would occur in two states on the same land will result in the same problem in a bi-national state. The only difference is that a bi-national state would eventually meet the needs of both people, rather than their interests, but only if both sides desired so, and if only the leadership of both sides advocated for that. That is why it was so important for Dr. Magnes that the leadership of both people be parallel to each other, and thus lead their own followers into cooperation, rather than into competition with each other. It was only through cooperation that security and success could be guaranteed to both Jews and Arabs.

Dr. Magnes was trying to extract the *needs* of both Jews and Arabs, rather than fall back on the *interests* both sides were voicing. He argued that immigration into Palestine was what Jews most wanted, that was also their *need*. "Give us the chance of an ample immigration, and many of the sincerest advocates of the Jewish state will forgo the

state.”⁹⁶ He then argued that what Arabs wanted most was self-government, that that was their *need*. “Give them self-government, and many of the sincerest opponents of Jewish immigration will acquiesce.” Was Dr. Magnes naïve as to the true desire of people like Weizmann, Ben-Gurion, and Shertok? Was not Jewish immigration a step towards the creation of a Jewish state, and not an end in itself? Would the Arabs stand by while European Jews immigrated to Palestine? Dr. Magnes's plan could easily fail if there was no communication between the leaders of the Arabs and the Jews, and so he was pushing the Committee to recommend a scenario in which people like Ben-Gurion would have to talk to his counterpart on the "other side."

Although Crossman greatly admired Dr. Magnes, he also argued that it was a great mistake to believe that the difference between moderate Zionists and extreme Zionists was one of principle. “Weizmann, Magnes, and Ben-Gurion are in complete agreement about the objectives, the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. On this, Magnes is just as extreme as a member of the Stern Gang. What they differ about is tactic.”⁹⁷ Weizmann, argues Crossman, thought it was a tactical mistake to demand a Jewish state at once; and “Magnes thinks it is a mistake in tactics to demand a Jewish state at all. But they all want to see the Jews as much at home in Palestine as the Americans in America.”⁹⁸

Here, Crossman is mistaken. By Dr. Magnes not seeking a Jewish state at all, how was he the same as Weizmann, Ben-Gurion or the Stern Gang? He was not, for he was not seeking to dominate land or people in favour of a nationalistic goal, when the others were. Crossman continued to argue that Dr. Magnes' ideas would be alright “if all the Jews were

⁹⁶ Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Jewish Problems in Palestine and Europe. *Public Hearings, 1945-1948* (Switzerland: Zug, 1977), pp. 6-7. Hearing took place in Jerusalem, Palestine, on March 14, 1946.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ From Crossman's remark, it seems that he makes a distinction between a “Jewish commonwealth” and a “Jewish state.” He does not explain what this distinction is.

as patient and rational as he is; if the Arabs were not certain that the British are on their [Jewish] side,” and if British Prime Minister Atlee was able to replace all the key officials in Palestine by people who believed in the national home, and in helping the Arabs and the Jews to work together. “But isn’t that just utopia?”⁹⁹

This is exactly what Dr. Magnes was trying to emphasize, that if the leadership of Jews and Arabs agreed on the importance of cooperation, then their people would follow suit. The Jewish people would become patient and rational if their leadership exemplified patience and rationality. But the Jewish Agency was not patient, because its main goal was the fulfilment of Zionism, the establishment of a Jewish state without cooperating with the Arabs. The Jewish Agency was not looking for a utopian solution, but its very own solution, believing that the creation of a Jewish state would meet the needs of their followers.

Whether the solution was utopian or not, Judge Hutcheson recognised what the entire Committee saw in Dr. Magnes. “You are not denominated a Christian, Dr. Magnes,” he said, “but you talk as I should like Christians to act. I am not ready to assess your proposal, but I am a fairly old man, and I recognize moral power when I see it.”¹⁰⁰ What Dr. Magnes proposed met the *needs* of both Jews and Arabs – immigration of Jewish Holocaust survivors who had nowhere to go, and Arab self-governance. Although not clearly stated, Dr. Magnes understood that a Jewish state would harm not only the Arabs, but the Jews, too. He recognized that the *interest* of the Jewish Agency in establishing a Jewish state would not meet the long-term *needs* of the Jewish people, to live in a peaceful and prosperous environment, but rather be the cause of continuous strife.

⁹⁹ Crossman, Richard, MP. *Palestine Mission*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁰ Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Jewish Problems in Palestine and Europe. *Public Hearings, 1945-1948* (Switzerland: Zug, 1977), p. 37. Hearing took place in Jerusalem, Palestine, on March 14, 1946.

Nevertheless, the needs of the Arabs or the Jews were not what the British government were concerned with; their own interests ultimately led the way to their solution of the Palestine quagmire. And the US simply stepped aside.

The Interests of Outside Forces

So far, this paper concentrated mostly on the needs and interests of the Jewish Holocaust survivors in the DP camps, the various Zionist leaders, both within the Jewish Agency and outside it, and some Arab voices. However, the Palestine issue could not be resolved in a bubble, and the outcome would have to include the interests of outside forces, which had their own stakes in Palestine. In an ideal world, the Jews and the Arabs would have resolved their differences between themselves, but this was no utopian world. The British, the Americans, and the Russians, each had their own perspective, their own wishes, and their own goals in the Middle East. This section looks at the Committee's recommendations, and how the interests of the British and Americans governments, who had a stake in the Committee's proposals, affected their responses to implementing the Committee's recommendations. Neither the needs nor the interests of the Jewish or Arab people were taken into consideration.

When the Committee first crossed the Atlantic Ocean from the American continent to Europe at the beginning of their investigation, they were presented with a document marked: "Contents of file of confidential communications on Palestine supplied by Division of Near Eastern Affairs for use of Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry." The document dealt with seventeen items – despatches, cables, correspondence, and memoranda of conversations. This was a resume of the State Department secret file on Palestine, Crum wrote, that not even President Truman had known. According to this file, since September 15, 1938, "each time a promise was made to American Jewry regarding Palestine, the State Department promptly sent messages to the Arab rulers discounting it

and reassuring them, in effect, that regardless of what was promised publicly to the Jews, nothing would be done to change the situation in Palestine.” As Crum pointed out, this file confirmed the charges of double-dealing that had been hurled at both the US and Britain.¹⁰¹ The Committee was adamant not to have this occur with their investigation.

The first recommendation of the report that the Committee issued to their respective governments on April 20, 1946, read: “We have to report that such information as we received about countries other than Palestine gave no hope of substantial assistance in finding homes for Jews wishing or impelled to leave Europe.”¹⁰² The Committee argued that Palestine alone cannot meet the emigration needs of all the Jewish victims in Europe and that the whole world shared the responsibility for settling them and all other displaced persons, “irrespective of creed or nationality.” The Committee recognised that many of the Nazis’ victims would remain in Europe and so it was the responsibility of both the US and British governments to secure their rights under the United Nations Charter, calling for “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedom for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.”

As for the Jewish displaced people themselves, the report recommended that 100,000 certificates be authorised immediately for admission into Palestine, and that these certificates be awarded that same year, 1946. The report commented that the number of Jewish refugees far exceeded 100,000, and that there were more than this in Germany, Austria and Italy alone. It emphasised the need to close down those “camps” in which the Jewish survivors were waiting, and who were living in the same environment in which they had been persecuted. Due to immigration laws of other countries, the report said, “We know of no other country to which the great majority can go in the immediate future other

¹⁰¹ Crum, Bartley C. *Behind the Silken Curtain*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁰² Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. *Report to the United States Government and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, Lausanne, Switzerland, April 20, 1946*, p. 1.

than Palestine. Furthermore that is where almost all of them want to go. There they are sure that they will receive a welcome denied elsewhere. There they hope to enjoy peace and rebuild their lives.”¹⁰³

Although his name is not mentioned in the report, the third recommendation, assigned to the question of partitioning Palestine, was very similar to the testimony Dr. Magnes gave. The report recommended that Palestine be established as “a country in which the legitimate national aspirations of both Jews and Arabs can be reconciled.” The Committee wanted to avoid the need for a majority to establish a state, as that would become the cause for conflict in Palestine. It wanted the constitution of the country to ensure that the need for a majority would be made purposeless.¹⁰⁴

And so, under the headline of *Mandate and United Nations Trusteeship*, the Committee’s fourth recommendation concluded that

The hostility between Jews and Arabs and, in particular, the determination of each to achieve domination, if necessary, by violence, make it almost certain that, now and for some time to come, any attempt to establish either an independent Palestinian State or independent Palestinian States would result in civil strife such as might threaten the peace of the world.¹⁰⁵

The Committee thus recommended that until this hostility disappeared, the Government of Palestine be continued as at present under mandate pending the execution of a trusteeship agreement under the United Nations. The Committee recognised that the Peel Commission of 1937 had already admitted that the Mandate was unworkable, and so did the League of Nations. In 1939, two years after the Peel Commission, the British government issued a White Paper, and announced it would take steps to terminate the Mandate and establish an independent Palestinian state. “Our recommendations,” says the

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

Committee's report, "are based on what we believe at this stage to be as fair a measure of justice to all as we can find in view of what has gone before and of all that has been done."¹⁰⁶ The Committee was aware that they were not in accord with the claims of either Jews or Arabs, and that they supported departure from the recent policy of the Mandatory. The Committee also recognised that if their recommendations were adopted, they will involve a long period of trusteeship, "which will mean a very heavy burden for any single Government to undertake," but a burden which would be lightened if the difficulties were appreciated and the Trustee had the support of the United Nations.

The Committee's report illustrated how distressing the situation was, that in fact, this was a conflict of right against right. While each side overstated their case, each side had a legitimate case. As the Arab Office in London explained, the Jews wanted to save more victims from the wreck of Europe; the Arabs want to avoid the danger of becoming a minority in a Jewish state. "Therefore a just solution would be one which opens the doors to Palestine to further Jewish immigration but at the same time safeguards the Arabs against it being turned into a Jewish state."¹⁰⁷ The Arab Office did not argue that this is what it wanted; instead, this recommendation reflected how outsiders, like the Committee, viewed the solution to European Jews' displacement and the conflict within Palestine. Based on what the Committee witnessed, heard, and experienced, the above recommendations were meant to meet the needs of all those concerned, and not just Jewish or Arab interests.

When the report was discussed for the first time in the British cabinet on April 24, 1946, the only person to support the report was Foreign Secretary Bevin, who promised the Committee he would do so, if they reached their recommendations unanimously. He hoped that the report would lead the US government to cooperate in solving the Palestine

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Arab Office (London). *The Future of Palestine* (Geneva: Imprimerie Centrale, August 1947), p. 60.

problem the British were facing. Prime Minister Atlee was highly critical of the report, arguing that in effect no other country except Palestine would contribute to absorbing the Holocaust survivors. Atlee also feared angering both the Arabs and the Jews against the British government, and feared extended pressure by the US to allow 100,000 Jews into Palestine.¹⁰⁸ These were but some of the reasons the recommendations of the Committee were being shelved.

Another reason the British government attempted to find different avenues than the ones proposed by the Committee, was the insistence of Prime Minister Atlee that the *Haganah* be disarmed, before the 100,000 Jewish immigrants be allowed into Palestine. Podet argues that Attlee knew well that British forces could not disarm the *Haganah*, as it meant disarming the majority of the Jewish population. Partition, therefore, seemed like a very attractive and safer (for British troops) solution, as conflict between British forces and the *Haganah* would be avoided, and after partition, British troops would leave.¹⁰⁹ An additional reason the British looked at other possibilities was because they knew that no help from the US would be given to implement the Committee's recommendations. The British knew they would need extra military support in order to allow 100,000 Jews into Palestine, and prevent a conflict between Arabs, Jews, and British forces. The US had no interest in sending troops to Palestine.

Perhaps by looking at the bigger picture, Britain's failure to implement the report can be blamed on the fact that the Committee studied the Palestine problem in abstraction from world strategy. Crossman points out that while in Cairo and Jerusalem, he realised that the procedure of studying the Arab and Jewish problem, without taking into account other forces was farcical. "Any policy for the national home [for the Jewish people] must

¹⁰⁸ Kochavi, Arie J. *Post-Holocaust Politics – Britain, the United States, and Jewish Refugees, 1945-1948* (Chapel Hill, NC & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 108.

¹⁰⁹ Podet, Allen H. *The Success and Failure of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, 1945-1946: Last Chance in Palestine* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), p. 324.

form part of a Middle Eastern policy; and a Middle Eastern policy must form part of a world policy.”¹¹⁰ The report had embarrassed the British Government because it challenged implicitly the principles of British imperial policy at a time when a new struggle, the Cold War, was beginning for control of the Middle East.

The US in turn, accepted the report, as President Truman either did not see, or refused to see, the Palestine issue as a political problem, but rather he saw the report as solving a refugee problem. As the US was not prepared to provide troops to implement the report (as Prime Minister Atlee required, but which the report itself did not specify) it was not at any political risk when it pressured the British for the implementation of the report and the allocation of 100,000 certificates to Jewish DP. President Truman simply saw Palestine as a British issue, which did not require US interference.¹¹¹

The first public notice of the Committee’s recommendation appeared on July 22, 1946. Ironically, it was the same day the *Irgun* blew up the King David Hotel, killing ninety-one people. It was also around the same time the Grady-Morrison meetings were considering other solutions for Palestine. The Grady-Morrison meetings were established as an alternative to the Committee’s recommendations, and looked, once again, into the idea of partition. The Arabs rejected the plan, insisting that the entire country should remain under a representative government, and the Zionist leadership rejected it on the ground that the territory assigned to them was not enough, and that the plan did not give them sufficient control over immigration.¹¹² Once again, the British fell back on the “easier” solution to Palestine – partition, and once again the idea of partition was not accepted by any of the parties.

¹¹⁰ Crossman, Richard, MP. *Palestine Mission*, p. 198.

¹¹¹ Nachmani, Amikam. *Great Power Discord in Palestine – The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry into the Problem of European Jewry and Palestine, 1945-1946*, p. 228.

¹¹² Sakran, Frank C. *Palestine Dilemma – Arab Rights Versus Zionist Aspirations* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1948), p. 183.

At this point, President Truman told Prime Minister Atlee that he could not accept the proposed Grady-Morrison plan because both the Arabs and the Jews did not agree to it, that the US could not participate in any further discussions, and that Britain was free to seek its own solution. As Frank Sakran wrote in *Palestine Dilemma – Arab Rights Versus Zionist Aspirations* (1948), “Thus it seemed at the time that America washed its hands of this difficult problem and threw it back into Great Britain’s lap – where it rightly belonged.”¹¹³ During 1946 and 1947 the British government attempted to find solutions to the Palestine issue by inviting both Arab and Jewish delegates to conferences held in London. The Arab states accepted, while the Jewish leadership rejected the invitations, emphasising their displeasure at the postponement of admitting the 100,000 Jewish survivors, which the Committee had originally recommended. The British government thus attempted to convince the Arab delegates to accept the idea of partition, insisting it was the best solution. The Arabs rejected it, arguing they wanted Palestine to be under one government, which would represent adequately its inhabitants – this would mean an Arab majority, and thus the end of the Zionists’ aspirations.

The British government finally reached the point where it admitted it had no solutions to offer. In a speech delivered to the House of Commons, on February 25, 1947, Foreign Secretary Bevin explained the reasons for the failure of the London conference, which meant to bring both Arabs and Jews to the negotiating table, to implement the Committee’s report:

The course of events has led His Majesty’s Government to decide that the problem of Palestine must be referred to the United Nations... The problem of Palestine is a very complex one. There is no denying the fact that the Mandate contained contradictory promises. In the first place it promised the Jews a National Home, and, in the second place it declared that the rights and position of the Arabs must be protected. Therefore, it provided for what was virtually an invasion of the country of thousands of immigrants, and at the same time said that this was not to disturb the people in possession. The question therefore arose whether this could be

¹¹³ Ibid.

accomplished without a conflict, and the events in the last 25 years have proved that it could not.¹¹⁴

The British government's main objective was to meet its own interests, which is why the Mandate included contradictory promises. After more than two decades, none of the parties involved, neither the Arabs nor the Jews trusted the British. Trust would have required time and steady positive moves, and Britain took all the wrong steps along the way.

In *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* (1979), Bauer poses this question: What made the British government go to the United Nations? Bauer argues that it was the decisive influence of American pressure which prevented Britain from implementing its anti-Zionist policy, a policy that did not allow for the creation of a Jewish state. In turn, the pressure on the US government was motivated by the presence of the Holocaust survivors in the DP camps under US control (which Ben-Gurion had planned all along). This pressure, argues Bauer, was kept up on US decision-makers by American Jewry, "cultivating a receptive American public."¹¹⁵ So the establishment of the State of Israel and the consequent achievement of a political power base for the Jewish people were made possible, to a large degree, by the Jews in the Diaspora. By saying this, Bauer tries to correct the impression that the main factor leading to the Jewish statehood was the activity of the Jewish underground movements in Palestine. But he emphasises that all this was built on "the fundamental contribution of pre-war Zionist movement, of three generations of Zionist immigrants." He also writes, "There is no doubt that the influence of the organised Holocaust survivors, and of the American pressure which was related to this

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 184.

¹¹⁵ Bauer, Yehuda. *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 76. American Jewry became more supportive of Zionism following the Holocaust, as they believed that a repeat of such atrocities could reoccur anywhere.

problem, set the stage for the Zionist's diplomatic triumph."¹¹⁶ The Jewish holocaust survivors' presence in the DP camps (especially in the American zones), pressure from the Jewish population in the US, and Zionist activities within Palestine, all contributed to the creation of the State of Israel. The interest of the Zionist ideology would finally be met, the needs of its followers would not, and the result would be just what Dr. Magnes predicted: War, animosity, and competition for a land both people would want to have as their own.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Conclusion

This paper focused on the difference between the needs and the interests of both the Jewish people in the DP camps, and of the Zionist leaders who were advocating for a Jewish state in Palestine. The Jewish survivors in the DP camps were eager to find a place where they could begin a fresh start to their lives. While the gates to many countries remained closed to them, the Zionist ideology offered them what no-one else did – hope. This hope was a source of motivation which the survivors required to lift themselves from the ashes of their loved ones' graves; it gave meaning to their suffering and a goal to pursue. The survivors needed Zionism, an ideology that embraced them, when everyone else, who was not a Zionist, did not. What they were not aware of was the impact that practicing their ideology would have on them and the Jewish people of Palestine. The practice of Zionism would have offered them the safety and security they so longed for, if it was exercised in a place where there was no-one else. Palestine, however, was settled by those who never did, were not, and could never practice Zionism, simply because they were not Jews. This would mean that the Jews in Palestine would find themselves in conflict with the Arabs of Palestine; as a result, Zionist ideology's promise of a peaceful and prosperous environment for the Jewish people could not be fulfilled. Thus, the practice of Zionism in Palestine would not provide its followers with their need, what they must have to lead a secure and prosperous life. Ironically, Zionism's goals-- freedom for Jews to practice their religion and to be leaders of their communities and their respective countries-- has been achieved in areas outside of Palestine/Israel – mainly North America and Western Europe – Zionism was achieved outside Zion.

The Zionist leaders, both within the Jewish Agency and outside of it, preached that the Jewish people were different from others, and thus required different rules and different privileges not granted to others. They argued that the Jewish people were in fact a nation which deserved a state, and the fact that others lived on the land where they proposed to locate that state did not matter. They tried to convince the Committee that the Jewish state would, in fact, assist the Arab population rather than harm it even when the facts on the ground proved the opposite. They were, as Dr. Magnes suggested, “State mad.” For them the state was the end, and not the means to achieve peacefulness and prosperity. They saw a Jewish state as a means to defend the Jewish people, instead of realising that it was the idea and practice of Zionism itself that was endangering the Jews. The Zionist leaders could not see the benefit of working together with the Arabs, as their nationalistic ideology did not allow for a broad understanding of issues, offering instead a limited view of options. The option of cooperation was not one of them. Therefore, the Zionist leaders focused on the interest of the Jewish people, rather than on their needs.

Dr. Magnes, founder of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, a former rabbi and an educated individual, was able to predict all that has happened from the moment the partition of Palestine was announced by the United Nations in 1947. The people of Palestine, both the Jews and the Arabs, were set apart, rather than encouraged to work together. This has only increased the animosity, the competition, and the conflicts between two people who desire to live on the same land. It has increased the desire of Jews and Arabs to compete for their interests, rather than to cooperate to fulfil their needs.

The Committee had predicted this outcome in their recommendations, and believed that the implementation of their recommendations would have achieved the needs of both people. The Committee did not fail; instead, their governments failed by refusing to implement the Committee’s recommendations. The British and American governments

failed because they did not seek what Jews and Arabs really needed, but rather what their own governments were interested in. Britain dug itself into a hole, and the US was not prepared to dig Britain out. The Committee, for its part, did the best it could do under the circumstances, and offered the best advice to the people who would be affected the most. If the Committee had attempted to look at the interests of other forces, it would have realised that a solution would have been impossible. It was difficult enough to find solutions for two people in Palestine; it would have been impossible to find a solution that also included Britain and the US.

It was the needs of both people that Arabs and Jews had in common: a need for a free and secure life, free of domination by another. These needs still remain the same today. Perhaps it is time to once again focus on what people must have, rather than on what they really want. Perhaps then Jews and Arabs will realise that what they must have is actually the same, and that each can only attain it by providing it to the other.

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