

American Jewish Committee

January 26, 1945

Judge Joseph M. Proskauer  
11 Broadway  
New York City

Dear Judge,

Before this letter arrives you will in all probability have seen the letter which I wrote to Slawson, and which was intended naturally also for you. I have directed and will direct similar letters to Slawson in order to preserve the proprieties of the centralized organization of the American Jewish Committee which is his official concern.

I have now had interviews with the three most important leaders of the Zionist Organization at present in this country, namely Weizman, Ben Gurion and Shertok. I have also talked to Senator, who is the last so-called non-Zionist representative of the Jewish Agency.

Weizman is coming to America in April. I believe I have laid the groundwork for his meeting with you to discuss the possibilities of united effort on the part of the Zionists and non-Zionists in America, the latter represented particularly by the American Jewish Committee, for Jewish settlement in Palestine. My definite conviction is that he is far from being enthusiastic about, or inwardly committed to the Biltmore politics of Ben Gurion and company, which have been pursued so intensively particularly during the last two years. I think that Weizman, as well as an increasingly large part of the Jewish community in Palestine, are convinced that if more attention had been paid to the basic essentials of removing the White Paper, getting permission for large Jewish immigration and for the acquisition of unused lands in Palestine, than to the development of the maximum political program of the immediate obtaining of the Jewish Commonwealth, more real progress could have been recorded than is now possible. I find that the protagonists of the Biltmore platform are increasingly on the defensive. I have said to Weizman that I believe that on the basis of a program of immigration and land almost complete unity of action could be obtained among Jews in America to help achieve what is realistically possible. I almost wish I could be present for some of the discussions at least between him and you, or between the representatives of the Zionist Organization in America and the American Jewish Committee. I know I have your confidence; I feel that I have obtained Weizman's. I want to emphasize that I made plain to Weizman, as I made plain to others with whom I have been having discussions, that in my opinion the American Jewish Committee could not be induced to support a renewed propaganda for the realization of the Biltmore program.

I felt that both Ben Gurion and Shertok were less sympathetic to my exposition of what I thought were the realities and necessities and possibilities of united American Jewish effort with regard to Jewish settlement in Palestine. Both insisted that there must be some political mechanism, by which they meant the Jewish State, of course, to enable the maximum possible number of Jews to immigrate into Palestine and to secure the necessary lands and economic assistance and possibilities of industrial development for them. I explained that

I thought they were putting the cart before the horse, and that in no event did I think political supremacy would be given to a Jewish minority in Palestine over all the rest of the inhabitants of the land, aside from many other considerations which would prevent it. I told them that I thought that the chances of securing a haven of refuge in Palestine for the largest possible number of Jews in Europe who had no other hope but to come here, were being seriously hurt by this insistence upon achieving immediately the Jewish Commonwealth of Palestine.

I have not yet developed for them, but will probably do so in future conversations, my conviction that this insistence upon a political state must inevitably raise again the question of partition in Palestine, which I consider iniquitous, no matter how it may be sugar coated. I think they also realize, although they refuse to admit it yet, that even if the gates of Palestine were to be completely opened to as many Jews of Europe as wanted to come here, it would still be impossible to achieve a Jewish majority. My own estimate is, and I have reason to believe that it agrees with their own private estimate, that out of the million Jews approximately who may survive the war in Europe, at the very most half a million could with herculean efforts be brought to Palestine. If they are to be brought at all, or if any portion of that half million is to be brought, it will have to be done, I am convinced, within the next five years.

If Ben-Gurion and his followers would only listen to reason, and I believe that Weizman is already convinced, I think the bases in fact exist for a mighty attempt by unified American Jewry to save a large part of the remnant of Israel that still survives in Europe that can be saved. I am firmly convinced that Palestine can easily hold another half a million Jews.

The above in outline is the situation as I see it today. With cordial greetings,

sincerely yours

NG:IP