

MAGNES

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

July 22, 1936

MEMORANDUM  
FOR SUBMISSION TO THE EXECUTIVE OF THE JEWISH AGENCY

Soon after the beginning of the Arab Strike of this year, it became evident that the disturbances would be prolonged and might result in Governmental measures detrimental to Zionist aims and interests. The undersigned met in order to exchange views on the situation and to see if a reasonable program of negotiations with influential members of the Arab community could be worked out, with a view to ending the present Strike through a truce and perhaps subsequently, to a lasting peace arrangement between the two races.

The undersigned have been living in the country for a number of years. All of them have in different ways had close contact with leading members of the Arab Communities of Palestine, Transjordan, Egypt, Syria and Iraq. They have had many opportunities of hearing Arab views on the burning question of Jewish-Arab relationships. All of them have been in touch with Government officials whose views and feelings on the subject of Jewish-Arab relations they regard themselves as competent to interpret.

The exchange of views between the undersigned through verbal discussions and written memoranda, brought to light, that, although differing in details, they were united on fundamental points of approach as follows:-

1. The successful upbuilding of the Jewish National Home cannot be accomplished without coming to an agreement with the Arab Community of Palestine.

2. Even if this upbuilding, notwithstanding Arab opposition, were possible, with inevitable disturbances and riots, entailing loss of life, enormous loss of material values, frustration of many endeavours and the great loss of time necessary for recovery, Jewish colonisation with Arab consent offers incomparably more advantages than this work in opposition to the Arab Community.

3. Although there is more difficulty now than 10 - 15 years ago, during which time a new generation of nationally minded Arabs has grown up, in reaching an agreement with the Arabs, the undersigned from their experiences with responsible Arab leaders before and during the present disturbances were convinced that even now it was possible to come to an understanding with influential leaders of the Arab Movement, and these leaders in their turn would be prepared to use their endeavours to make this understanding acceptable to the majority of their Community.

4. All classes of the Arab Community without exception believe that, with the present rate of Jewish immigration, there will soon be a Jewish majority in Palestine with the Arabs a subject race. The undersigned were convinced that a basis for discussion with the Arabs could be found only if the question of the fixation of Jewish immigration over a limited period formed the central point of the discussion.

5. From recent private conversations of some of the undersigned with prominent Arabs, they became convinced, that the fixation of immigration at an average maximum of 30,000 Jewish immigrants per annum over a period of 10 years, resulting in a Jewish population of 800,000 at the end of the period or 40% of the total population of 2,000,000, could have formed the basis of discussion with Arab leaders with considerable hope of success. Although these figures had already had considerable Arab assent, the undersigned felt that once the two sides met, having agreed in advance on the

principle of the fixation of Jewish immigration over a limited period, the number of Jewish immigrants and the period of the truce might well be the subject of further discussions.

6. The undersigned further believed, that an agreement on the main question - immigration, might have led to a peace settlement between the two Communities on such other outstanding questions as the regulation of land purchases, employment of labour and staff, and arrangements in the political field on the basis of the equality of both Nations.

From the outset the undersigned agreed that no steps be taken in furtherance of their views without the knowledge and consent of the Jewish Agency - the body authorized to deal with political affairs. Therefore, having coordinated their views on the fundamental points of a possible agreement with the Arab Community, the undersigned communicated the result of their information and deliberations to the members of the Jewish Agency responsible for conducting its political affairs and offered them their assistance, if desired.

A Memorandum embodying the agreed views of the undersigned was drawn up, consisting of two parts - 1) the substance of the proposals which might form the basis of discussion with Arabs and (2) the procedure to be followed.

Following conversations which Mr. Frumkin and Mr. P. Rutenberg each had privately with Mr. Shertok on the subject, both of them together, on behalf of the undersigned, had on 29th May in Tel-Aviv a joint conference with Mr. Shertok and one of the leaders of the Histadruth, who were informed of the undersigneds' proposals and their desire to have a formal meeting with members of the Jewish Agency in order to place these proposals before them.

On Monday, the 1st of June, this meeting took place. There were present on behalf of the Jewish Agency:- Messrs. Kaplan ( in the chair ), Shertok, Ussischkin, B. Joseph and Berl Katznelson; on behalf of the group-Messrs. Frumkin, Magnes, Novomeysky, P. Rutenberg and M. Smilansky.

A memorandum was submitted and discussed. Copies of this memorandum are attached hereto. In regard to its second part - procedure for arranging a conference with Arab leaders, the undersigned explained why they thought it preferable that preliminary stages should be conducted through unofficial channels. It was, however, emphasized that the procedure to be followed was a matter to be decided by the Jewish Agency, the chief interest of the undersigned being in the substance of the proposals.

The representatives of the Jewish Agency decided to call a meeting of its Executive and undertook to inform the undersigned through one of its members of the decision taken.

A few days later Mr. Shertok informed one of the undersigned, that the Executive had decided unanimously in favour of negotiation with the Arabs, that the question of the possibility of waiving under certain carefully thought out circumstances the right to utilise the immigration certificates already issued could not be discussed, being entirely unacceptable, and that on the question of the fixation of immigration, the views of the members of the Executive were equally divided and the opinions of the members at present in London - Dr. Weizmann and Mr. Ben-Gurion, were to be sought by cable and telephone and that the undersigned would be informed of the results in a few days. Mr. Shertok was urged to give a speedy reply, as the disturbances were developing and deepening and the opportunities which seemed to be favourable at the moment might not be available as time passed.

On the 8th of June another meeting took place between Mr. Shertok and



Messrs. Rutenberg and Novomeysky at the Hotel Gat-Rimon in Tel-Aviv. Mr. Shertok was again urged to act in the matter of negotiations with all possible speed, to start negotiations themselves of their own, if they did not want to agree to the proposals of the undersigned.

On the 16th June a meeting took place between representatives of the Jewish Agency, Messrs. Shertok and Kaplan, and Mr. Novomeysky, representing the undersigned. Mr. Novomeysky was informed that a majority of the Executive of the Jewish Agency was now in favour of fixation of immigration over a limited period, but that the annual figure which they would be willing to consider was that of 1935, namely, 62,000. As to the procedure, the Executive was against the proposal to empower the undersigned to start unofficial negotiations with Arab leaders. The Political Department of the Agency was the only body to conduct negotiations, and this Department would be glad to receive any useful information from private persons.

On the 20th June Messrs. Rutenberg and Novomeysky had a meeting with Mr. Ussischkin to clarify the situation. Mr. Ussischkin undertook to arrange for another meeting of the Agency's Executive.

On the 24th June at the invitation of Mr. Ussischkin a meeting took place at his home, at which Mr. Kaplan and Mr. Shertok of the Jewish Agency and Mr. Novomeysky representing the undersigned were present. Mr. Ussischkin summarized the decision of the Executive in regard to the proposals of the undersigned, as follows:-

(1) The Executive welcomes these proposals of assistance in negotiations with Arab leaders.

(2) The proposal in regard to the fixation of immigration is accepted, but it should be formulated so that the absorptive capacity of the country remains the main basis for the calculation of immigration figures. On this basis the figure of 1935, namely, 62,000 should be accepted for a limited period of 10 years.

(3) The possibility of a waiver of the right to utilise certificates already granted should not be raised.

(4) The undersigned may meet those Arab leaders with whom they have been in contact, but they should remain in close touch with the Executive, mutually exchanging information and discussing steps to be taken.

Mr. Novomeysky, although expressing doubts, in view of the great change the Arab Strike Movement had undergone since the undersigned had first discussed the question with the Executive and in view of the fact that certain Arab leaders were absent either from Jerusalem or the country, nevertheless expressed his satisfaction with Mr. Ussischkin's proposals and asked to be informed of the actual procedure to be followed and the next step to be taken.

Mr. Shertok stated, that he was unable to give a definite reply immediately or even the following day, but he expected to be able to do so in two or three days, after he had consulted some of his friends.

Four weeks have now passed since that meeting. The Chairman of the Agency Executive, Mr. Ben-Gurion, has in the meantime returned to the country and left again for England and the undersigned have received no communication from members of the Agency.

The undersigned wish to put on record their deep regret and concern over the attitude of the Executive. Another eleventh hour opportunity has thus been lost for initiating a course for the undisturbed building up of the Jewish National Home.

Signed: G. Frumkin; J. L. Magnes; M. Novomeysky;  
P. Rutenberg; M. Smilansky.

Jerusalem, 22.7.36

### I. THE AGREEMENT.

- 1) A period of from 5 to 10 years.
- 2) The Agreement is to be made at once and without the intervention of Government, but with its ultimate approval.
- 3) The Agreement to cover both the economic and the political aspects of the question at issue.

### II. IMMIGRATION

- 4) No free entrance into the country of Arab workmen from other countries.
- 5) Jewish Labour Immigration in accordance with the absorptive capacity of the country, but on condition that in new openings for labour created by Jews a proportion to be allotted to Arabs.
- 6) No change in preference to Capitalist immigration or relatives.
- 7) Jews to be employed on Government undertakings not less than their numerical strength.
- 8) Among other factors in determining capacity, the number of unemployed taken half-yearly should be an index, only wage-earners to be counted and not agricultural labourers or Bedoui.
- 9) In case the above is insufficient to secure agreement, a temporary fixation of immigration over 5 to 10 years to be conceded, provided that at the end of the period the Jewish population may reach approximately 40% of the total population.

### III. LAND

- 10) No acquisition, except on the principle that an Arab cultivating the land as owner or tenant should not be displaced without his consent, or that land of equivalent value in the same neighbourhood or any other place with his consent be placed at his disposal for development.
- 11) Only a given proportion (75%) of land, owned and cultivated by a fellah is to be sold by him and a lot viable is to remain to him in inalienable possession and the necessary financial and scientific aid is to be given him for the development of his land by Government, with possible Jewish participation.
- 12) If land cultivated by tenants is sold, a portion of it or some other land to be allotted to them, and they to be helped to acquire and develop this land by Government, with possible Jewish participation.

IV. POLITICAL.

- 13) A Legislative Council upon the basis of parity, thus showing that neither people is to dominate the other.
- 14) The principle is adopted of increased Jewish and Arab participation in Government administration as Heads of Departments and as members of the Government Executive. As a beginning, a Jew and an Arab as Heads respectively of two Government Departments and a Jew and an Arab as members of the Executive Council.

V. STAGES OF THE NEGOTIATIONS

- 1) The Executive of the Jewish Agency is to authorise the unofficial Committee consisting of five persons

which may coopt any other person by mutual agreement with the Executive of the Jewish Agency to canvass with unofficial Arabs the possibility of coming to an understanding on the main points of Immigration, Land and Legislative Council.

- 2) Should those private talks indicate that there is the possibility <sup>of agreement</sup> on the main points, the above mentioned unofficial Committee shall with the consent of the Executive of the Jewish Agency come together with a similar unofficial Committee of Arabs for the purpose of preparing a text for submission to both Jewish and Arab official bodies respectively.
- 3) The Executive of the Jewish Agency and the Arab Supreme Committee are to consider this text and to inform the unofficial Committee of their attitude.
- 4) Should an agreement be reached on the main points - Immigration, Land, Legislative Council - the Executive of the Jewish Agency and the Arab Supreme Committee are then to meet and to issue an announcement something like the followings-

"The Executive of the Jewish Agency and the Arab Supreme Committee have decided to enter into formal negotiations and during the progress of these negotiations the strike is to be called off by the Arab Supreme Committee as from June....and the Jewish Agency is to postpone the carrying out of the new labour schedule."

"The formal and official negotiations between these two bodies will begin on....."



(Although the figures on this page were worked out in 1938, they will give an idea of what was in mind when an agreement for 10 years was spoken of, permitting the Jews at the end of that time to constitute 40% of the population.)

The Arab population in 1948 will be about 1,240,000 (see graph on page 281 of Royal Commission Report).

If the Jewish population is then 40% of the total population, it will be 2/3rds (i.e. 40/60) of the Arab population, or about 825,000.

That requires an average annual immigration from 1938 of about 29,000 a year. At that rate of immigration and with the existing rates of natural increase of Jews and Arabs, the populations will be as follows approximately after 1940:-

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Arabs</u>	<u>Total Jews</u>	<u>Total population</u>
1940	1,040,000	480,000	1,520,000
1941	1,065,000	520,000	1,585,000
1942	1,090,000	560,000	1,650,000
1943	1,115,000	600,000	1,715,000
1944	1,140,000	650,000	1,790,000
1945	1,165,000	690,000	1,855,000
1946	1,190,000	735,000	1,925,000
1947	1,215,000	780,000	1,995,000
1948	1,240,000	825,000	2,065,000

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