The Future of the Jews: Planning for the Postwar Jewish World, 1939-1946

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines a key transformation in the history of Jewish nationalism in the 1940s - the decline of autonomist visions in Jewish national thought oriented toward Jewish life as a minority community in Eastern Europe, and the emergence of a Jewish ethnic-nation state in Palestine as the dominant mode of Jewish national expression. The main argument advanced in this dissertation is that this shift cannot be explained exclusively as a Jewish response to the Holocaust, but ought to situated as part of the larger process of the homogenization of the nation-state in East Central Europe during the war and in its immediate aftermath through genocide and ethnic cleansing, population transfers and the rejection of international norms regarding the protection of minorities. Drawing on a variety of archival and published sources in Hebrew, Yiddish and English, this study reconstructs the vibrant Jewish postwar planning scene in New-York, Palestine and London. From the start of the war tens of Jewish leaders and scholars, many whom had bee recent refugees from Europe, turned to plan for the Jewish future after the war. This dissertation examines how these Jewish leaders and thinkers grappled with the question of the future of the Jews as they debated whether Jews would be able reintegrate into Eastern Europe after the war, learned about the extermination of European Jewry and observed the ethnic transformation of the multiethnic East Central European landscape through wartime and postwar population transfers and ethnic cleansing.

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This dissertation has been many years in the making and I owe enormous gratitude to many teachers, colleagues and friends who helped me along the way. I wish to thank my doctoral sponsor Michael Stanislawski for many conversations and advice throughout this period. His work, and in particular his book *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle*, served for me as a model for writing a critical intellectual history of Jewish thinkers that is rooted in a broader European context. I met Samuel Moyn when I first visited Columbia in the winter of 2010, and viewed him as an intellectual model since. By personal example, Sam instilled in me, as in his other students, the intellectual confidence to think for ourselves, and pursue our convictions even if they might provoke. Mark Mazower encouraged me to write the history of the Jews from the point of view of a historian of modern Europe. Before coming to Columbia I read, and was exhilarated by, chapter 3 of his book *No Enchanted Palace* – "Nations, Refugees and Territory: The Jews and the Lessons of the Nazi New Order." This dissertation is part of my continued engagement with this text. I also wish to greatly thank Rebecca Kobrin and James Loeffler for their comments, advice and support.

Alongside my doctoral committee, I wish to thank many colleagues and friends who supported me in the past several years. Yfaat Weiss, my teacher and undergraduate thesis advisor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, first introduced me to the study of history. In 2008 I joined a small reading group class in which we read chapter 9 of Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man." This text exposed me to the core themes of Yfaat's work, that in turn became the main themes of my own work: the entangled histories of nationalism, ethnicity and citizenship, and how they shaped Jewish history in Europe and continue to shape Israeli society and politics to this day. Michal

Dedication

The opening sentence of Isaac Beshevis Singer's novel *Shosha* reads: "I was brought up on three dead languages – Hebrew, Aramaic and Yiddish (some consider the last not a language at all.)" I dedicate this dissertation to my paternal grandmother, Tsipora Rubin Z"L, and to my maternal grandmother, Rivka Lifhsitz, TB"LA. When Tsipora passed away, we found a notebook in her attic in which she wrote down memories from her childhood in Poland in beautiful Hebrew prose. It always seemed to me that Rivka, on the other hand, had no language to call her own. When the war broke out, Rivka was eleven and lived in Botosani. I am told she spoke Romanian, but she left Romania at twenty. She also spoke Yiddish, but her older sister, the last person with whom she spoke Yiddish, passed away six years ago. Later in the same page Singer writes: "Although my ancestors had settled in Poland some six or seven hundred years before I was born, I knew only a few words of the Polish language." Though she has lived in Israel for almost 7 decades now, Rivka's Hebrew vocabulary remains limited. As a child I always noticed how she would never get gender pronouns right. With love to these women who built the Jewish future.

Introduction

In July 1939 Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini signed an agreement that called for the transfer of over 250,000 ethnic Germans from the Alto Adige region in the Italian Alps, also known in German as South Tyrol (*Südtirol*), to Germany. Within months, thousands of ethnic Germans crossed the Italian border into German-annexed Austria. While the South Tyrol agreement had not been the subject of major international attention at its time, one Jewish observer nonetheless described it as a development that would have profound consequences for the future of Europe and its Jews. "A precedent had been set that the world will feel and never forget," he observed, "and perhaps this precedent had been set in order to fulfill, in the future, an important role in our own Jewish history."

The author of these lines was the fifty-nine year old Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky, founder and leader of the right-wing Zionist Revisionist movement. For Jabotinsky, the South Tyrol agreement was an event of enormous historical significance because it augured what he believed was an entirely new vision for solving the European minority problem. The League of Nations system of minority protection, established by the Great Powers after the First World War, sought to deal with the problem of minorities in Eastern Europe by granting them a limited form of collective rights in the new states established in the region after the war. The South Tyrol agreement offered a radically different approach – getting rid of minority groups altogether by removing them to their purported ethnic 'homelands'. Writing in the Palestine-based Revisionist Zionist daily *Hamashkif,* Jabotinsky reminded his readers that Hitler was not the first to promote the method of population transfers. In 1923 the League of Nations had brokered an agreement between Greece and Turkey that sanctioned the transfer of some 1.5 million Orthodox Greeks

from Turkey and about half a million Muslims from Greece, many of whom had already been displaced during the Greco-Turkish war (1919-1922). Yet Jabotinsky insisted that there was an aspect entirely unique to the South Tyrol case. For the first time the transfer of populations was not to take place as a result of war but as part of a pre-planned and peaceful agreement. As such, he predicted, it would be far more influential than the Greek-Turkish precedent, and would be soon employed by various other states to solve their own minority problems and reshape the ethnic order in Eastern Europe.

Was this new precedent, Jabotinsky contemplated in the essay, ultimately good or bad for the Jews? Jabotinsky acknowledged that the rise of support in Europe for the transfer of populations could help promote the goal of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. In 1936 Jabotinsky began to advocate for the so-called 'Evacuation plan' that envisaged the transfer of some 1.5 million Jews from Eastern Europe to Palestine over the course of ten years. Such a political vision, he believed, could be greatly buttressed in an international order in which the transfer of populations is widely practiced. Yet at the same time as he acknowledged the potential benefits of population transfers for the cause of a Jewish Palestine, Jabotinsky feared its implications for the future of Jewish rights in Europe. Though Jabotinsky was a right-wing Zionist, he shared the consensus view among Jewish nationalist leaders of his day - that Jewish nationalism will develop in two centers, as a minority community in Eastern Europe and as a territorial center in Palestine. International support for the transfer of populations, Jabotinsky warned, could serve as a pretext by Eastern European states to strip Jews of their rights and ultimately expel them. The very same solution that might serve the interests of Jews in Palestine, he concluded, could end up haunting them in Europe.[1]

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[1] Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky, "A Conversation with Zangwill," *Hamashkif*, July 21 1939, 3 [in Hebrew].

Jabotinsky's historical assessment was off the mark. When he wrote this essay he was convinced that the chatter in European policy circles over an imminent war in the continent was greatly overblown. But the new political order Jabotinsky anticipated on the eve of the war nonetheless soon came into being, even if not through a series of peaceful agreements as he initially predicated, but far more violently under the guise of war and the chaotic years of European reconstruction. Indeed, after the outbreak of war the Nazis and other Axis powers radically transformed the ethnic landscape of Europe through large-scale population transfers, ethnic cleansing and the Holocaust of European Jewry. At the end of the war, East European governments, primarily Poland and Czechoslovakia, with the support of the Soviet Union, Britain, and the United States, carried out large-scale population transfers of some 15 million members of minority groups, predominately Germans, to their ethnic 'homelands'. The cumulative result of these processes of population transfers, ethnic cleansing and genocide was what will be termed here the 'ethnic revolution' in Europe - the emergence of new, ethnically homogenous nation-states throughout the formerly multiethnic landscape of East Central Europe, the heart of the historic center of European Jewish life.

This study takes off from Jabotinsky's essay to examine how Jewish leaders and thinkers grappled with this ethnic revolution in Europe during the Second World War and in its immediate aftermath. How did the collapse of the multiethnic order in Eastern Europe with international protections for minority rights, and the emergence of new, ethnically homogenous nation-states throughout the region, reshape the way Jewish nationalist leaders and thinkers envisioned the future of Jews in Europe and Palestine? Jabotinsky's essay hinted at a major moral and political dilemma – the new ethnically homogenous order in Europe could benefit Zionism but endanger the future of Jewish rights in Europe. As we shall in the following pages,

it is only by examining the encounter of Jewish leaders with this ethnic revolution that we can

explain a key transformation in the history of Jewish nationalism – the decline of visions of

Jewish national autonomy in Eastern Europe and the emergence of a Jewish ethnic nation-state in

Palestine as the dominant, almost exclusive, form of Jewish national expression.

Jews and the Ethnic Revolution in Europe

In the past decade scholars have carefully studied the radical changes to the ethnic landscape of

Europe during the Second World War and in its immediate aftermath. Historians have argued

that the extermination of European Jewry ought to be examined alongside other projects of

wartime ethnic cleansing and efforts to create racially homogenous societies by the Nazis and

other Axis powers, such as in Nazi-allied Romania and Croatia.[2] Scholars have also analyzed the

growth of wartime support among Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and Eastern

European Governments in Exile for the expulsion of Germans and other minorities after the war

as a way to solve European minority problems once and for all.[3] And historians have explored

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[2] For recent accounts of ethnic cleansing and genocide across Nazi occupied Europe see Donald Bloxham, *The Final Solution: A Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin, 2009). See also specific case studies such as Holly Case, *Between States: The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea During World War II* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Vladimir Solonari, *Purifying the Nation: Population Exchanges and Ethnic Cleansing in Nazi-Allied Romania* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Alexander Korb, *Im Schatten des Weltkriegs. Massengewalt der Ustaša gegen Serben, Juden und Roma in Kroatien, 1941-45* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2013); Emily Greble, *Sarajevo, 1941–1945: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Hitler's Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Raz Segal, *Genocide in the Carpathians: War, Social Breakdown, and Mass Violence, 1914-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

[3] See R. M Douglas, *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Matthew Frank, *Expelling the Germans: British Opinion and Post-1945 Population Transfers in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Jessica Reinisch, Elisabeth White (eds.) *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Postwar Europe, 1944-1949* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Eric Weitz; "From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations and Civilizing Missions," *American Historical Review* Vol. 113 5 (2008), pp. 1313-1343; Mark Mazower, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933-1950," *The Historical Journal* Vol. 47 2 (2004), pp. 379-398; Dirk Moses, "Partitions, Population "Transfers" and the Question of Human Rights and Genocide in the 1930s and the 1940s", paper presented at the University of Chicago, November 3 2013; Phillip Ther, *The Dark Side of Nation-States: Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe* (New York:

the political and legal transformation of Poland and Czechoslovakia following the expulsion of

German and Hungarian minorities and the violent process of ethnic cleansing in the Polish-

Ukrainian borderland.[4] Overall, we have an increasingly rich historical understanding of what

Tony Judt observed was a central innovation that separated the the aftermath of the Second

World War from that of the First World War – the shifting of populations more so than borders.[5]

The history of the Jews and of Jewish nationalism however is largely missing from this

growing scholarship on the transformation of Eastern European nationalism during the 1940s.

The absence of Jews from this history is surprising, for historians of the Jews have traditionally

situated the history of Jewish nationalism in its East Central European context. This absence

could be explained as product of what David Engel recently observed is a prevalent but

methodologically unjustified disciplinary divide in the study of European Jewish history between

historians of the Jews who study the period up until 1939 and historians of the Holocaust years.[6]

Historians of European nationalism have also largely overlooked the Jews in their studies of the

period, either because they relegated the Jews to a separate history focused exclusively on the

Holocaust, or because they argued that - given the eventual emergence of a Jewish state in

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Berghan Books, 2016).

[4] See Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011) as well as Zahra, "The 'Minority Question' and National Classification in the French and Czechoslovak Borderlands," *Contemporary European History* Vol. 17 2 (2008), 137-165; Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution Against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Hugo Service, *Germans to Poles: Communism, Nationalism and Ethnic Cleansing after the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus 1569-1999* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 2003); Tarik Cyril Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City between Stalinists, Nazis, and Nationalists* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

[5] Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), p. 27.

[6] See David Engel, *Historian of the Jews and the Holocaust* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009). Another important reason for this divide is the ethical and emotional complexity involved in writing about the Holocaust which contrasts with historians' commitment to write history, as much as possible, out of a commitment to a clinical detachment from their subjects. For reflections on the limits of writing a history of the Holocaust see Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 14-38.

Palestine at the end of that decade - the history Jewish nationalism no longer fitted the Eastern Europe context. In his study of the emergence of Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus out of the territories of the former multiethnic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Timothy Snyder explained the exclusion of the Jews from his study – another national group that lived in the same territory - by arguing that the history of the Jewish nation "would draw us away from the Eastern Europe territorial focus," that is, to Palestine.[7]

This dissertation seeks to place the Jews and the history of Jewish nationalism in the story of the ethnic revolution in Europe. The Jews, this dissertation argues, lay at the center of the history of the transformation of nation-state in Eastern Europe in the 1940s. As Jabotinsky's essay indicates, Jewish leaders were some of the first to observe that such a significant ethnic transformation was taking place and to contemplate its meaning for the future of Europe and the Jews. During the war, as we shall see, Jewish leaders and thinkers wrote some the first studies on the ethnic revolution in Europe, such as Raphael Lemkin's *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*.[8] And Jewish leaders and thinkers emerged as both some of the most vocal opponents and staunch proponents of the vision of large-scale population transfers in postwar Europe. The vigorous engagement of Jewish leaders and thinkers with the ethnic revolution in Europe, and their recognition of the enormous influence of these changes on their future political status, stemmed from the unique position of Jews in Europe – a minority group without a nation-state. Writing from Paris in the summer of 1940, German-Jewish thinker Hannah Arendt gave voice to this view, observing that "[a]s for the Jews, these newest methods [of population transfers] are

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[7] Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations,* p. 9.

[8] Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944).

especially dangerous for them because they cannot be reimported to any motherland, to a state where they are a majority. For them it can only be a matter of deportation."[9]

Once the Jews are placed in the history of Eastern European nationalism in the 1940s, the story of the ethnic revolution in Europe appears radically different. Indeed, the first large-scale plans by Eastern European states for the expulsion of minorities were not a product of the war, but originated in the 1930s with regard to the Jews. After Hitler rose to power in 1933, Germany stripped Jews of their rights, sponsored pogroms and pushed for their emigration. The Polish government adopted a policy in favor of Jewish 'evacuation', advocating for the emigration of about 90% of its 'excess' Jewish population, which numbered around three million on the eve of the war. At the same time, the governments of Romania and Hungary also advocated for the removal of a large segment of its Jewish population, passing a series of anti-Jewish laws that rolled back the gains of Jewish equality. And while Eastern European governments sought to get rid of their Jews, Zionists, Jewish territorialists organizations and various governments proposed plans for Jewish resettlement on humanitarians grounds, exemplified by Jabotinsky's 'Evacuation plan', the French-sponsored exploratory mission on Jewish colonization in Madagascar and the abortive 1938 Evian Conference convened to find immigration avenues for Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany. As Tara Zahra recently observed, during the 1930s the 'Jewish question' had become a site around which visions of ethnic cleansing and humanitarian agendas of refugee resettlement repeatedly intersected.[10]

Eastern European plans to expel its 'excess' Jewish population did not disappear after the

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[9] Hannah Arendt, 'On the Minority Question' (copied from a letter to Erich Cohn-Bendit) in Jerome Kohn and Ron Feldman, eds., *The Jewish Writings* (New York: Schoken, 2007), 129.

[10] Tara Zahra's recent book examines the Jews in the context of visions of ethnic homogeneity in the 1930s, but does not engage with Jewish sources and the Jewish perspective. I discuss Zahra's work in more detail in chapter I. See Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure: Emigration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World* (New York: W.W Norton, Forthcoming), chapters 3 and 4.

outbreak of war. As this dissertation shows, from late 1939 the Polish and Czech Governments in Exile laid out plans for the 'evacuation' of a large segment of their Jewish population after the war. These Jewish expulsion plans were born in first years of the war, at a time in which both Jewish and Eastern European leaders expected that the majority of Jews would survive the war and seek to rebuild their lives in their former homes. In December 1941 Edward Beneš, president of the Czechoslovak Government in Exile, told Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, that the country's Jewish population would have to be "diluted" by about a third after the war. Similarly, leading members of the Polish Government in Exile advocated reviving the anti-Jewish 'evacuation' policy of the 1930s. By early 1942 Jewish leaders concluded that the war would end with a Jewish refugee problem in the scale of some two to three million. From late 1942, as news of the extermination of Jews had begun to reach the Allied capitols, Jewish and Eastern European leaders increasingly recognized that millions of Jews would perish in the war, and the discussions on Jewish postwar 'evacuation' soon petered out.

The history of plans to 'evacuate' Jews should encourage historians of Eastern European nationalism to more carefully examine the 1930s origins of Eastern European vision of ethnic homogeneity. Moreover, the history of these Jewish 'evacuation' visions underscores how Eastern European plans to expel Germans and other 'disloyal' minorities after the war did not emerge singularly out of desire for retribution, or for curbing irredentist nationalism, but included the Jews and were from the start part of a broader vision of creating states free of all minorities.

From Minority Rights to a Jewish Ethnic Nation-State

By studying the history of the Jews in the context of the transformation of the nation-state in

Eastern Europe in the 1940s, this dissertation seeks to offer a new history of Jewish nationalism in the crucial decade that saw the emergence of a Jewish nation-state. In recent years scholars revised our understanding of Jewish nationalism by carefully recovering the rich history of Jewish diaspora nationalism. Scholars have emphasized that from the late 19th and throughout the interwar years, Jewish nationalism was not aimed primarily at the establishment of a Jewish nation-state. Indeed, from the turn of the twentieth century and until the Second World War, Jewish nationalist leaders and thinkers were committed to fighting for national autonomy and minority rights for Jews as a minority community in Eastern Europe. Jewish nationalist parties – Zionists, Bundists, Autonomists – joined the struggle of various nationalities in the Habsburg and Tsarist Empires to reform those empires into more inclusive federations with extensive rights to their minorities. In the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, Jewish delegations advocated for and significantly shaped the League's system of minority protection. Between the wars, Jewish nationalist leaders in Eastern Europe fought for the realization of the vision of minority rights in both their national parliaments and in international forums. Zionist leaders in Palestine also supported the struggle of Jews for minority rights in Eastern Europe. Though Zionist leaders hoped to establish a Jewish majority in Palestine, they believed the Jewish population in Eastern Europe was large enough to support two national centers, in Eastern Europe and in Palestine. The most radical Zionist emigration plan of the 1930s - Jabotinsky's 'Evacuation plan' discussed above, envisaged the transfer of 1.5 million Jews from Eastern Europe to Palestine. Had the plan been realized to the letter, there would have still remained over two million Jews in Poland alone. The demographic reality of Jewish life between the wars thus implied that regardless of the success of Zionism or any other large-scale Jewish resettlement vision, Eastern Europe would remain a major center of Jewish existence for the foreseeable future.[11]

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[11] Historians have been studying the history of Jewish diaspora nationalism for decades now, but the past few years

Yet while historians have successfully displaced the vision of a Jewish nation-state from the center of the story of Jewish nationalism, they have nonetheless failed to explain how and why the nation-state ultimately emerged as the predominant vision of Jewish nationalism by the end of the Second World War. When and why did Jewish leaders abandon their support for autonomy and minority rights in Eastern Europe, and of Jewish nationalism as developing in both Eastern Europe and Palestine, and begin to imagine the future of the Jews as based centrally in a Jewish nation-state in Palestine? This dissertation investigates this question by studying the transformation of Jewish nationalism alongside the ethnic revolution in Europe.

The Future of the Jews

As this study shows, the collapse of the vision of Jewish minority rights was by no means an inevitable outcome of the war. During the first years of the war Jewish diaspora nationalist leaders advocated for a return to minority in postwar Europe. From the start of the war tens of Jewish political leaders and scholars, many of whom had been recent refugees from Europe, set-up several postwar planning institute in New York, London and Palestine, and turned to plan for the Jewish future. With the memory of Jewish achievements at the 1919 Paris Peace conference

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saw a proliferation of works on the topic, which emerged, at least in part, out of a desire to recover Jewish diaspora nationalism as moral alternative to nation-state Zionism. For some of the main recent works on the history of Jewish diaspora nationalism and visions of autonomy and minority rights see Simon Rabinovitch, *Jewish Rights, National Rites: Nationalism and Autonomy in Late Imperial and Revolutionary Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014); Rabinovitch, *Jews and Diaspora Nationalism: Writings on Jewish Peoplehood in Europe and the United States* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2012); David N. Myers, *Between Jew and Arab: The Lost Voice of Simon Rawidowicz* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2008); Noam Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); James Loeffler, "Between Zionism and Liberalism: Oscar Janowsky and Diaspora Nationalism in America," *AJS Review* No. 34 Vol. 2 (November 2010), 289-308; Loeffler, "Nationalism without a Nation? On the Invisibility of American Jewish Politics," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 105 No. 3 (2015), p. 367-398; Joshua Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Joshua Karlip, *The Tragedy of a Generation: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2013); Arie Dubnov, "Zionism on the Diasporic Front," *Journal of Israeli History* Vol. 30, No. 2 (2011), 211-224; Dimitry Schumsky, *Between Prague and Jerusalem: Prague Zionism and the Idea of Binational Palestine* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Institute, 2010) [in Hebrew]; Jess Olson, *Nathan Birnbaum and Jewish Modernity: Architect of Zionism, Yiddishism, and Orthodoxy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

in mind, they prepared for an opportunity to shape the Jewish future in the postwar peace conference. Speaking from Vilna in March 1940, Simon Dubnow, the dean of Jewish historians, captured this sense of excitement about the future when he urged Jewish leaders to bear the experience of the 1919 Peace Conference in mind as they prepare to fight for Jewish rights in the postwar world.[12] Diaspora nationalist leaders remained committed to Jewish minority rights even as they learned about the plans of the Polish and Czech governments in Exile to 'evacuate' Jews after the war. Successful Jewish diplomacy and pressure through Britain and the United States, they argued, could force these states to abandon their Jewish evacuation visions.

From late 1942, however, Jewish leaders had begun to reevaluate their position on the Jewish future in Europe. Growing knowledge of the extent of the Nazi extermination of Jews, and of the radical population movements already carried out in Axis-occupied Europe, led them to envision a postwar Europe radically different from the one they expected in the first years of the war: a Europe with far fewer minorities and a significantly diminished Jewish population. Several diaspora nationalist leaders argued it was now implausible to expect a return for minority rights after the war. Others insisted on fighting for minority rights long after news on the extermination of Jews had reached the Allied capitols. At the Paris Peace Conference of 1946, diaspora nationalist leaders still laid out demands for a renewed system of minority protection. Yet unlike in 1919, in 1946 Jewish demands were entirely ignored by the Allies. As Jewish leaders watched the massive flight of Jewish refugees from Poland to Displaced Persons camps in Germany, alongside the expulsion of minorities across Eastern Europe, many concluded that a Jewish nation-state remained the only political alternative for the Jews in an increasingly ethnically homogenous order in postwar Eastern Europe.

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[12] "Dubnow Urges Jews to Learn from Last War in Fighting for Rights," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, May 5 1940. See also "The Future of European Jewry: Professor Dubnow's Views, Lessons from 1920," *The Jewish Chronicle,* May 24, 1940.

While this dissertation recovers how the idea of a nation-state came to dominate Jewish national politics after the war as the vision of Jewish minority rights in Eastern Europe collapsed, it also seeks to offer a new and more complex history of the ways in which the concept of a Jewish state was re-imagined from the 1920s and throughout the early postwar years. Indeed, though scholars have repeatedly observed that Zionism emerged as the dominant political program in the Jewish world after the war, they have nonetheless overlooked the significant ways in which the meaning of Zionism transformed during the war and in its immediate aftermath in the face of the transformation of the nation-state in Eastern Europe and the new demographic realities of the postwar Jewish world.

Between the wars Zionist leaders envisioned Palestine as a future state based on separate Jewish and Arab autonomies and extensive power sharing arrangements. This vision was based in part on Zionist leaders' ideological rejection of the idea of a Jewish ethnic nation-state. During the interwar period Zionist leaders publicly stated their desire to establish in Palestine the dream state of nationalities and minority rights Jews were clamoring for in Eastern Europe.[13] But more centrally, these visions of Jewish-Arab power sharing emerged out of Zionist leaders' analysis of the demographic reality in Palestine and direction of British mandatory policy. Zionist demographic forecasts of the 1920s estimated it would take Jews some thirty years of a favorable immigration rate to only equal the number of Arabs in Palestine, let alone establish a significant Jewish majority. Under such conditions mainstream Zionist leaders regarded the idea of a Jewish nation-state as preposterous. Moreover, following the 1929 Arab riots and throughout much of the 1930s, Zionist leaders became convinced that the British were reneging on the mandate promise of establishing a 'Jewish national home' in Palestine and were increasingly committed

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[13] On Zionist leaders' ideological rejection of the ethnic-nation state model between the wars see Dimitri Schumsky, "Zionism and the Nation-State: A Reconsideration" *Zion* 77 (2012), p. 223-254 and Yosef Gorny, *From Binational Society to Jewish State: Federal Concepts in Zionist, 1920-1990* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

to turning Palestine into state in which Arabs will remain a majority and Jews be protected as a minority. To counter these plans, prominent Zionist leaders such Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion laid out visions of Jewish-Arab power-sharing based on the idea of equal share in government administration. Zionist leaders' fears as to the direction of British policy were not unfounded. The 1939 White Paper famously capped Jewish immigration to Palestine, but it is largely forgotten that it also stipulated that within ten years Palestine would be declared an independent Palestinian state with an Arab majority in which Jews would remain a minority. Zionism had become a road not taken. The current discussions on the one-state solution foster a new historical imagination that allows us to reexamine the history of the *Yishuv* in the interwar period from the perspective that seemed most plausible to its contemporaries. During the 1930s a Jewish nation-state appeared as a far off dream, and Zionist leaders recognized that Palestine was either to become a shared Jewish-Arab state or an Arab nation-state.

The outbreak of war radically changed the Zionist demographic calculus. Early in the war Weizmann, Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky learned about the plans of the Polish and Czech governments in exile to prevent the reintegration of masses of Jews after the war, and expected a Jewish refugee problem in the millions in postwar Europe. Deeply aware of growing support in Allied circles for population transfers as a solution for the 'minority problem' in Europe, Weizmann, Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky laid out plans for the transfer of millions of stateless Jews from Eastern Europe to Palestine after the war. This postwar Jewish transfer, they argued, would set the stage for the creation of a Jewish nation-state in Palestine with a Jewish majority larger than they had ever before imagined was possible. The prospects of an overwhelming Jewish majority also reshaped their visions of Jewish-Arab relations. Jabotinsky and Weizmann advocated for the large-scale transfer of the Arab population from Palestine as a necessary

corollary to successful postwar Jewish resettlement, and Ben-Gurion disavowed his interwar commitment to Jewish-Arab power sharing arrangements. Scholars such as Benny Morris have carefully surveyed the views of prominent Zionist leaders on the issue of population transfers, yet it is remarkable that scholars have generally overlooked the critical wartime Eastern European context that gave rise to a new vision of a Jewish ethnic nation-state.[14]

The vision of the transfer of millions of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe to Palestine was however short-lived. As news of the extermination of European Jewry had reached the *Yishuv* from late 1942, Zionist leaders begun to grapple with a terrifying question - will enough Jews survive the war to enable the establishment of a Jewish majority in Palestine? As Zionist leaders increasingly recognized that the Jewish centers in Eastern Europe – the demographic reservoir of Zionism - had been destroyed, they begun to search for new Jewish candidates for postwar mass immigration. Weizmann insisted that the future of Zionism lay in the large-scale immigration of American Jews to Palestine, while Ben-Gurion looked eastwards and for the first time envisioned the immigration to Palestine of Jewish communities from North Africa and the Middle East. At the same time, Zionist leaders recognized that the only way to establish a majority in the territory of mandatory Palestine is by partitioning the land – thus reducing the number of Jewish immigrants required to 'offset' the Arab demographic majority. In an August 1946 meeting in Paris, the executive of the Jewish Agency officially endorsed partition as its proposal to the British and American governments that were deliberating the future of Palestine. By the end of the war Zionist leaders thus embraced a new, post-Holocaust vision of Jewish

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[14] See, for example Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) In her analysis of Joseph Schechtman Yfaat Weiss underscored the link between Schechtman's scholarship on population transfers in Eastern Europe and support for the expulsion of Arabs from Palestine. But this analytical approach has not yet shaped the way scholars approach the study of prominent Zionist leaders such as Ben-Gurion, Weizmann and Jabotinsky. See Yfaat Weiss, *A Confiscated Memory: Wadi Salib and Haifa's Lost Heritage* (Columbia University Press: 2011) as well as Weiss, "Ethnic Cleansing, Memory and Property – Europe, Israel/Palestine 1944- 1948," *Juedische Geschichte als Allgemeine Geschichte* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), p. 158-188.

statehood: a small state in a partitioned Palestine that was to be established through the immigration of just enough Jews, Zionist leaders hoped, to establish a majority.

1946 as the Jewish Postwar

The chapters in this dissertation focus for the most part on the years 1939-1946. The choice of the period from 1939 to 1945 is rather self-explanatory, and corresponds to the standard periodization of the Second World War. This periodization reflects this dissertation's goal of extending the study of Jewish nationalism into the war years, and examining the history of Jews during the Holocaust not only as victims but also as active agents shaping the postwar order. Yet the choice of the year 1946 seems like an outlier. 1945-1946 is too short a period to carefully examine the history of Jews in Eastern Europe after the war. And as a history of Jewish nationalism in the 1940s, this dissertation oddly stops two years before the actual establishment of a Jewish state. 1946 is chosen as the end point of this study however because it marks the origins of what would be termed here the 'Jewish postwar'. In his seminal study *Postwar*, Tony Judt portrayed the European postwar not so much as a chronological time-frame but as a state of mind, defined by the way European societies grappled with the moral and political ramifications of the war and by a visceral sense of living in a decidedly post-1945 world.[15] Norman Naimark has recently examined the diversity of the concept of the postwar in European history, noting how the fighting ended and new political orders emerged in vastly different moment across Europe during the 1940s.[16] As the following chapters show, 1946 marked a moment in which Jewish leaders and thinkers openly recognized that they inhabit a new postwar order – a world in

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[15] Judt, *Postwar*.

[16] Norman Naimark, "The Persistence of the Postwar, Germany and Poland" in Frank Biess and Robert G. Moller (eds.) *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 13-29.

which Europe was no longer to be the center of Jewish life. In August 1946 Jewish organizations

from across Europe and the United States flocked to the Paris Conference, in a failed effort to

secure new guarantees for Jewish rights in Europe. Jewish delegates at the conference contrasted

their failure in 1946 with Jewish successes at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, and described

1946 as the end point of a century and a half long struggle to secure Jewish rights in international

conferences.[17] At the same time, the Zionist executive endorsed partition as its vision for a future

Jewish state in Palestine. The Zionist leadership's embrace of partition reflected the realization

that Eastern European Jewry, the demographic reservoir of Zionism, was now gone. The Zionist

movement still insisted it could find a solution to the 'Jewish question,' but by 1946 the 'Jewish

question' was no longer that of millions of 'excess' Jews in Eastern Europe as it had been in the

1930s, but became tantamount in the international imagination to the fate of some 250,000 Jews

who lingered in Displaced Camps in in Germany, Austria and Italy. 1946 was also the year that

saw the Kielce pogrom and height of Jewish flight from Poland – these events were heavily

reported on in the Jewish press, and symbolically marked the failure of attempts to rebuild

Jewish life in Eastern Europe after the war. Historian Jacob Talmon, who attended the 1946 Paris

Conference as a young delegate of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, thus observed after the

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[17] In analyzing 1946 as an end point of long tradition of Jewish attempts to secure their rights through the
international system, this dissertation seeks to add to an expanding scholarship on Jewish internationalism. For some
of the main works on the topic see Abigail Green, *Moses Montefiore: Jewish Liberator, Imperial Hero* (Harvard
University Press, 2010); Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in
Ninteenth-Century France* (Stanford University Press, 2006); Mark Levene, *War, Jews, and the New Europe: The
Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf, 1914-1919* (Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2009); Carole Fink, *Defending the
Rights of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878-1938* (Cambridge
University Press, 2006); Philipp Graf, *Die Bernheim-Petition 1933: jüdische Politik in der Zwischenkriegszeit*
(Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008); Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle
and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925* (Indiana University Press, 1990); Jonathan Frankel,
Damascus Affair: "Ritual Murder", Politics and the Jews in 1840 (Cambridge University Press, 1997); Nathan
Kurz, "A Sphere above the Nations?": The Rise and Fall of International Jewish Human Rights Politics, 1945-1975
(Doctoral dissertation, Department of History, Yale University, 2015); Samuel Moyn, "Rene Cassin, Human Rights
and Jewish Internationalism," in: Jacques Picard, Jacques Revel, Michael P. Steinberg, Idith Zertal (eds.) *Makers of
Jewish Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 278-291.

conference that "the morality of the world had greatly decline from 1919 to 1946," and argued that the Jewish future now lay exclusively in national regeneration in Palestine.[18] Salo W. Baron, who also passed through Paris during that fateful summer, envisioned the Jewish future as centered in the United States where the success of Jewish emancipation will serve as model for Jewish communities across the world.[19] Yet regardless of where Jewish observers envisioned the Jewish future, in 1946 they all recognized that they live in radically new period marked by the destruction of the European centers of Jewish life.

Chapter Outline

The story of this dissertation unfolds across five chapters. Chapter 1 explores the wartime debate among diaspora nationalist leaders over the future of Jewish minority rights. The chapter focuses on Jacob Robinson, a prominent diaspora nationalist leader in Lithuania between the wars. In late 1940 Robinson founded the Institute of Jewish Affairs, the postwar planning institute of the World Jewish Congress. Based in New-York, Robinson led the effort to plan for new guarantees for Jewish rights in postwar Europe and opposed the plans of the Polish and Czech governments in Exile for postwar Jewish 'evacuation'. By late 1943 however, facing growing news on Jewish extermination and reports on massive population shifts across Nazi-occupied Europe, Robinson radically changed his views and concluded there was no future for minority rights in postwar Europe. The chapter surveys Robinson's transformation as an anchor to recover the vigorous debate that emerged in Jewish postwar planning circles over the future of minority rights.

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[18] Jacob Flaiszer (Talmon), "The Jewish Question in the 1946 Paris Peace Conference," *Metzuda* 5 6 1947-1948, 166 [in Hebrew].

[19] Salo. W. Baron, "Final Stages of Jewish Emancipation," Unpublished essay written in late 1946/early 1947, Salo W. Baron Papers, Stanford University Libraries, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, M0580, Box 386.

Chapter 2 focuses on Jabotinsky as a lens to examine how Zionist leaders came to envision

Palestine as a Jewish ethnic nation-state as they observed the ethnic transformation in Europe.

Between the wars Jabotinsky consistently advocated for a future Palestine based on extensive

Jewish and Arab autonomies and political equality and repeatedly rejected the idea of the transfer

of the Arab population from Palestine. Shortly after the outbreak of war, however, Jabotinsky

began to advocate for the expulsion of the Arab population from Palestine. This chapter analyzes

Jabotinsky's transformation as a product of the war. Jabotinsky believed that millions of Jewish

refugees would be prevented from returning to their prewar homes in Eastern Europe and would

seek to immigrate *en masse* to Palestine; to resettle these refugees, he argued, the Arab

population 'would have to make room'. Keenly aware of growing support among the Allies for

population transfers as a solution to the minority problem in postwar Europe, Jabotinsky

envisioned an increasingly ethno-national Jewish state in Palestine that mirrored the new forms

of nationalism emerging across Eastern Europe.

Chapter 3 goes back in time and examines Ben-Gurion and Weizmann's interwar thought

on the future of Palestine. The chapter shows that by the mid-1930s both became convinced that

the establishment of a Jewish majority and thus a Jewish state in Palestine was not a political

goal realizable in the foreseeable future. Both advocated for the establishment of a form of bi-

national Arab-Jewish state in Palestine based on different forms power sharing arrangements,

fearing the alternative would be worse – the emergence of an Arab majority state with Jews

remaining a minority.

The history explored in chapter 3 sets the stage for understanding how radical was Ben-

Gurion and Weizmann's wartime political shift. Learning about the plans of the Polish and

Czech governments in exile for the Jews, Ben-Gurion and Weizmann expected a Jewish refugee

problem in the millions after the war and laid out a plan for the large scale transfer of millions of Jews to Palestine and the establishment of a 'Jewish commonwealth.' Chapter 4 explores the origins of this new vision of a Jewish nation-state in Ben-Gurion and Weizmann's early wartime thought, and shows how it emerged out of Zionist demographic predictions regarding a mass Jewish statelessness problem in a new, ethnically homogenous postwar order in Europe. The chapter also recovers how the expectation for a future state with an overwhelming Jewish majority transformed Zionist visions of Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine.

Chapter 5 examines how growing knowledge of the Holocaust transformed the Zionist vision of a Jewish state. As Zionist leaders learned about the scale of Jewish extermination in Europe, they grappled with the question of whether Zionism has a future without the Eastern European demographic centers.

Overall, the five chapters in this dissertation challenge the narrative that the outbreak of war and the Holocaust simply brought an end to Jewish life in Eastern Europe and prompted the inevitable rise of nation-state Zionism. By 'slowing the clock' on the war, this study recovers how various political visions emerged and disappeared – a future for Jewish minority rights in Eastern Europe, a Jewish state with millions of Jewish immigrants - as the postwar Jewish world took shape during the war and in its immediate aftermath.

Chapter One

The End of Minority Right: Jacob Robinson and the Fate of Jewish Diaspora Nationalism

In June 1943 Jacob Robinson, a Jewish nationalist leader from Lithuania, submitted a confidential memo to the peace planning committee of the World Jewish Congress, 'Minority Rights as Part of Our Peace Program'. In March 1940 Robinson fled Lithuania through France and settled in New York where he established and directed the Institute of Jewish Affairs, the World Jewish Congress' research institute on postwar problems. In his memo Robinson laid out a radical recommendation - Jews should not demand minority rights guarantees in the postwar peace conference. "The suggestion is hereby made than an expression [minority rights] which has been so compromised in the past and provokes so much confusion in the present be omitted and allowed to fall in disuse." In the place of minority rights, Robinson argued in a subsequent memo, "our single demand should be the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine" which will absorb the remaining Jewish refugees in Europe after the war.[20]

Robinson's recommendations came as a shock to the members of the peace planning committee. From the start of the war the leaders of the World Jewish Congress had hoped they could convince the Allies to establish a new system of minority protection in Europe after the war. While they recognized the many failures of the League of Nation's interwar system of minority rights, they could not envision any alternative for the millions of Jews they believed would survive the war seek to rebuild their lives in Eastern Europe in its aftermath. Indeed, during the first years of the war Jewish leaders assumed that the war will conclude with a Jewish

[20] Jacob Robinson, Minority Rights as Part of our Peace Program. Notes Submitted to the Peace Aims Planning Committee, 29 June 1943, World Jewish Congress Records, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio C118 8 (hereafter WJC papers. Papers accessed as copies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archive.)

refugee problem of unprecedented proportions – some three to five million "floating Jews" in Eastern Europe after the war, as Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, described them.[21] As Europe would emerge from the rubbles, declared the authors of a wartime study *The Jewish Refugee*, Jewish leaders would be faced with an enormous task - turning these floating Jews "from refugees to builders of a Jewish future."[22] Nahum Goldman, president of the World Jewish Congress, thus summarily dismissed Robinson's call for rejecting minority rights as a fringe right-wing Zionist argument.[23]

The members of the committee were shocked however not only by the contents of Robinson's memos but also by the identity of the author. Robinson was a staunch supporter of minority rights between the wars: he belonged to a milieu of Jewish political activists and intellectuals who dedicated their careers to promoting the cause of Jewish nationalism in Eastern Europe. Robinson fought for minority rights in the Lithuanian parliament – serving as a prominent delegate of the Zionist party and for a time as the speaker of the country's minority bloc, and in various international forums – petitioning the League of Nations in cases of

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[21] Cham Weizmann, "Speech at Extraordinary Zionist Conference of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs", May 9th, 1942, Biltmore Conference Stenographic Protocol, the Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem.

[22] Arieh Tartakower, Kurt Grossman, *The Jewish Refugee* (New York: The Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1944) (the book was originally written in 1942). "World leaders have all recognized," observed Zionist leader Yitzhak Gruenbaum in January 1942, "that the Jewish question has become the question of the refugee." Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem, Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 5.1.1942. For other wartime studies on the Jewish refugees problem see Eugene M. Kulischer, *Jewish Migrations: Past Experiences and Postwar Prospects* (American Jewish Committee, 1943); Jacob Lestchinsky, *Where Should We Go? Jewish Migration in the Past and Today* (Jewish National Workers Union, New York, 1944) [in Yiddish]. The wartime experience – and public fascination – with the image of the Jewish refugee was captured in Hannah Arendt's famous wartime essay 'We Refugees'. See Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees" *The Menorah Journal* 31 (1943), 66-77. The Jewish refugee crisis was part of a general international preoccupation with the problem of refugees after the war. In October 1939 US President Franklin D. Roosevelt famously declared that "when this ghastly war ends there many not be one million but ten million or twenty million" who would become part of the problem of the human refugee." Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address to Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees", October 17, 1939, reprinted in *Postwar Migrations* (New York: The American Jewish Committee Research Institute on Peace and Postwar Problems, 1943), p. 19.

[23] Minutes of World Jewish Congress Peace Planning Committee Meeting, 1943. WJC Papers, C118 8.

violations of Jewish rights and representing Jews in the organization of European minorities, the

European Nationalities Congress. Indeed, Robinson was one of the most characteristic

representatives of Jewish diaspora nationalism between the wars and that was a main reason why

the World Jewish Congress entrusted him with heading the organization's postwar planning

institute.[24]

This chapter reconstructs Robinson's wartime political transformation – from a supporter

of minority rights to an advocate of a Jewish national agenda focused exclusively on state-

building in Palestine - as a lens to examine more broadly the decline of the vision of minority

rights in Jewish national thought during the war. This inquiry forms one part of the broader

interpretive task of this dissertation: explaining how the central vision of Jewish nationalism in

the interwar years, based on a dual commitment to the promotion of national rights for Jews in

Eastern Europe and the development of a Jewish center in Palestine, transformed by the end of

the war into a new, and exclusive focus on the establishment a Jewish ethnic nation-state in

Palestine. The main argument advanced in this chapter is that to understand why Robinson – and,

as we shall see, many other prominent Jewish nationalist leaders - abandoned their commitment

to Jewish national rights in Eastern Europe, we ought to examine how they thought about and

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[24] The literature on Robinson and primarily on his prominent role as a diaspora nationalist leader is greatly expanding. This chapter is based on, but significantly expands on, an article on Robinson I published in 2012 in the *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook*. For more on Robinson see Omry Kaplan-Feuereisen, "Geschichtserfahrung und Völkerrecht. Jacob Robinson und die Gründung des Institute of Jewish Affairs," *Leipziger Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur* 2 (2004), 307–330 as well as "At the Service of the Jewish Nation. Jacob Robinson and International Law," *Osteuropa* (2008), 157-170, (2008). For Robinson's prominent role in the Bernheim petition affair, see Phillip Graf. *Die Bernheim Petition* 1933. *Juedische Politic in Der Zweischenkriegszeit* (Leipzig: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2008). See also the following compilation of essays on Robinson by Eglė Bendikaitė and Dirk Roland Haupt (eds.). *The Life, Times and Work of Jokūbas Robinzonas –Jacob Robinson* (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 2015), particularly relevant for the discussion in this chapter are the following essays in the volume. Saulius Kaubrys, "Jokubas Robinzonas – A Member of the Second and Third *Seimas*: Anatomy of Action and Experience," 19-38 as well as . Eglė Bendikaitė,, "Politician Without Political Party: A Zionist Appraisal of Jacob Robinson's Activities in the Public Life of Lithuania," 39-66. For a recent reappraisal of Robinson that takes stock of the expanding literature on the subject see James Loeffler "'The Famous Trinity of 1917': Jacob Robinson and the Lost Tradition of Zionist Internationalism," *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 15 2016 (forthcoming, August 2017).

responded to the process of the homogenization of the nation-state in the region during the war and in its immediate aftermath.

In the past decade scholars have underscored how the postwar expulsion of minorities - primarily ethnic Germans - from Poland, Czechoslovakia and several other Eastern European states, should be understood in the context of changing international norms regarding minorities in that decade. Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and East Central European states all viewed the 'minority question' as one of the root causes of interwar instability, and from the start of the war promoted population transfers as a 'necessary evil' that would solve minorities conflicts in the region once and for all.[25] Missing from this expanding literature, however, is a consideration of the significant place of Jews in the development of European thinking on population transfers. Indeed, the history of Jews in the 1930s and 1940s has been studied almost exclusively as part of a separate story about antisemitism and the Holocaust. Yet Jews have been central to European visions of ethnic homogeneity in this period. The first large-scale plans by Eastern European states for the expulsion of minorities were not a product of the war, but originated in the 1930s with regard to the Jews. After Hitler rose to power in 1933, Germany

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[25] The literature on population transfers during and after the Second World War is voluminous. For recent literature that emphasizes the link between expulsions of minorities from Eastern Europe and support among the Allies for population transfers see, for example Jessica Reinisch, Elisabeth White (eds.) *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Postwar Europe, 1944-1949* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Matthew Frank, *Expelling the Germans: British Opinion and Post-1945 Population Transfers in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); R. M Douglas, *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution Against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Vladimir Solonari, *Purifying the Nation: Population Exchanges and Ethnic Cleansing in Nazi-Allied Romania* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Hugo Service, *Germans to Poles: Communism, Nationalism and Ethnic Cleansing after the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Eric Weitz; "From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations and Civilizing Missions," *American Historical Review* Vol. 113 5 (2008), pp. 1313-1343; Tara Zahra, "The 'Minority Question' and National Classification in the French and Czechoslovak Borderlands," *Contemporary European History* Vol. 17 2 (2008) pp. 137-165; Mark Mazower, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933-1950," *The Historical Journal* Vol. 47 2 (2004), pp. 379-398; Dirk Moses, "Partitions, Population "Transfers" and the Question of Human Rights and Genocide in the 1930s and the 1940s", paper presented at the University of Chicago, November 3 2013 and Phillip Ther, *The Dark Side of Nation-States: Ethnic Cleansing in Modern Europe* (New York: Berghan Books, 2016).

stripped Jews of their rights, sponsored pogroms and pushed for their emigration. The Polish

government adopted a policy in favor of Jewish 'evacuation', advocating for the emigration of

about 90% of its 'excess' Jewish population. At the same time, the governments of Romania and

Hungary also advocated for the removal of a large segment of its Jewish population, passing a

series of anti-Jewish laws that rolled back the gains of Jewish equality.[26]

      Eastern European plans to expel its 'excess' Jewish population did not disappear after the

outbreak of war. In fact, as we shall see in this chapter, the Polish and Czech Governments in

Exile had also planned for the 'evacuation' of a large segment of its prewar Jewish population

after the war. These visions were born in first years of the war, at a time in which both Jewish

and Eastern European leaders expected that the majority of Jews would survive the war and seek

to rebuild their lives in their former homes. As Edward Beneš, president of the Czechoslovak

Government in Exile, told Chaim Weizmann in December 1941, the country's Jewish population

would have to be "diluted" by about a third after the war. Under Nazi rule Jews in

Czechoslovakia had already been removed from their homes and professions, and many Czech

citizens have in the meanwhile taken possession of their property. Simply dispossessing Czechs

after the war, Beneš told Weizmann, "in order to restore the property to its original owners was

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[26] In viewing interwar Eastern European fantasies of Jewish expulsion as an important precursor for postwar population transfers this chapter makes an argument similar to that advanced recently by Tara Zahra in her book *The Great Departure.* As Zahra writes in the introduction, the ethnic cleansings of the Second World War and its aftermath should be traced to the postwar World War I molding of nationally homogenous populations … of which "Eastern European Jews were the most tragic victims …" (p. 17-18). Chapter three and four of her book explore the confluence between Eastern European plans for the expulsion of Jews in the 1930s and humanitarian visions, primarily by Zionist and territorialist, for resettling Jews outside Europe. While sharing Zahra's approach, this study expands on her analysis in several ways. First, as we shall see, this study shows how central visions of expelling Jews remained in Eastern European thinking throughout the war years; Second, this study highlights the internal Jewish perspective –and shows how the encounter of Jewish leaders and thinkers with the process of the homogenization of the nation state in Eastern Europe reshaped they way they understood the meaning and goals of Jewish politics; And lastly, this study seeks to emphasize the historical and moral distinctions between anti-Jewish evacuation and expulsion plans and the efforts of Jewish leaders to resettle masses of Jews outside Europe. See Zahra, *The Great Departure: Emigration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World* (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 2016). For another recent prominent study that explores the themes of the confluence between visions of Jewish expulsion and humanitarian visions of saving the Jews see Timothy Snyder, *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2015) primarily chapter three.

scarcely a solution." Similarly, leading members of the Polish Government in Exile advocated

reviving the anti-Jewish 'evacuation' policy of the 1930s and hoped to gain the support of

Zionist leaders for their plans to drastically reduce the size of the country's postwar Jewish

population.[27]

During the first years of the war Robinson and many other Jewish leaders believed they

could fight these plans and restore minority rights for Jews by applying diplomatic pressure on

Britain and the United States. At the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919 Jewish diplomacy

succeeded in imposing international guarantees for such rights against the will of Eastern

European governments. Over the course of late 1942 and 1943, however, Robinson had begun to

re-evaluate his position. Growing knowledge of the extent of the Nazi extermination of Jews and

of the radical population movements the Nazis had already carried out in Axis-occupied Europe,

led him to envision a postwar Europe radically different from the one he, and other Jewish

leaders, had expected in the first years of the war: a Europe with far fewer minorities and a

significantly diminished Jewish population. Under such circumstances, he argued, it would be

implausible to expect a return to minority rights after the war. As European nation-states were

becoming increasingly ethnically homogenous, Jews too, Robinson argued, should center their

political agenda exclusively on the creation of a nation-state. Robinson's memos and subsequent

publications prompted a debate in Jewish postwar planning circles over the future of minority

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[27] Though details of these visions have been discussed in the literature on Jews and the Polish and Czech governments in exile, this chapter is the first to reconstruct them in full and show how Jewish leaders understood the Polish and Czech plans as intimately related and as part of the larger context of Allied wartime planning for postwar population transfers. In his study on the relationship between the Polish Government in Exile and the Jews, David Engel discusses support among leaders of the Polish Government in Exile for postwar Jewish evacuation but primarily as a means to understanding how those leaders later responded to news of the Holocaust. In his study of the Czechoslovak government in Exile and the Jews, Jan Lanicek analyzes Beneš' rejection of Jewish demands for minority rights, but does not draw the conclusion – which, as we shall see, Jewish leaders shared - that Beneš was in fact advocating for the expulsion of a large segment of the country's prewar Jewish population. These issues will be explored in the length in the section of this chapter entitled "Jews and Population Transfers". See David Engel, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz: The Polish Government in Exile and the Jews* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993) as well as Jan Lanicek, *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews, 1938-1948* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

rights. Several Jewish leaders insisted on fighting for minority rights long after news on the extermination of Jews had reached the Allied capitols and knowledge of plans by Eastern European states for the future of their minorities became widespread. At the Paris Peace Conference of 1946, Jewish leaders – Robinson among them – still laid out demands for a renewed system of minority protection after the war. Yet unlike in 1919, in 1946 Jewish demands were entirely ignored by the Allies. As Jewish leaders watched the massive flight of Jewish refugees from Poland to Displaced Persons camps in Germany, alongside the expulsion of minorities from Eastern Europe, they lamented the end of a decades long struggle for Jewish rights as a national minority in the region.

Planning for the Jewish Future

Robinson's 1943 call to abandon minority rights demands explanation not only because he staunchly supported this political vision before the war, but also because during the first years of the war Robinson had vigorously advocated for a return to a system of minority protection in postwar Europe. To understand Robinson's early wartime advocacy for minority rights, it is essential to situate his thought in the context of the vibrant Jewish postwar planning scene in the Allied capitols.

From the start of the Second World War Jewish leaders and intellectuals in New York, London and Palestine – many of whom had been recent refugees from Europe – turned to plan for the Jewish future. The assumption of practically all Jewish leaders engaged in postwar planning was that the war, much like the Great War, would end with a major international peace conference that would offer new opportunities to guarantee Jewish rights. Indeed, it was the memory of Jewish achievements in the 1919 Paris Peace Conference that captured the

imagination of Jewish leaders. Speaking from Vilna in March 1940, Simon Dubnow, the dean of

Jewish historians, urged Jewish leaders to bear the experience of the Versailles Paris Peace

Conference in mind as they prepare to fight for Jewish rights in the future.[28] "The main problem

of European Jewry," declared Goldman in November 1941, "… is the problem of its future, after

Hitlerism had been destroyed and the democratic victory will have opened the way to the

establishment of a new world."[29] "Rarely in the history of the last two thousand years," observed

Joseph Tentenbaum, president of the American Federation of Polish Jews, "did we have such an

urgent call to participate in the dynamic forces molding our own future."[30] One *Ha'aretz*

commentator was baffled by the obsession of Jewish leaders with the future. Everyone these

days has assumed the ungrateful role of a prophet, he noted, attempting to predict the shape of

the postwar order and peak behind the "the veil of the future."[31]

During the first year of the war the discussions on the future were scattered and took

place mainly in the Jewish press and in various public speeches. In March 1940 Max Laserson, a

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[28] "Dubnow Urges Jews to Learn from Last War in Fighting for Rights," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, May 5 1940. See also "The Future of European Jewry: Professor Dubnow's Views, Lessons from 1920," *The Jewish Chronicle,* May 24, 1940. Shortly after the outbreak of war Dubnow also proposed the creation of a research institute on Jewish postwar problems that eventually emerged as the Institute of Jewish Affairs (the institute will be discussed at length later in the chapter). See Simon Dubnow, *International League Report,* WJC papers, A3 1.

[29] Nahum Goldman, "Post-War Problems," *Congress Weekly*, Vol. 8, no. 39 (November 28, 1941), 5-7. Goldman's essay was first delivered as an address in the Inter-American Jewish Conference, November 1941.

[30] Joseph Tentenbaum, "The Great Emergency", 1942, Joseph L. Tenenbaum Papers, YIVO Archives, RG 283 box 1, folder 1. Tenenbaum was a Polish Jewish diaspora nationalist leader and Zionist activists who was a member of the Jewish delegation to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Between 1933-1941 he was the founder and executive chairmen of the Joint Boycott Council Against Nazi Germany, and during the war led the American Federation for Polish Jews. Tenenbaum carefully articulated in his speeches the link between the memory of Jewish activism for peace in 1919 and postwar planning activities during World War II. As he put it in a 1943 speech, "Postwar Problems of the Jews": "The Jewish question must be solved once and for all, in its entirety and not piece-meal. We are sick of being the perennial attorneys in our own cause … I was, in 1919, a member of the Committee of Jewish Delegations for the Peace Conference and helped formulate what was called by our enemies a 'Jewish Peace.' On the morrow of the adoption of the Minority Treaties, which I, together with other Jewish leaders from all lands helped to formulate … there were pogroms in Poland, massacres in Rumania and bloody excesses in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe." Tenenbaum, "Postwar Problems of the Jews," Address delivered at the session of the American Jewish Conference, August 31, 1943, Joseph L. Tenenbaum Papers, box 7, folder 32. See also Tenenbaum, "Polish Jews in War and Peace," 1942, Joseph L. Tenenbaum Papers, 7 - 39.

[31] S. Goralik, "When One Raises the Tip of the Veil of the Future," *Ha'aretz*, 21 February, 1941[in Hebrew].

leader of the Jewish minority in Latvia, drafted the first Jewish postwar program on behalf of the Jewish National Workers Alliance. As Laserson put it, it was by no means too early to start planning for the future – in fact, in publishing this pamphlet he was merely continuing the work begun by the organization ahead of the last peace conference.[32] The renowned historian Salo Baron was invited to deliver several speeches on the future to Jewish audiences in the spring and summer of 1940. Baron was generally optimistic about the prospect for Jews in postwar Europe, and sought to reassure an audience terrified by the prospect of a Germany victory in the war that even a Nazi triumph would not imply the end of European Jewry. Like all multiethnic empires in history, Baron argued, the Nazis too would inevitably become more tolerant of nationalities as they attempt to establish their rule over diverse populations.[33]

    After the fall of France in the summer of 1940 the discussions on the Jewish future were organized into institutional frameworks. The realization that Hitler now had come to dominate

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[32] Max M. Laserson, *The Status of the Jews After the War. A Proposal for Jewish Demands at the Forthcoming Peace Conference* (New York: Jewish National Workers Alliance, 1940), p. 4.

[33] Salo Baron, 'Reflections on the Future of the Jews of Europe', *Contemporary Jewish Record*, 3, 4 (1940), 362. This address was first delivered to the joint session of the National Conference of Jewish Social Welfare, Pittsburgh, 25 May 1940. In his uncompleted draft autobiography, Baron reminisced about this essay, regretted his overt optimism and explained it as intended at the time to pacify a morally devastated American Jewish community: "As a matter of fact, I recall that at the beginning of the war I had to deliver a lecture before a Reform Jewish group on the Jews of Europe, and emphasized above all the need of American Jewry to make early preparations for a far-reaching plan of help … To be sure, being an optimist by nature, I could not even imagine the great catastrophe … During the first months of the war things looked less threatening … In May, however, things were totally reversed and the German armies marched into the Netherlands and France in an unprecedented speed, I myself spent many sleepless nights imagining the horror of the Jews in the conquered territories. My anguish was magnified by the fact that I had promised at the beginning of the war to the Jewish Welfare Board to give a major address at their annual meeting in May. Of all things, the title of my forthcoming address 'The Future of European Jewry' became doubly irksome in view of the German rapid advances. Upon my arrival in Pittsburgh, where the meeting took place, I informed the chairman of the meeting that I would gladly pay a substantial ransom for being released from my promised address. But it was in vain. … I was doubly irked by my situation, since unwittingly the heads of the Welfare Board published my address without any alterations. Needless to say, that did not predict the Holocaust, or anything resembling it. But apart from the general optimistic attitude, I felt it necessary to pacify my listeners to some extent at the time when most others went to the extreme of their predicting a German victory in the war. … In that state of mind I felt that organized American Jewry will be completely disoriented. My address therefore did not represent my apprehensions of the sleepless nights, but more clearly reflected the self-imposed hopefulness that Germany could not win the war. … Still, in view of what actually happened, that article could be classified as another example of the unpredictability of history in general." Salo Baron, Draft Autobiography, Salo W. Baron Papers, Stanford University Libraries, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, M0580, Box 386.

Western and Eastern Europe had convinced Jewish leaders that the interwar order had been

irrecoverably shattered and that a radically new order would have to be established in the region

after the war. In September 1940 the Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of

British Jews drafted its first memorandum on the 'Jewish Question in the Future Peace

Conference', renewing the work it begun for planning for peace during the First World War.[34] In

November 1940 the American Jewish Committee established the Institute on Peace and Postwar

problems, the first Jewish research institute dedicated exclusively to planning for the coming

peace.[35] The American Jewish Congress and World Jewish Congress followed suit in February

1941, establishing the Institute of Jewish Affairs.[36] Several months later the Jewish Labor

Committee set up its own postwar research institute.[37] Other Jewish postwar planning activities

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[34] "The Jewish Question at the Future Peace Conference," September 1940, YIVO Archives, Lucien Wolf and David Mowshowitch Papers, RG 348-99.

[35] On the founding of the American Jewish Committee Institute on Peace and Postwar Problems see Morris R. Cohen, "Jewish Studies of Peace and Postwar Problems", *Contemporary Jewish Record* 4 2 (April 1941), 110-127. This institute published numerous studies on postwar Jewish problems. See, for instance, Max Gottschalk et al. *Jewish Postwar Problems. A Study Course* (New York: Research Institute on Peace and Postwar Problems of the American Jewish Committee, 1942); Max Gottschalk et al. *The Position of Jews in the Postwar World. A Study Course* (New York: Research Institute on Peace and Postwar Problems of the American Jewish Committee, 1943). See also American Jewish Committee, "Institute on Peace and Postwar Problems. Program of Activities" March 1942, Morris D. Waldman Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio, M0580 201.

[36] On the founding of the Institute of Jewish Affairs see Jacob Robinson, "Institute for Research on Contemporary Jewry," April 29, 1940 WJC Papers C67-16 as well as Nahum Goldman, "Memorandum: The Establishment of an Institute on Jewish Peace Aims," January 14, 1941 WJC papers C67-16. On Robinson's involvement in the founding of the institute see Kaplan-Feuereisen, "At The Service of the Jewish Nation," 157-70.

[37] On the founding and work of the Jewish Labor Committee's postwar research institute see Joseph Kismann, "Report on the Activities of the Research Committee of the Jewish Labor Committee," in *Jews After the War. Report on the First Conference of the Research Committee of the Jewish Labor Committee* (New York: Jewish Labor Committee, 1942). See also the special issue of *Die Zukunft* vol. XLVII no. 3 (March 1942) on Jewish postwar problems with articles by leading members of the committee. For more on the founding of the Jewish Labor Committee's postwar research institute see the organization's files at the Tamiment Library & Robert Wagner Labor Archives, NYU, particularly box 18.

took place on a smaller scale within several other organizations such as YIVO, the Bund and among various national committees organized by Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe.[38]

The emergence of Jewish postwar planning institutes was a major wartime innovation. Employing tens of Jewish scholars, many of whom were recent refugees form Europe, these institutes gave rise to what had been at the time the largest enterprise of the study of Jewish society and history. Jewish postwar planning institutes had three major preoccupations. They undertook to study the recent past in order to understand, as Morris Perlzweig, head of the British section of the World Jewish Congress put it, "the reasons for the collapse of Jewish rights in Europe".[39] Numerous studies were written during the war on the political, economic, legal and demographic position of Jews in various European countries and on the history of Jewish attempts to internationally guarantee their rights. At the same time, these institutes sought to gather up-to date information on the condition of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. Collecting information from contacts across Europe, they aimed to provide the most accurate assessment of the impact of the war on European Jewry. Most centrally, these institutes drew on this vast scholarship to devise plans for the future. Such plans dealt with the immediate tasks of postwar

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[38] Leading members of YIVO such as Max Weinreich took part in the postwar planning activities of the Jewish Labor Committee, but YIVO also set-up a smaller publication program on the postwar order and published several studies among them a study on population transfers by Mark Vishniak that will be discussed later in this chapter. The Bund leadership relocated to New York and vigorously debated the place of Jews in the postwar order on the pages of its journal *Unzer Zeit*. For a discussion of some of these debates see David Slucki, "The Bund Abroad in the Postwar Jewish World," *Jewish Social Studies* 16 1 (Fall 2009), 111-144. Other postwar planning activities took place on a smaller scale in various committees such as organizations of Polish and Czech Jews in exile. On the activities of the Polish Jewish committee see Arieh Tartakower, "Diplomatic Activity for Polish Jewry in the United States during the Second World War," *Galed* V (1978), 167-184 [in Hebrew]. On the activities of the Czech Jewish committee see Yitzhak Rosenberg, "Beneš on the Political Rights of the Jews," *Gesher* 2 75 (1973), 54-69. The proliferation of Jewish postwar planning institutes was noted and reported about in the Jewish press at the time, with many observers wondering why are so many different institutes in fact needed, see Editors, "Research and 'Standpoints'" *Congress Weekly,* July 25, 1941, 4-5; "Research Institutes" *Yiddisher Kempfer,* October 3, 1941 [in Yiddish]; Abraham G. Duker, "Political and Social Aspects of Jewish Postwar Problems," *The Jewish Social Service Quarterly* Vol. XIX, No. 1. See also Elisabeth Gallas, "Facing a Crisis Unparalleled in History". Jüdische Reaktionen auf den Holocaust aus New York, 1940 bis 1945", *S.I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation 1* (2014), no. 2, 5–15.

[39] Morris Perlzweig, "Research Institute for Contemporary Jewish Affairs," February 3 1941, WJC papers, C67, 16 361.

relief and economic reconstruction as well as with question of Jewish immigration after the war and international guarantees for Jewish rights in Europe.

The emergence Jewish postwar planning institutes also signified the rise of New York as the wartime capital of Jewish politics. The historian Lucy Dawidowicz, who worked during the war in the YIVO research department, recalled how in 1940 New York became "a haven for Jewish talent in flight," a place where "scholars, writers, lawyers and communal leaders and intellectuals from Eastern Europe" congregated.[40] New York was a center of Jewish political activity from the turn of the century: it was home to a large Jewish socialist movement in the first decades of the twentieth century and during the First World War became a major site of activity for relief and reconstruction of European Jewry.[41] The outbreak of war, however, turned New York into the primary center of Jewish political activism. With the Jewish centers on the continent under Nazi and Soviet occupations, hundreds of Jewish refugee scholars and political activists relocated to Manhattan. New and old and Jewish organizations, often located a short distance from each other, emerged as sites of bustling debate on the war and the future. Jewish organizations such as the World Jewish Congress, the Bund and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research moved their headquarters from Europe to New York in the first years of the war.[42] Zionist leaders such as Chaim Weizmann and Ben-Gurion repeatedly visited the city and

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[40] Lucy Dawidowicz, *From that Time and Place: A Memoir, 1938-1947* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008) p. 213.

[41] For a study of Jewish socialism in New York see Tony Michels, A *Fire in Their Hearts. Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009). For a recent reconsideration of American Jewish politics with a focus on activities in New York during World War I see James Loeffler, "Nationalism without a Nation? On the Invisibility of American Jewish Politics," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 105, 3 (summer 2015), 367-398 as well as Naomi W. Cohen *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee, 1906-1966* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society of American, 1972).

[42] On Jewish organizations relocating to New York during the war see World Jewish Congress, *Unity in Dispersion. A History of the World Jewish Congress* (New York: World Jewish Congress, 1948),124 ; Cecile Esther Kutznitz, *YIVO and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture. Scholarship for the Yiddish Nation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014),181 and Daniel Blatman, *For Our Freedom and Yours. The Jewish Labor Bund in Poland, 1939-1949* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), 203.

Revisionist Zionist leader Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky relocated to New York in early 1940. In 1943, reflecting the growing political mobilization of American Jewry, representatives of sixty-four Jewish organizations established the American Jewish Conference with the goal of serving as a unified representative body of American Jews in matters relating to postwar reconstruction.[43] Several locations in the city emerged as sites of sustained conversation on the Jewish future. Jewish refugee scholars from Eastern Europe met regularly at the New-York public library reading room, where they picked up the papers from their home countries and discussed the war.[44] Penniless Zionist Revisionist activists, many of whom arrived in New York shortly after the outbreak of war, spoke "broken English" and regularly met at a midtown cafe to plan how to gain American support for their agenda.[45] The Jewish postwar planning scene took root within a broader postwar planning frenzy in the Allied capitals. Indeed, in 1942 the Council of Foreign Relations listed more than 300 groups engaged in postwar planning which laid out plans on issues as diverse as reforming the international monetary system, rebuilding a more robust international organization and eradicating hunger and unemployment.[46]

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[43] Daniel Gerard Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 130.

[44] Mark Vishniak. *Years of Emigration, 1919-1969: Paris-New York* (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1970) [in Russian], 228-229.

[45] Benjamin Akzin, *From Riga to Jerusalem: A Memoir* (Jerusalem: Publishing House of the World Zionist Organization, 1989) [in Hebrew], 305-319.

[46] For scholarship on postwar planning in the context of the rise of internationalism in the United States and Britain see Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Stephen A. Wertheim, 'Tomorrow, the World: The Birth of U.S. Global Supremacy in World War II' (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2015); Christopher D. O'Sullivan. *Sumner Welles, Postwar Planning and the Quest for a New World Order, 1937-1943* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Harold Josephson *James T. Shotwell and the rise of Internationalism in America* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1975); Robert A. Devin *Second Chance: The Rise of Internationalism in* America during World War II (New York: Atheneum, 1967); Andrew Baker, *Constructing a Postwar Order: The Rise of US Hegemony and the Origins of the Cold War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011); *Elizabeth Borgwardt. A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Johnstone, Andrew E. *Dilemmas of Internationalism: The American Association for the United Nations and US Foreign Policy, 1941-1948* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009). For an examination of competing American-British visions for the postwar

Arriving from Lithuania to New York through Vichy France in November 1940, Robinson quickly became a central figure in the Jewish postwar planning scene. Two months after his arrival in the city he officially founded the Institute of Jewish Affairs.[47] In Robinson's view the institute was designed to represent the diaspora nationalist political agenda that organizations such as the Comité des Délégations Juives, and later the World Jewish Congress, had promoted between the wars. Robinson staffed the organization primarily with Eastern European Jewish scholars, parliamentary leaders and international lawyers who had had either taken part in shaping the Jewish agenda at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference or had become active in in promoting the vision of Jewish minority rights following the emergence of the post-World War I order in Europe. These included figures such as Arieh Tartakower, a Zionist activist in Poland and sociologist by training; Jacob Lestchinsky, a Jewish demographer who was one of the founding members of YIVO; Leon Kubowitzki, a diaspora nationalist leader in Lithuania and one of the founders of the World Jewish Congress; Max Laserson, a member of the Latvian parliament and an expert on minority rights in the Baltics and Mark Vishniak, a Paris based scholar of international law and advocate for minority rights. Robinson came to know most of his associates at the Institute before the war. Both Laserson and Robinson, for example, served as

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order see Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York: The Penguin press, 2012), 154-190.

[47] Kaplan-Feuereisen, "At the Service of the Jewish Nation," 166-168. For recent accounts of the Institute and Robinson focused on its role in developing conception of international criminal justice see Mark Lewis. *The Birth of the New International Justice: The Internationalization of Crime and Punishment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 150-180; Michael R. Marrus, "A Jewish Lobby at Nuremberg: Jacob Robinson, and the Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1945–1946," *Cardozo Law Review* 27 (2006) as well as Marrus, "Three Jewish émigrés at Nuremberg: Jacob Robinson, Hersch Lauterpacht and Raphael Lemkin" in Ezra Mendelsohn, Stefani Hoffman, and Richard I. Cohen (eds.,) *Against the Grain: Jewish Intellectuals in Hard Times* (Oxford : New York: Berghahn Books, 2013), 240–54.

delegates to the European Nationalities Congress.[48] And Robinson and Vishniak first met in Vichy France, as they both searched for a way out of Nazi Europe to New York.[49]

From the start of the war Robinson and the Institute of Jewish Affairs were committed to promoting a return to a system of minority rights in Eastern Europe after the war. As Robinson reminisced in an interview he gave in 1960, "[o]ur focus [early in the war] was on minority protection in a new world order that would basically follow the same pattern – but with greater preparation – that emerged in Versailles."[50] In 1942 Robinson dedicated an issue of *Jewish Affairs*, the institute's monthly publication, to the topic of minority rights. Gathering statements from notable intellectuals and groups in favor of a postwar return to minority rights - from the British League of Nations Union to international lawyer Hans Kelsen - Robinson sought to demonstrate the degree of support that remained among many intellectuals and politicians for the idea of international minority protection. As Robinson put it in the issue's introductory essay, minority rights will remain an element of the postwar order because national minorities will inevitably remain part of the political order in East Central Europe after the war. "For this much is certain," he asserted, "no boundaries after this war can eliminate all minorities".[51] Later that year, Robinson had begun to work on a collaborative study with the institute's staff on the operation of system of minority protection in the interwar years *Were the Minorities Treaties a Failure?* Drawing on the knowledge of leading Jewish experts on minority protection, the study sought to position itself as the conclusive scholarly overview of the operation of the Minorities

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[48] See for example Sitzungbericht des Kongresses der Organisieren Nationalen Gruppen in den Staaten Europas, Genf, August 22-24, 1927 (Wien, 1928).

[49] See Vishniak, *Years of Emigration*, 228-229.

[50] Cited in Daniel Greenberg, "Jacob Robinson as a Person. The Human Side of One of the Great Figures of the 20th Century." Paper presented at "The Life, Work, and Times of Jacob Robinson," Conference, Kaunas, 22 October 2007. I thank Philipp Graf for sharing these materials with me.

[51] Institute of Jewish Affairs, "Minorities after this War", *Jewish Affairs*, April-May 1942, 1-23.

Treaties aimed at policy experts and intellectuals in the Allied capitols. While the study recognized the many limitations of the Minorities Treaties, it refrained from condemning the system as a failure. "Despite all the faults and shortcomings, … the experience of twenty years does not justify the condemnation of a most remarkable experiment;" the study concluded, "an experiment that could not but share the fate of the political organism in which it lived – the League of Nations itself."[52] And at the same time as Robinson was completing this study he had began work on a second study on minority protection. This study, as Robinson wrote in a letter to a colleague, was to "prove that for the last 350 years almost scarcely a treaty can be found which ... does not make special provisions to protect individuals differing form the majority in religion first, and later on, in language and race." The research will serve as "a very important weapon in our arguments with regard to the future of minority rights, the idea being that it was just one experiment in this field and that this experiment failed." The study will prove that interwar minority protection was "not just a fancy solution for the last World War," but "a prominent element in the attempt to re-shape the map of Europe" for centuries.[53]

While the Institute of Jewish Affairs was most vocal in its commitment to minority rights it was by no means alone among Jewish groups in its advocacy for new guarantees for minority protection after the war. The Jewish Labor Committee organized a major conference on the postwar order in 1942 in which its leaders advocated for more robust international guarantees for minorities after the war.[54] The Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews commissioned C.A Macartney, a leading British scholar and expert on minority rights, to draft a

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[52] Jacob Robinson et al. *Were the Minorities Treaties a Failure?* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1943), p. 265.

[53] Letter from Jacob Robinson to A. L. Easterman, Januay 21, 1942 WJC Papers, C11 06. See also Loeffler "'The Famous Trinity of 1917."

[54] Symposium "Jews After the War," *Die Zukunft* vol. XLVII no. 3 (March 1942) [in Yiddish].

memorandum outlining an improved system of minority rights.[55] In a May 1942 speech Joseph

Brodetsky, director of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, also emphasized the importance of

resurrecting new minority rights guarantees for Jews in Eastern Europe after the war.[56] "The 21

years elapsed between 1918 and 1939 belong to the most troubled years of history," Kubowitzki

captured the general sentiment among diaspora nationalist leaders, "it is not a normal epoch on

the basis of which we may conclude that we should relinquish important principles of our

doctrine."[57] "After this war," Tenenbaum declared in a 1942 speech on the future of Polish

Jewry, "the checks and guarantees for the protection of minorities will have to be made more

universal and more obligatory and more forceful, with plenty of teeth in them."[58]

The commitment of Jewish groups to minority rights was based on their belief that there

was no alternative for the millions of Jews they expected would survive the war and seek to

rebuild their lives in Eastern Europe. Yet Jewish groups remained committed to minority rights

also because they believed that within the framework of a new, postwar order minority

protection could succeed. Indeed, the war years saw the emergence of a major internationalist

current in the Allied capitols.[59] The outbreak of two world wars in Europe in the course of a

single generation, many intellectuals and policy makers argued, was a result of excessive

nationalism. A stable postwar order, they posited, could only be secured by quelling nationalist

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[55] C.A Macartney, "Suggestions for an Improved Procedure to Secure Execution of the Treaties of Minorities," YIVO Archives, Lucien Wolf and David Mowshowitch Papers, series VI Folder 99.

[56] See Brodetsky's remarks on the postwar order in a May 1942 speech. Joseph Brodetsky, The Jews in the Postwar Settlement (London: Jewish Historical Society of Engalnd, 1942) 19-20.

[57] Leon Kubowitzki, "Comments on the Preparation for a Program of Action for United American Jewry," January 13, 1942 WJC Papers, C95 16.

[58] Joseph Tenenbaum, "Polish Jews in War and Peace," YIVO, Joseph L. Tenenbaum Papers, box 7 39.

[59] The most famous example of this sentiment were Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech with its emphasis on social welfare and the Atlantic Charter that was widely interpreted as vouching for self-determination for those under colonial rule.

sentiments in the continent and limiting the sovereignty of states after the war. During the first

years of the war British and American intellectuals thus repeatedly spoke about the 'crisis,'

'problem' and 'paradox' of the nation-state. "Somehow, somewhere in the past" British political

theorist Leonard Woolf summarized the general intellectual mood in 1943, "the political status of

the small state in the international system … had become a problem which menaces peace and

jeopardizes civilization." [60] Against the excess of ethnic nationalism critics of the nation-states

embraced federalism, the idea that a federation or several federations should be established in

Europe and around the world after the war. Visions for federalism in Europe were advocated

from late nineteenth century throughout the interwar years. But the wars years saw an explosion

of federative ideas for European reconstruction. In June 1940, to bolster the moral of the

disintegrating French army, the British government issued a declaration on the establishment of a

postwar Franco-British Union.[61] Resistance movements across Europe embraced the cause of

federalism as an assertion of a newfound pan-European identity based on the rejection of the

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[60] Leonard Woolf, "The Future of the Small State," *The Political Quarterly* 14 (1943), 209-224. Similarly, the author of a 1942 study on postwar planning argued that "any discussion of postwar reconstruction must base itself on the inescapable fact that … the national states as we have known it is in the throes of violent death." See J. Donald Kingsley and David W. Petegorsky, *Strategy for Democracy* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co, 1942), 35. The wartime discussion on the crisis of the national state and the failure of national-self determination is vast. Perhaps the most poignant critique of national self- determination was articulated by the Austrian émigré Erich Hula who in 1938 joined and helped create the New School for Social Research in New York. See Hula, "National Self-Determination Reconsidered", *Social Research* 10 (1943), 1-21. See also R.W Seton-Watson, *The Problem of Small Nations and the European Anarchy: Montague Burton International Relations Lecture, 1939* (Nottingham: University College, 1939) and Wolfgang Friedman *The Crisis of the National State* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1943). It should be noted that the war constituted one of the key moments in the development of the modern study of nationalism, and that nationalism scholars actively participated in the debate on the future of the nation state. See for example Rudolf Schlesinger, *Federalism in Central and Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945) as well as Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944). Kohn paid great attention to the question of the postwar order – and to the issue of federalism – in his often overlooked 1942 work, *World Order in Historical Perspective.* See Kohn, *World Order in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942). The wartime critique of ethnic nationalism and the question of federalism also informed Salo Baron's study of nationalism, his only work not dedicated exclusively to Jewish history. See Baron, *Modern Nationalism and Religion* (New York: Harper, 1947).

[61] Avi Shlaim, "Prelude to a Downfall: the British offer of Union to France, June 1940", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 9, 3 (1974), 27–63.

Nazi New Order.[62] Federalist ideas were also widespread in planning for the future of the United States and Britain, and intersected with broader debates over a reformed British Empire after the war and Anglo-American leadership in the postwar world. Clarence Streit's *Union Now*, advocating for a federation of democracies, became a major wartime bestseller and the source of a grassroots movement across the United States and Britain.[63]

The most elaborate wartime discussions and planning on federalism however centered on the future of east central Europe. In numerous pamphlets and émigré newspapers, such as *New Europe* and *Austria's Voice* and in newly founded organization such as the London-based Danubian Club, exiled eastern European intellectuals and politicians agitated for a postwar federation in the region.[64] Beginning in 1941, federalist plans for the region had begun to receive British political backing. In 1942 the governments in exile of Poland and Czechoslovakia had reached an agreement on a postwar confederation that entailed the creation of some form of economic and defense union between the two countries. That same year, the governments in

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[62] Walter Lipgens, 'European Federation in the Political Thought of Resistance Movements during World War II', *Central European History*, 1, 1 (1968), 5–19. For a general overview of discussions on a postwar federation see also Lipgens, *A History of European Integration*, *Volume 1 1945–1947* (New York: Clarendon, 1982), 44–76.

[63] See Clarence Streit, *Union Now*: *A Proposal for a Union of the Democracies of the North Atlantic* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939). The scholarship on federalism in the context of imperial reform and global Anglo-American leadership is greatly expanding, see for example Michael Collins, "Decolonization and the 'Federal Moment,'" *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* Vol. 24, no. 1 (2013), 21-40; Or Rosenboim, "Barbara Wootton, Friedrich Hayek and the debate on democratic federalism in the 1940s," *The International History Review* Vol. 36 (5) 2014, 894-918; Frederic Cooper, 'Reconstructing Empire in Post-War French and British Africa,' Ibid., 196-210; Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage, 1998), 201 and Samuel Moyn, "Fantasies of Federalism," *Dissent* (Winter 2015).

[64] See, for example, Danubian Club, C*entral and South-Eastern European Union. Report by the Danubian Club,* (London: 1943); Tibor Eckhardt, "The Problem of the Middle Danube Basin", *Free Europe*, vol. II (16), 1940; Otto of Austria, "Danubian Reconstruction", *Foreign Affairs* 20 (1942), 243-252; Anatol Muhlstein, "United States of Central Europe", *New Europe* 1 (1 & 5) (1940). A bibliography complied by Felix Gross, director of the East Central European Planning Board, in 1945 on the subject of wartime federalist plans for Eastern Europe includes some fifteen pages of references to works on subjects spanning from a Polish-Soviet confederation and a Balkan Union to a broader Danubian federation and an Anglo-Saxon Union. See Felix Gross, *Crossroads of Two Continents. A Democratic Federation of East-central Europe*, (New York: 1945). For recent works on federalist plans for the reconstruction of east central Europe see Holly Case, 'The Strange Politics of Federative Ideas in East-Central Europe,' *Journal of Modern History* Vol. 85, no. 4 (2013), 833-866 as well as Case, 'Reconstruction in East-Central Europe: Clearing the Rubble of Cold-War Politics,' *Past and Present* 2010 (suppl. 6) (2011), 92-94.

exile of Greece and Yugoslavia signed a plan for a postwar Balkan Union. Prompted by these developments, an East Central European Planning Board was established in New York by the delegates of the four governments with the goal of studying the prospects for federalism in the region. [65] "To the question, what is the most essential issue in postwar planning for Central and Eastern Europe," observed East Central European Planning Board director Felix Gross in 1943, "the only correct answer is, the problem of federation."[66]

Many Jewish diaspora nationalist intellectuals embraced the prospects of a federation in East Central Europe with excitement. From the late 19th century and until the end of the first World War, federalism formed a central part of the Jewish national agenda in the region. Jewish leaders, joining other national minorities, had advocated for reforming the empires in the region into multiethnic federations with extensive rights for their minorities. "Federalism", declared Baron in May 1940, is the most "desirable solution – as far as Jews are concerned" for the postwar period. "If a state of multiple nationality had always proved to be the most hospitable of states for Jewry-in-Exile," Baron argued, "a confederation of free and equal states and nationalities would be the very epitome of a tolerant and multifarious entity."[67] Similarly, the German Jewish intellectual Hannah Arendt repeatedly wrote in favor of a postwar European federation and highlighted its importance for the future of Jewish nationalism after the war. "Our

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[65] The few existing works on the subject of the Czechoslovak-Polish confederation were written in the wake of the Cold War by east European émigrés that envisioned a democratic, federal Eastern Europe as an alternative to a Soviet-dominated region. Wartime federalist plans for Eastern Europe thus played an important role in their thought and their assessments of them hence should be considered as somewhat exaggerated. See Taborsky Eduard, "A Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation, A Story of the First Soviet Veto," *Journal of Central European Affairs*, Vol. 9, no. 4 (1950), 379-395 as well as Piotr Wandycz, *Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation and the Great Powers 1940-43* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956).

[66] Felix Gross, "Peace Planning for Central and Eastern Europe", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 232 (1944), 169–176.

[67] Baron, 'Reflections on the Future,' 362. While Baron's support for federalism had been strengthened during the Second World War, his commitment to a European federation should be traced back to the interwar period and is found prominently in his *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937).

only chance," Arendt wrote in the summer of 1940, "indeed, the only chance of all small peoples

– lies in a new European federal system."[68] International lawyer Nathan Feinberg argued in 1941

that "it is clear that within a federative framework ... it is easier to realize self-determination and

the nationalities problem" and advocated for federalism as a way to promote Jewish nationalism

in Eastern Europe.[69] Historian and expert on minority rights Oscar Janowsky worked during the

war on a proposal for a postwar federation in Eastern Europe with extensive guarantees for

minorities.[70] Nationalism scholar and Zionist activist Hans Kohn also wrote extensively during

the war in favor a postwar federation in Europe.[71] Diaspora nationalist leaders viewed federalism

not only as a prescription for the future but as an emerging reality across the world. The Soviet

Union and the United States were already federal entities, some of them argued, and thus the war

should be seen as struggle between the principles of the racial state and the multiethnic

federation.[72] "Of one thing we may be certain," declared one Jewish proponent of federalism in

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[68] Hannah Arendt, 'The Minority Question,' in Jerome Kohn and Ron Feldman, eds., *The Jewish Writings* (New York: Schoken, 2007), 125-131 as well as 'A Way Toward the Reconciliation of Peoples,' Ibid*., 261.

[69] Nathan Feinberg, "The Rights of Man and Nations after the War," Central Zionist Archives, Papers of Nathan Feinberg, A306/96 [in Hebrew].

[70] Oscar Janowsky, *Nationalities and National Minorities* (with Special Reference to East- Central Europe) (New York: 1945) as well as Oscar, Janowsky, "Towards a Solution of the Minorities Problem," in *Strategy for Democracy*, ed. Kingsley, J. Donald and Petegorsky, David W. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942). For more on Janowsky see James Loeffler, "Between Zionism and Liberalism. Oscar Janowsky and Diaspora Nationalism in America," *AJS Review* 34 (2010), 289-308. For Janowsky's earlier works on minority rights see Janowsky. *The Jews and Minority Rights, 1898–1919* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1933) and Janowsky, *People at Bay: The Jewish Problem in East-Central Europe* (Victor Gollancz: London, 1938),

[71] Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism as well as* Kohn, *World Order*.

[72] Such views were articulated for example in Janowsky, *Nationalities and National Minorities;* Arendt, 'Can the Jewish Arab Question be Solved?', in Kohn and Feldman, eds., *Jewish Writings*, 196 as well as 'The Return of Russian Jewry', ibid. 173 and Koppel S. Pinson, "Antisemitism in the Post-War World," *Jewish Social Studies* Vol. 7 no. 2 (April 1945), 99-118.

1941, "the secular Jewish problem in Europe will never be solved save within the framework of a democratic United States of Europe."[73]

Despite the enthusiasm of many Jewish thinkers for federalism, Jewish groups were not at the forefront of the wartime discussions on the topic. The significance of federalism for understanding the thought of diaspora nationalist leaders does not stem from the fact that they had specifically embraced or rejected such a program, but rather from the type political and intellectual climate the 'federalist moment' fostered. For even if federalist ideas were a mere political fantasy, as some of its critics charged, their widespread wartime percolation attested to the salience of internationalist ideas in British and American official thinking on the postwar order, and in particular about the reconstruction of East Central Europe.[74] It convinced Jewish leaders that the project of international protection of Jewish rights could be resurrected on a firmer footing after the war. Within this intellectual climate Goldman had thus declared in November 1941 that the coming peace "would have to be a revolutionary peace". "The period of sovereign states," he argued, "has to come definitely to an end." "I cannot see any higher or nobler task for the Jewish people… than to become the vanguard of a movement … [for] the abolition of the sovereign state." [75]

Population Transfers and the Jews

Robinson and other Jewish leaders remained committed to minority rights because they hoped a new international order could vouch for its success and because they could not imagine any other

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[73] Zachariah, "Design for Peace," *The Menorah Journal*, 26 3 (October-December 1941), 246.

[74] For this view, and a general survey of some attitudes of Jewish postwar planning institutes on federalism see Moses Moscowitz, *Principles, Plans and Proposals for Post-War Reconstruction in Reference to Jewish Questions* (New York: Research Institute on Peace and Postwar Problems of the American Jewish Committee, 1942), AJA, Morris Waldman Papers, M0580 2013.

[75] Goldman, "Post-War Problems," 6.

alternative for the masses of Jews they believed would attempt to rebuild their lives in Eastern Europe after the war. Yet their commitment to minority rights was also based on genuine fear over how a radically new order in Europe could look like. For at the same time as some intellectuals and policy makers advocated for limiting the sovereignty of nation-states after the war and for new federal structures, others called for the creation of a far more nationalist postwar order in Europe through a series of large-scale population transfers of minorities. While Hitler had been seeking to craft a racially organized New Order in Europe, leaders of exiled Eastern European governments and policy makers in Britain and in the United States envisioned a postwar Europe without minorities following the defeat of Nazism. In their view, large-scale transfers of minorities would be a 'necessary evil' that could solve national conflicts in Europe once and for all.

Indeed, after the Nazi invasion of Poland and the collapse of the interwar order in Eastern Europe, many intellectuals and policy makers in Britain, France and the United States had begun to embrace population transfers as a solution for creating a more stable European order after the war. The idea of population transfers was not a wartime invention. It first emerged as a form of policy and topic of public debate in Europe beginning in the 1910s, as a series of wars in the Balkans concluded with several bilateral agreements that provided for the exchange of populations between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. In 1923, the first international agreement sanctioning population transfers was signed between Greece and Turkey under the auspices of the League of Nations. Yet from the late 1930s, and particularly after the outbreak of war, the once dominant critical attitude toward this solution in liberal quarters had significantly waned. "Public opinion is more favorably inclined toward this solution than twenty years ago …" observed Nikolas Politis, Greek ambassador to the League of Nations and one of the architects of

the 1923 Lausanne agreement, shortly after the outbreak of war, "the criticisms leveled at it at the time of the [peace] conference have vanished."[76] "Everything leads us to believe," noted a French scholar as early as November 1939, "that the [transfer of populations] would be one of the major innovations of the peace treaties of the future."[77] C.A Macartney lamented in the summer of 1940 how population transfers has become "the present fashionable panacea for all difficulties connected with national minorities".[78] These sentiments were also echoed in government quarters. President Roosevelt spoke about the specter of millions of refugees in postwar Europe and enlisted scholars to plan for the large scale reshuffling of minorities after the war.[79] As geographer and prominent Roosevelt advisor Isaiah Bowman put it in a 1942 State Department meeting, "people were getting used to the idea of moving minorities because Hitler had carried the process so far."[80] At the same time, the British government sponsored studies and laid out plans for postwar population transfers.[81]

Within this intellectual climate, Polish and Czech diplomats in exile had begun to plan for the expulsion of German and other minorities after the war. Eastern European exiled governments were planning for the postwar expulsion of minorities at the same time as they were

[76] Nicolas Politis, 'Les Transfert de Populations', *Politique étrangère*, 2, 5 (1940), 83–94.

[77] Michel Pierrac, "Les Transferts des Populations," *Voix de Peuples*, 15 October 1940, 463-470.

[78] Cited in Douglas, *Orderly and Humane*, p.28.

[79] For Roosevelt's statement see footnote 3. Roosevelt sponsored the creation of the so-called "M-project," aimed at studying the possibilities for resettlement of millions of refugees and ethnic groups across the globe see Henry Field, *"M" Project* (Ann Arbor: F. D. R. Studies in Migration and Settlement, 1962). For more on the M-Project see Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace. The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* (Princeton University Press: 2009), 104–149.

[80] Political Subcommittee Chronological Minutes, Meeting 2, March 14, 1942, Box 55, Harley Notter Files, Record Group 59, US National Archives. I thank Stephen Wertheim for sharing with me these protocols. For more on Bowman and his role in the M-Project Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

[81] See Matthew Frank, *Expelling the Germans: British Opinion and Post-1945 Population Transfers in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

discussing the creation of a postwar confederation in the region. Already in November 1939

exiled Polish officials had discussed plans for the annexation of east Prussia and German Upper

Silesia after the war and for the expulsion of Germans from those territories. In a February 1940

memorandum August Zaleski, Foreign Minister of the Polish Government-in-Exile, listed the

'liquidation of German settlements' in east Prussia as a major Polish postwar aim. Edvard Beneš,

president of the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile, had begun to harbor hopes for the

expulsion of Germans from a future Czechoslovakia already following the 1938 Munich *diktat*.

In November 1940 he laid out in detail his vision for postwar Czechoslovakia in a dispatch to the

Czech resistance. Germans who 'betrayed' the nation, Beneš argued, would be expelled after the

war and the remaining German population would have to forgo any claims for minority rights.[82]

While exiled Polish and Czech leaders were directing their plans at the Germans, they were

hoping to get rid of other minority groups after the war. Beneš at times mentioned the Hungarian

minority, and both exiled governments, as shall see, were committed to encourage the expulsion

of Jews after the war.

Despite the commitment of Polish and Czech leaders to the postwar expulsion of

minorities in the first years of the war, population transfers had by no means become yet either

their explicit policy or official Allied policy. Polish leaders, for one, remained deliberately

reticent on their plans for population transfers in their conversations with British and American

officials. The primary postwar goal of exiled Polish leaders was to regain the territories of

eastern Poland the Soviet Union had annexed as part of the 1939 Nazi-Soviet division of Poland,

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[82] Detlef Brandes' work offers the most thorough archival based study of the evolution of Czech and Polish wartime plans on postwar population transfesr. See Detlef Brandes, *Grossbritannien und seine osteuropäische Alliierten : Regierungen Polens, der Tschechoslowakei und Jugoslawiens im Londoner Exil vom Kriegsausbruch bis zur Konferenz von Teheran* (München : Oldenbourg, 1988) Brandes, *Der Weg zur Vertreibung, 1938-1945 : Pläne und Entscheidungen zum "Transfer" der Deutschen aus der Tschechoslowakei und aus Polen* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001).

and they feared that any call for the postwar expansion of Poland into east Prussia and German Upper Silesia would be interpreted in the West as constituting 'compensation' for the territories Poland had 'lost' in the east. Czechoslovak leaders were simply in no position to make demands for the expulsion of Germans after the war. Beneš was still struggling to have the British officially repudiate the Munich agreement and recognize his government as the direct legal successor of the Czechoslovak Republic as of 1938. The question of population transfers thus took a secondary place in Beneš postwar policy in the first years of the war, an attitude compounded by the fact that the British were sympathetic at the time to demands voiced by exiled Sudeten German Social Democratic leaders for autonomy in postwar Czechoslovakia.[83]

The growth of support for population transfers in discussion in Britain and the United States on the postwar order deeply alarmed Jewish leaders and intellectuals engaged in planning for the future of Jewish life in Europe after the war. If minorities are to be transferred en masse to their homelands after the war, where would Jews, a minority without a homeland, go? Writing from exile in France in the summer of 1940, Arendt underscored this point. "As for the Jews, these newest methods are especially dangerous for them because they cannot be reimported to any motherland … for them it can only be a matter of deportation."[84] The alarm of Jewish leaders over the rise of support among Eastern European governments and Allied policy makers for population transfers stemmed from their experiences in the 1930s. During the 1930s Jews were subject to concentrated state efforts aimed at promoting their emigration and resettlement: the German government forced the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Jews through the adoption of racial laws and economic marginalization; the Polish government adopted an official

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[83] See Brandes, *Grossbritannien und seine osteuropäische Alliierten* as well as A.F Noskova, "Migration of the Germans after the Second World War: Political and Pyschological Aspects," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Scholarship* 16 1-2 (2000), 96-114

[84] Arendt, 'The Minority Question', in Kohn and Feldman, eds., *Jewish Writings*, 125–31.

policy committed to the 'evacuation' of its Jewish citizens – a special department was

established within the Polish Foreign Office dedicated to planning large-scale Jewish

resettlement schemes; and Hungary and Romania sought to curtail and ultimately revoke the

citizenship of Jews though anti-Jewish legislation. The aftermath of the war, many Jewish

leaders feared, might serve as an opportunity for East European government to realize their anti-

Jewish expulsion fantasies of the 1930s.

From the start of the war Jewish leaders were thus committed to fighting the rise of

population transfers and sought to gather information on the postwar plans of East European

governments regarding their Jewish populations. The question that preoccupied Jewish leaders

the most was the future of Poland – home to the largest Jewish population in interwar Europe

and to a government that had vocally advocated for the evacuation of its Jewish population in the

late 1930s. After the outbreak of war, some Jewish observers had hoped that the Polish

Government-in-Exile, formed in France in October 1939, would reject the anti-Jewish policies of

the prewar Polish regime.[85] The Polish Government-in-Exile had publicly sought to distance

itself from the authoritarian policies of its predecessor and did not include in its ranks members

of the ruling circles of the prewar regime. In its public statement the new government had

promised the establishment of a liberal democratic order in postwar Poland. Prime Minister

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[85] David Engel, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz: The Polish Government in Exile and the Jews* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 54. See also Zvi Avital, "The Polish Government in Exile and the Jewish Question," *Wiener Library Bulletin* 33/34, 1975, 43-51. The question of the attitude of the new Polish regime toward its Jews deeply occupied Jewish observers from the start of the war. As the *Jewish Chronicle* put it in a survey of views of Polish leaders on the Jewish question, "the composition and views of the new Polish government … is a matter of extreme importance to the Jews, and especially to those in Poland, on whose future the actions of the government may one day have an important bearing." "Who's Who in the New Polish Government," *The Jewish Chronicle,* October 13, 1939, p. 14.

Władysław Sikorski had vouched for a future Poland "equal and just for all its citizens," in which minorities would enjoy "free national and cultural development."[86]

Yet the initial hopes of Jewish leaders over the commitment of the new Polish regime to Jewish equality quickly waned as they learned that leading members of the government had been advocating for the 'evacuation' of the majority of Polish Jews after the war and sought the support of Zionist leaders for their plans. In a February 1940 meeting between Edward Raczyński, the Polish ambassador in London and Brodetsky, Racinsky told Brodetsky that Poland would oppose protecting Jews as a national minority after the war and argued that the Jewish problem in Poland should be solved through some form of large-scale postwar emigration.[87] In a subsequent meeting between Brodetsky and Stanisław Kot, internal minister of the Polish Government-in-Exile, Kot insisted that only about a third of Polish Jews would be allowed to remain in Poland after the war and sought Brodetsky's support for the resettlement of the remainder of the Jews outside Poland.[88] Later that year Jozef Rettinger, Sikorski's personal secretary, published a book that advocated reviving the anti-Jewish evacuation policy of the

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[86] Engel, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz,* 46-52. For official statements by the Polish Government in Exile relating to the status of Jews after the war see "The Polish Government in Exile," *Contemporary Jewish Record ,* 3 6 (1940), 646-651.

[87] Pawel Korzec translated into German correspondence between the Polish government in Exile and Jewish groups during the first year of the war. See Edward Racinsky, Report of a Meeting with Selig Brodetsky (to the Foreign Ministry of the Polish Government in Exile), February 14, 1940, Pawel Korzec, "General Sikorski und Seine Exilregierung zur Judenfrage in Polen im Lichte von Dokumenten des Jahres 1940," *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 30 2 (1981), 241-243.

[88] Kot in fact suggested that such an emigration scheme would apply also to Jews in Hungary and Romania: "We spent several hours with Prof. Kot. It was an amazing conversation. Prof. Kot gave us a long history of the Jews in Poland, which, he said, had treated the Jews well for centuries. But the Jews were a foreign body in Poland; they did not even speak Polish. Many Jews had come to Poland from Lithuania. He said there were too many Jews in Poland, and Hungary and Romania. About a third of them could remain; the rest would have to go elsewhere. 'Where?' I asked, 'Palestine?' 'No, not Palestine,' he said, 'The Arabs are against it. We could take an area around Odessa from the Russians after the war, and settle the Jews there.' We said we could not consider it." Brodetsky, *Memoirs: From Ghetto to Israel* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1960), p. 198. In April 1940 *The Jewish Chronicle* ran a report on Kot, describing him as a supporter of disenfranchising Jews by nationalizing the Polish economy and of large scale Jewish postwar emigration from Poland. "Will Emigrationism be Resurrected?" *The Jewish Chronicle,* April 12, 1940.

1930s. "The only solution to the burning [Jewish] question," Rettinger concluded in his study,

"is that offered by emigration."[89] Similarly, Janusz Głuchowski, Secretary of the Polish National

Council in America, published a booklet in early 1940 in which he argued that "at least one

million Jews should emigrate from Poland" after the war, and that only when "the percentage of

Jews in Poland is reduced to at least one-third of the present number will the Jewish problem in

Poland be solved or rather cease to exist."[90]

Brodetsky's meetings, together with these public statements and actions by Polish

officials in the early months of 1940, convinced Jewish leaders that the policy of the Polish-

Government-in-Exile on the future of Jews in Poland was in line with – if not more radical than -

that of the prewar Polish regime.[91] By early May, the Jewish press in London, New York and

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[89] Joszef Retinger, *All About Poland: Facts, Figures, Documents* (London: Minerva Publishing, 1940), 67-68. Retinger writes: "The Polish republic, the Polish nation, and the Jewish community in Poland are faced by the vital necessity of solving this matter. New fields for emigration must be found and the necessary capital funds must be mobilized. The Jewish question therefore has ceased to be only of interest to Poland; it had assumed an international character and requires the collaboration not only of Jewish circles but also of those countries that still dispose of areas available for immigrant settlement." The book was discussed in the Jewish press. See, for instance, Eliezer Lichenstein, "The Future of the Jewish Question" *Davar,* 20.4.1941.

[90] For a detailed report on the booklet see "Poland's Surplus Jews," *The Jewish Chronicle,* May 24, 1940.

[91] One of the main points of contention that preoccupied Jewish leaders – and further convinced them of the anti-Jewish leanings of the Polish regime - was the publication of antisemitic content in the organ of the Polish government in Exile, *Jestem Polakiem*. For the debates over the paper see, Engel, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz*, 71-74. At around the same time other expressions and actions by member of the Polish Government in Exile further convinced Jewish leaders of its intentions to revive the anti-Jewish policies of its predecessor. While officially the Polish Government in Exile did not express a clear position on the Jewish question during that time, members of the right-wing Endeck party – which held prominent positions in the Polish Government in Exile - publicly attacked Jewish leaders and repeated calls for Jewish postwar evacuation. In April 1940 Taduscz Bielecki, the leader of the antisemitic Endeck party in prewar Poland and vice-chairman of the national council of the Polish Government in Exile, issued a vigorous attack against Goldman for proposing limiting the sovereignty of states in Europe after the war and imposing international guarantees for minority rights, see "Endek Attacks Jewish Congress at Polish Council Session," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, April 10 http://pdfs.jta.org/1940/1940-04-10_006.pdf; see also "Nahum Goldmann Chides Polish Leader for Attack on Jewish Congress," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, April 15 http://pdfs.jta.org/1940/1940-04-15_010.pdf. For a longer report on the matter see, "Antisemitism in Polish National Council: World Jewish Congress Attacked," *The Jewish Chronicle,* April 19, 1940. During the same month *Free Europe*, a publication closely associated with the Polish Government in Exile, published an opinion piece by a Polish Jewish Zionist Revisionist activist rejecting minority rights for Jews after the war and urging postwar Jewish emigration to Palestine, Dr. Symon Wolf, "The Jewish Problem in Eastern Europe," *Free Europe*, April 5, 1940, 214. For a report on the article see "New Form of Minority Status for Jews Seen Needed in Restored Poland," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* 04/25/1940 http://pdfs.jta.org/1940/1940-04-25_018.pdf

Palestine had run numerous reports claiming that the Polish government had in fact revived the anti-Jewish evacuation policy of the 1930s.[92]

While Jewish leaders were alarmed by the positions of Polish officials, they believed they could rely on diplomatic pressure to fight for Jewish equality after the war. At the Peace Conference of 1919 it was Jewish international advocacy that secured equality and minority rights for Polish Jews against the stated will of the Polish government. Jewish leaders hoped the present war would offer similar opportunities. The Polish government was heavily dependent on the support of the French and British governments for the realization of its primary postwar goal - the restoration of the territories of eastern Poland annexed by the Soviet Union. Fostering a liberal-democratic public image in the West was thus a high priority for the Polish government. Under such circumstances, Jewish groups sought to press the Polish government to issue a deceleration that would vouch for Jewish equality and for the annulment of all prewar anti-Jewish legislation in the future Poland. The campaign for a deceleration began almost immediately after the start of the war and was carried out in the Jewish press – primarily on the pages of the London based *Jewish Chronicle*, and in private meetings between Jewish leaders and Polish officials. Polish officials were initially opposed to the demand of Jewish groups for a

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[92] In early May 1940 Jewish groups in Western Europe sent official letters of protestation against the revival of the anti-Jewish evacuation policy by the Polish Government in Exile, see for example "New Curbs Imposed in Nazi Poland; Exiled Leaders Revive Forced Emigration Talk," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 05/02/1940 http://pdfs.jta.org/1940/1940-05-02_023.pdf; Several days letter, in a statement sent to the Polish Government in Exile, Stephen Wise, president of the American Jewish Congress, urged the leaders of the Polish Government in Exile to issue "a frank statement … repudiating such [evacuation] proposals and assuring Jews everywhere of (their) desire to guarantee to Jews in Poland full equality" *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 05/05/1940 http://pdfs.jta.org/1940/1940-05-06_026.pdf; Several days later count Jerzy Potocki, Polish ambassador in the United States, sought to deny the rumors that the Polish government had revived this policy "Potocki Denies Polish Government Reviving Demands for Jewish Emigration," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 05/08/1940; Prompted by these reports, the leaders of the American Jewish Committee held a luncheon on the future of Jews in Poland in which they reiterated their rejection of the anti-Jewish evacuation policy of the 1930s, *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency* 05/06/1940 http://pdfs.jta.org/1942/1942-05-07_103.pdf; In early May the London based Jewish chronicle reported extensively on Polish plans for the future of the Jews, arguing that the Polish Government in Exile still believes that the solution to the Jewish problem lies 'as it was thought to be under Col. (Josef) Beck and company, in getting rid of the Jews." See the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*'s coverage of the *Jewish Chronicle* reports, 05/10/1940 http://pdfs.jta.org/1940/1940-05-12_031.pdf.

deceleration, mainly because they feared the ramifications such a declaration could have after the war. Like the minorities treaties of 1919, such a deceleration could serve as a precedent that would tie Poland again to international oversight over the treatment of its minorities. During the first years of the war of the Polish Government-in-Exile thus resisted the demand for a declaration, relying on what was at the time the opposition of several Bundist leaders from Poland to it. Yet as the campaign for a declaration began to attract increasing public attention in Britain and the United States, the Polish government eventually resolved in favor of issuing a deceleration. In a symposium convened in London in April 1940 by the Board of Deputies of British on the future of Polish Jewry, Jan Stariczyk, labor minister of the Polish government in Exile, delivered a statement promising equality for Jews in Poland after the war both as individuals and as a national group. [93]

Jewish leaders considered the Stariczyk deceleration as a first achievement in the long struggle over Jewish equality after the war – even as some Jewish observers immediately dismissed it as an empty statement that sought to conceal the Polish government's continued

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[93] For the private meetings between Jewish groups and Polish officials over the deceleration see Korzec, "General Sikorski," 238-259; Engel, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz,* 80-83; Zvi Avital, "The Polish Government in Exile and the Jewish Question," *Wiener Library Bulletin* 33/34, 1975, 43-51; Arieh Tartakower, "Diplomatic Activity for Polish Jewry in the United States during the Second World War," *Galed* V (1978), 167-184 [in Hebrew]. Already in November 1939, the former Warsaw correspondent of the *Jewish Chronicle* urged Polish leaders to clarify their attitude on the Jewish question in an official statement. "Jews in the Future Poland," *The Jewish Chronicle,* November 24, 1939, p. 22. On November 24 the *Jewish Chronicle* repeated this demand in its editorial page, "New Polish Government and the Jews," *The Jewish Chronicle,* November 24, 1939. Indeed, at the same time the Polish Government in Exile issued a new declaration on equality –but it was coached in general terms – to all citizens, and to all minorities – rather than specify the Jews, for reports on these see for instance, "Poland Shall Be Democratic: A Pledge to Minorities," *The Jewish Chronicle*, December 29, 1939. See also reports on growing pressure for a declaration by Jewish groups – "Polish Government on the Fence," February 16, 1940. On February 18, 1940 the Board of Deputies of British Jews held a conference in which it repeated the demand for a declaration. This conference was extensively covered by the *Jewish Chronicle*, "A Polish-Jewish Appeal? The Polish Government and the Jews," *The Jewish Chronicle,* February 23, 1940. The *Jewish Chronicle* continued to scorn the Polish government for its reticence on Jewish rights and highlighted the antisemitic record of many of the members of the new Polish regime, see "General Haller's Belated Apology," *The Jewish Chronicle,* March 1, 1940. In March 1940 *The Jewish Chronicle* ran a report claiming the United States government was deeply interested in the fate of Jews in postwar Poland, and that Summer Welles, acting as Roosevelt's special envoy to Europe, discussed the matter with Polish officials. "Roosevelt Envoy and Polish Jewish Future," *The Jewish Chronicle,* March 19, 1940.

commitment to the policy of Jewish 'evacuation'.[94] Yet even this limited sense of achievement

was short-lived, for just several months after the deceleration had been issued Jewish leaders had

begun to receive news on plans of the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile to encourage the

emigration of its Jewish population after the war. Such news were first communicated to Jewish

leaders in a September 1940 meeting between Beneš and two Jewish national leaders from

Czechoslovakia, Lev Zalmanovitch and Imirch Rosenberg. In the meeting Beneš had told the

two that the Jewish question in postwar Czechoslovakia "has to be brought to a definite

solution." As Beneš explained, this meant that Jews in Czechoslovakia would no longer be

regarded as a national minority but ought to make a clear political decision – either become

citizens of the future Jewish state or assimilate to the Czechoslovak nation. "I think that the Jews

… will have to decide after the war," Beneš told Zalmanovitch, "either for citizenship of the

Jewish State or for the assimilation to the Czechoslovak nation."[95]

    Beneš' statements soon became a topic of incessant debate among Jewish leaders in

London and New York. What did Beneš' proposed alternative for the Jews after the war –

between assimilation and Zionism – actually mean, at a time in which a Jewish state still seemed

like a remote possibility? Zalmanovitch believed that Beneš intended for national Jews - those

who declared themselves as members of the Jewish nationality during the interwar years - to

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[94] In a meeting of the Committee of Polish Jewish Affairs convened to discuss the declaration, Tartakower described the deceleration as insignificant because it was delivered by a low-level minister rather than by Prime Minister Sikorski, and because the content was not discussed before with Jewish groups. Tartakower argued that Jewish groups should draft their own declaration and ask Sikorski to endorse it. Minutes of the Meeting of Polish Jewish Affairs of the World Jewish Congress, November 18, 1940, WJC Papers A24-01.

[95] Imirch (Yitzhak) Rosenberg to Joseph Brodetsky, 14 September 1940, YlVO Archives, RG 348, Wolf-Mowsowitch, Reel 17. Beneš told Rosenberg and Zalmanovitch: "The Jewish question as it has shown itself shortly before the war has to be brought to a definite solution. I need not repeat my attitude to Zionism. I assist the Jews as much as I can to help them reach their national aim, namely, the Jewish state in Palestine. But I believe that this time the Zionists should be more consequent and should all aim at this solution which avoids a further spreading of antisemitism. … Zionists should make their clear political decision already now. This should be that that the Zionists aim for the citizenship of the Jewish state."

emigrate immediately after the war to a transit country until a Jewish state is created.[96] Indeed,

Zalmanovitch was convinced Beneš had been planning to entirely deny Jews rights as a group in

postwar Czechoslovakia: at the same time as Beneš expressed his views on the postwar Jewish

question to Jewish leaders, the Czech Governments in Exile actively prevented the appointment

of a Jewish national member to its national council in order to avoid creating a precedent for

Jewish national representation in a future Czechoslovakia.[97] Louis Namier, a British historian

and Zionist activists, shared Zalmanovitch's assessment. In a December 1941 meeting with

Beneš, Namier explained to Beneš that while he was in agreement that ultimately all national

Jews should live in Palestine, "this was a question of generations, and no such decisive action

could be taken in the meantime."[98] Beneš elaborated on his position in a meeting with Weizmann

in December 1941. The Jewish population in postwar Czechoslovakia, Beneš told Weizmann,

would have to be diluted by about a third after the war. Under Nazi rule Jews in Czechoslovakia

had already been removed from their homes and professions, and many Czech citizens have in

the meanwhile taken possession of their property. Simply dispossessing Czechs after the war "in

order to restore the property to its original owners was scarcely a solution." By the end of 1941

Jewish leaders had thus received confirmation that behind Beneš' euphemistic rhetoric on a

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[96] Yitzhak Rosenberg, a Jewish national leader from Czechoslovakia and a main participant in the events published his recollections from the period based on consulting some records in the Central Zionist archives. See Yitzhak Rosenberg, "Beneš and Jewish Political Rights During the Second World War: The Story of a Man Who was Involved and Active at the Time" *Gesher* 2 75 (1973) in Hebrew, P.63.

[97] Ibid., 60-63. See also Jan Lanicek's study of the relationship between the Czechoslovak Government in Exile and the Jews, Jan Lanicek, *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews, 1938-1948* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 117-148.

[98] Interview between Dr. Beneš and Professor Namier at 12:30 p.m on January 7, at 9 Governor Place, S.W.1 1941 (secret), Weizmann Archives (WA).

postwar choice Jews would face between 'assimilation and Zionism' lay a plan to expel a third of the pre-war Jewish population of Czechoslovakia, which Weizmann estimated at 120,000.[99]

The specter of the expulsion of Jews from Czechoslovakia was deeply alarming to Jewish leaders not only because it endangered the fate of Jews in the country, but also because Jewish leaders believed Beneš' views could have wide-ranging implications for the future of Jews throughout east central Europe. As Namier noted in his report on his meeting, Beneš' had been the Eastern European leader most committed to minority rights in the interwar period – his call for the end of minority rights and the evacuation of Jews from Czechoslovakia could thus serve as dangerous precedent for states with a far less liberal record on Jewish rights. For that reason Namier had asked Beneš to keep his views secret for as long as possible.[100]

In the first years of the war, Beneš' views on the postwar 'Jewish question' were indeed kept a secret among Zionist and Czechoslovak leaders. Jewish leaders had hoped they could use discreet diplomatic means to change Beneš' position. In April 1941 Tartakower drafted an official letter of protestation to Beneš on behalf of the American and World Jewish Congress that summarized and reflected the attitude of Jewish leaders. "A Czechoslovakia national council had been established in which the Jewish population as such is not represented," Tartakower wrote, "we are informed by our friends that this strange decision which was made by you was motivated by your conviction that the Jewish problem would have to be solved by establishing a Jewish

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[99] Our knowledge of this meeting comes from a secondary source – Weizmann shared the information from the meeting with Drexel Biddle, US delegate to the provisional Czechoslovak Government in Exile, who then forwarded the memo to the State Department (though apparently also to Weizmann, as a copy of Biddle's account is preserved in Weizmann's papers). A.J Drexel, Biddle (Legation of the United States of America near Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia) to the Secretary of State, 27 December 1941, WA. See also Biddle's summary dispatch from the meeting A.J Drexel, Biddle (Legation of the United States of America near Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia) to the Secretary of State, Summary Dispatch, 27 December 1941, WA. It is important to note that Biddle – borrowing the term from Weizmann - in fact uses the term 'forced migration' when describing Beneš' visions for the Jews in postwar Czechoslovakia.

[100] Interview between Dr. Beneš and Professor Namier, WA.

commonwealth in Palestine." All nationalistic Jews, Tartakower repeated Beneš' position, "should concentrate themselves in this commonwealth and all Jews in other countries must be assimilated. There is no place according to this theory for national minority rights for the Jewish people." Tartakower rejected Beneš' position. "May we, with all due respect, emphasize that we regard this conception as a grave danger for the Jewish people, against which we feel it our duty to raise our warning voice." "It would be against the laws of justice," Tartakower declared, "if the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine should result in depriving the Jews of their rights to live as one people in other countries of the world." Tartakower's memo also highlighted the fear that the denial of minority rights to Jews was nothing short of a cover for the expulsion of masses of Jews from Eastern European states after the war – and underscored the strong connections he saw between the Czech and Polish plans:

> "We feel it our duty to point out, in the last sentence of our memorandum, the great danger inherent in your plan to the Jewish population not only of Czechoslovakia, but of other European countries as well … By depriving the Jewish population in your country of its national minority rights on the grounds given by you, you will certainly endanger not only its minority rights but even its civic position and the its possibilities for future development. There might be some countries, not so eager to assimilate their Jewish citizens, which might accept the slogan of enforcing their emigration from the respective countries on the basis of the principles formulated by you."[101]

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[101] Dr. Tartakower to Beneš, April 9 1941, WJC Papers, H97-11.

As Tartakower's memo indicates, Jewish leaders saw the Polish and Czech plans as deeply connected. Indeed, reflecting the idea that the Polish and Czech positions were part of the same postwar policy, Perlzweig had argued in a response letter to Tartakower's memo that the position of the Czech government was part of the price of its new alliance with Poland. If a Polish-Czech federal arrangement is to emerge, Perlzweig argued, "the Poles will be free from the liberal traditions of Masaryk." The Czechs, Perlzweig lamented in his letter, have now joined the camp of the interwar antisemitic powers.[102] Several months later Tartakower convened a committee of Polish and Czech Jewish leaders in the Untied States to take joint action against what they regarded were the two countries' strikingly similar visions for Jews after war. Tartakower opened the meeting by noting how history has reversed itself. "In the past the situation of the Czech Jews was much better than that of Polish Jews because they enjoyed both equal civil rights and a considerable measure of national autonomy." "Now, however," he argued, "it seems that the situation has changed somewhat." "The attitude of the Polish Government toward its Jewish citizens … is quite correct [referring to the Stariczyk declaration] whereas difficulties have arisen unexpectedly in Czech government circles ...". The participants in the meeting agreed that unified action is required to counter Polish and Czech plans.[103]

Only at the beginning of 1942 did Jewish leaders and intellectuals outside Zionist circles begin to discuss Beneš' position on the 'Jewish question', after Beneš publicly advocated for his vision for a postwar Czechoslovakia without minorities. In January 1942 Beneš published a controversial article, "The Organization of Postwar Europe," in the influential magazine *Foreign*

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[102] Perlzweig Response to Tartawkoer Letter, April 11 1941, WJC Papers H-97-11.

[103] Minutes of the Meeting of Representatives of Czech Jews and Polish Jews in the United States, Thursday September 25, 1941 WJC papers A24 1.

Affairs.[104] In this article, Beneš publicly laid out his vision for postwar Czechoslovakia: national

minorities that proved to be disloyal to the republic will have to be expelled, and minorities in

general will no longer enjoy groups rights. "After this war," Beneš wrote, "it will be necessary to

carry out a transfer of populations on a very much larger scale than after the last war", and added

that "the absurd state of affairs" created by the system of minority protection, "cannot be

renewed".[105] Though Beneš did not specify the Jews in his article and directed his comments on

population transfers primarily to those Germans and Hungarians who cooperated with the Nazis,

Jewish leaders were alarmed by the implications of such views on their position in

Czechoslovakia after the war.

Shortly after the publication of Beneš' piece, Max Weinreich, director of YIVO, sent a

letter to Jan Masaryk, Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovak Government-in-Exile, asking for

clarifications on Beneš' position.[106] Weinreich's letter emphasized that the fear that Beneš' plans

might include the Jews were not unfounded. "The question of transfers is for us the Jews not

merely an academic matter" he wrote, "as you know, the 'evacuation' of Jews from some east

central European states was forcefully advocated … in the eve of the present war."[107] Masaryk's

concise reply arrived a few weeks later. "I can understand that under the unprecedentedly tragic

circumstances that the heroic and sorely tried Jewish people find themselves in to-day, Dr. Beneš

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[104] See Edward Beneš, "The Organization of Postwar Europe", *Foreign Affairs* 20 (1942), 226-242.

[105] Ibid, 237.

[106] For recent research on Weinreich and his changing relationship to Zionism see Kenneth Moss, "Tsienizm in dem goles-natsyonalistishn gedank: Maks Vaynraykh in Palestine," *Afn shvel: gezelshaftlekh-literarisher zhurnal* 356-357 (2012).

[107] This correspondence was published in the introduction to Mark Vishniak, *The Transfer of Populations as a Means of Solving the Problem of Minorities*, (YIVO Institute for Jewish Research: New York, 1942) [in Yiddish]. Weinreich sent copies of this exchange to various groups and individuals engaged in postwar planning, a copy was found in both Max Weinreich's and Felix Gross' papers. See for example Papers of Morris Waldman Papers, AJA, box 6/175.

mentioning the possibility of exchanging populations could give rise to worry."[108] Referring to

Beneš' plan, Masaryk contended that "I know that when he speaks of 'exchange of population'

he means that, within the realms of possibilities we must – after this war – try to get rid of some

of the Germans around the frontiers of Germany who have never been much good to us" and he

then added that "I would like to go on record … in stating that Jews are certainly not included in

these as yet very hazy plans. And I have Dr. Beneš' authority in emphasizing this point."[109]

Masaryk's reply did little to quell Weinreich's fears. Shortly after this letter exchange he

commissioned Vishniak to write the first wartime study on the history of population transfers, a

small Yiddish booklet entitled *The Transfer of Populations as a Means of Solving the Problem of

Minorities*.[110] Vishniak was deeply involved in the Jewish postwar planning scene: he was one of

the co-authors of *Were the Minorities Treaties a Failure?* with Jacob Robinson and wrote a

study on statelessness for the American Jewish Committee as well as a proposal for an

international ban on antisemitism for the Jewish Labor Committee.[111] Vishniak's booklet

surveyed the history of population transfers and heavily criticized this political solution, calling

instead for the restoration of the system of minority protection after the war. "Democracy must

revise and abandon many things in its theory and its practice…" Vishniak wrote, "but giving up

on international protection of minorities will not constitute any step forward. It would mean a

blind return to the pre-Versailles order. It would mean resigning from a just principle only

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[108] Ibid., Ibid.

[109] Ibid., Ibid.

[110] Ibid., Ibid.

[111] See Mark Vishniak, *The Legal Status of Stateless Persons* (New York: The American Jewish Committee Research Institute on Peace and Postwar Problems,) as well as Vishniak. *An International Convention against Anti-Semitism* (New York: Research Institute of the Jewish Labor Committee, 1946). For a discussion of the demand for an international ban against antisetmism see Solomon Andhil Fineberg, "Can Anti-Semitism be Outlawed?" *Contemporary Jewish Record* 6 6 (1943), 619-631.

because the first attempt to enforce it failed owing to the timidity of some and the incapacity and dishonesty of others".[112]

By 1942 Jewish leaders thus had a clear idea of plans of the Polish and Czechoslovak governments in exile to expel a significant segment of the Jewish population after the war. Though these plans were communicated to Jewish leaders separately by Polish and Czechoslovak leaders, Jewish leaders viewed them as part of a general effort to reduce the size of the Jewish minority across Eastern Europe after the war and prevent the restoration of minority rights. They also recognized that these visions fit within a broader commitment among the Allies and Eastern European states to promote population transfers after the war as a means of solving the 'minority problem' in Eastern Europe once and for all. During the first years of the war Jewish leaders believed they could counter the Polish and Czech plans and use diplomatic pressure to guarantee Jewish national rights in Eastern Europe. Indeed, in April 1941, under pressure from the World Jewish Congress, Sikorski issued a second declaration by the Polish government promising equality for Jews in postwar Poland and the annulment of all prewar anti-Jewish legislation.[113] In November that year the Czechoslovak government finally agreed to appoint a Jewish national member to it state council after a protracted struggle by Jewish groups.[114] These developments convinced Jewish leaders committed to a Jewish national future in Eastern Europe that the plans of Eastern European governments in exile could be stopped if they were to develop an effective diplomacy.

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[112] Ibid. 93.

[113] For the official text and response of the World Jewish Congress to the Sikorski declaration see, Statement by American and World Jewish Congress, April 19, 1941, H279 11.

[114] See Rosenberg, "Beneš on the Political Rights of the Jews," 63-64 Lanicek, 117-148.

The Holocaust and the Geopolitics of Jewish Death

As the director of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, Robinson was deeply informed about the discussions between Jewish groups and the Polish and Czech governments in exile on the future of Jews after the war. In a September 1941 report for the leaders of the World Jewish Congress Robinson forcefully attacked Beneš' position. "The policy suggested by Dr. Beneš can, in plain language," he wrote, "be summarized as putting before every Jew in Europe this cruel alternative." "Either he accepts the idea of being evicted in 30-60 years, and in the meantime he and his children and his children's children will live under a status of aliens, or he will receive full rights of citizenship for the price of renouncing any connection with Jewish life (excepting the performance of religious ceremonies)." Beneš' vision, Robinson argued, in fact amounted to nothing short of a plan to de-nationalize masses of Jews in Eastern Europe after the war – to create a category of Jewish statelessness in Europe that will last for generations. For even if a Jewish state were to be created immediately after the war, he argued, it would not be able to absorb millions of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe. "Could we imagine that this little Jewish state in Palestine would be in a position to give effective protection to millions of Jews in Europe?" Beneš' plan, Robinson insisted, would thus "inevitably lead to a situation in which the Jews will be aliens without protection, a situation of which we had seen in the case of Rumania during the period 1878-1919." "Is this war," Robinson lamented, "to end with a universal acceptance of the cruel methods of Rumanian oligarchy? … Could a democratic leader, like Dr. Beneš, advocate such a method?"[115]

Robinson's memo indicates that in late 1941 he shared the view common among Jewish national leaders that the positions of Beneš and of the Polish Government in Exile should be

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[115] Jacob Robinson to Wise and Goldman, 'Beneš' Idea on the Jewish Problem,' WJC Papers, C95 12, 25 September 1941.

forcefully rejected and resisted. Indeed, just several months after he wrote this memo Robinson published an issue of the institute's publication *Jewish Affairs* in support of a return to minority rights in postwar Europe.[116] Yet less than two years later Robinson radically reversed his position. As he argued his in his June 1943 memo to the World Jewish Congress leadership discussed in the introduction to this chapter, Jewish leaders should abandon their demands for minority rights after the war. Drawing on a Beneš-like rhetoric he had previously strongly condemned, Robinson insisted in his memo that the time for "both-and" – for a Jewish national program based both on the promotion of minority rights in Eastern Europe and the development of a Jewish center in Palestine, must came to an end. "Today is the time for either-or" he wrote. In Robinson's view, Jewish leadership should focus exclusively on the realization of what he termed 'radical Zionism' – the transfer of the majority of Jewish refugees in Europe to Palestine after the war.[117] Though in late 1941 he doubted a future Jewish state could absorb such a large numbers of refugees, in 1943 Robinson called for the immigration of some 200-300 thousands Jewish refugees to Palestine for "two, three or four years" after the war.[118] Most strikingly, Robinson's call on Jewish leaders to abandon minority rights and focus exclusively on Zionism in Palestine came hand in hand with a general embrace of the idea of population transfers as an organizing principle of the postwar order. In a 1943 essay "Minorities after the War" Robinson carefully discussed the solution of population transfers. While reminding his readers he was aware of the humanitarian challenges such a solution entailed, he nonetheless insisted that "after all, the peace of Europe and the world is of greater importance than adherence to certain

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[116] Institute of Jewish Affairs, "Minorities after this War", *Jewish Affairs*, April-May 1942, 1-23.

[117] Jacob Robinson, "Minority Rights as Part of our Peace Program"

[118] Symposium on "The Post- war Prospects of the Jews" at the Jewish Club, 2 March 1943, YIVO Archives, RG 347.17.10 (American Jewish Committee Collection), Executive office – Morris Waldman Files, box 44.

procedures for the protection of minorities." The transfer solution, Robinson insisted, was not to be applied equally to all minorities but only to those "irredentist" minorities "which neglect the duties of citizenship and continually look to their powerful co-national for help." Yet it was not at all clear what Robinson planned for the other minorities, since in the same breath he added that "there is no great probability that the international protection of minorities after this war will take the form of a return to the minorities' treaties."[119]

Why did Robinson radically change his position? In May 1943 Robinson provided an answer of his own to this question. In his response to a pamphlet by the American Jewish Committee that discussed the future of minority rights and described the positions of Jewish groups on the subject, Robinson argued that the pamphlet was entirely misguided because it ignored "the two fundamental facts" shaping the topic: "the tremendous decrease in the Jewish population in both relative and absolute numbers," and "the current process of the homogenization of the European state units."[120]

Indeed, Robinson's change of position was in part a response to his early knowledge of the extent of destruction of Jewish life in Europe during the war. News of large-scale massacres of Jews in the Soviet Union had began to reach the Allied capitols from late 1941 and during the summer of 1942 the World Jewish Congress leadership in New-York had received official reports from its office in Geneva – among them the famous Riegner telegram - that the Nazis were carrying out a systematic plan aimed at exterminating the entirety of European Jewry.[121] In

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[119] Jacob Robinson, "Minorities in a Free World", *Free World* (May 1943), 450–454.

[120] Ibid., box C97, folder 7, MS-361, Jacob Robinson, Remarks on "The Position of Jews in the Postwar World," a study course by the American Jewish Committee, 25 May 1943. See also Abraham G. Duker (ed.), *The Position of Jews in the Postwar World - A Study Course,* Vol. V (New York: Research Institute on Peace and Postwar Problems of the American Jewish Committee, 1943).

[121] For a recent examination of reports from Europe to the World Jewish Congress leadership see Zohar Segev, *The World Jewish Congress during the Holocaust: Between Activism and Restraint* (De Gruyter: Berlin, 2014), 23-42.

October 1942 Robinson had directed the Institute of Jewish Affair's staff to draft a comprehensive study on the fate of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe that will provide both the leadership of the World Jewish Congress and the general public an accurate picture of the extent of Jewish destruction in Europe. Within a few months Robinson had began to receive drafts of chapters that surveyed the position of Jews throughout the Axis empire - from Poland and Czechoslovakia to Greece, Hungary and France. The study, entitled *Hitler's Ten Year War on the Jews*, was eventually published in August 1943 to mark ten years since Hitler rose to power.[122] In the conclusion, Robinson summarized the grim findings of the research: "Some 3,000,000 Jews of Europe have perished since the war began four years ago." "… They have been destroyed by deliberate means: by planned starvation, forced labor, deportation, pogroms, and the methodical murder in German-run extermination centers in Eastern Europe." [123] The economic destruction of European Jewry, Robinson concluded, is "virtually complete" as Jews throughout Axis-occupied Europe had been removed from their professions and robbed of their property and possessions. *Hitler's Ten Years War on the Jews* was not the first publication to report that the Nazis had been carrying out a plan to systematically murder European Jewry. In late 1942 the World Jewish Congress, the Polish-Government in Exile and the Allied governments had issued statements confirming their knowledge of such a plan. But the study was nonetheless the first to offer a comprehensive and meticulously detailed report on the fate of Jews in Nazi Europe and a specific figure – three million Jews, that allowed observers to conceptualize the extent of the extermination in concrete terms. Indeed, from late 1942 the press in the Allied capitols regularly published news on massacres of Jew in Europe. Some observers

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[122] Institute of Jewish Affairs, *Hitler's Ten-Year War on the Jews* (Institute of Jewish Affairs: New York, 1943). The work on the volume had begun in September 1942, see meetings and reports on the drafting of the study Catastrophe. Hitler's Ten Years War on the Jews, minutes, outlines, notes, 1943-1945, WJC Papers, c90 1.

[123] Ibid., p. 300.

regarded these reports as exaggerated and inaccurate while many others became desensitized to them by the sheer volume of horror. As the London based *Jewish Standard* put it, "Jewish slaughter became an every day affair and the senses of non-Jews were dulled into indifference." "The whole thing is so starkly tragic," wrote Harold Ickes, British Secretary of the Interior, in response to a report on massacres of Jews in Poland, "that it saturates the imagination." One Jewish observes spoke about the "feverish competition" between Jewish bodies "each seeking to anticipate the other" by publishing "still newer and larger horrors." [124] In this context Robinson envisioned his study as a comprehensive scientific intervention that both verified and summarized the sea of information from Europe.

Robinson's early knowledge of both the Nazi extermination plan and the degree to which it had been carried out in Europe significantly shaped his position on the future of minority rights. Robinson came to envision a postwar Eastern Europe with a significantly diminished and economically ravaged Jewish community that will not be able to sustain the type of social, cultural and economic cohesiveness that had underpinned the vision of Jewish diaspora nationalism before the war. As he put it in his June 1943 memo, "the number of Jews left in Europe after the war ... will be so small that all of them will be needed for the up-building of either European Jewry or the Yishuv."[125]

It was not only the prospects of a significantly diminished Jewish population, however, that prompted Robinson to reject minority rights. Equally significant for him was what he termed

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[124] Joseph B. Schechtman, who will be discussed below, describes the condition of the overflow of reports from Europe and urged Jewish groups to remain circumspect in publishing further reports. The quotes above appear in his piece as examples of indifference to the Jewish tragedy in the face of the excessive volume of reporting. See Joseph B. Schechtman, "More Circumspection!," *Zionews*, Vol IV 23-24, February 28, 1943, p. 16-18. For studies on reportage on the Holocaust in the Jewish and general press see Yosef Gorny, *The Jewish Press and the Holocaust, 1939–1945: Palestine, Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) as well as Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust,* 1933-1945 (New York: The Free Press, 1986).

[125] Robinson, "Minority Rights as Part of Our Peace Program."

"the current process of the homogenization of the European state units." Robinson, as we have

seen, was well aware of the plans of the Polish and Czech governments in exile to prevent the

reintegration of a significant portion of their Jewish population after the war. In 1942 he in fact

noted that even the expulsion of German minorities by these states after the war would be

detrimental for the Jews. "Imagine a Europe without German minorities and reorganized on a

very strong basis of transfer of population, which is now in the line of development," he

observed, "…I am very strongly afraid that the reorganization of Europe means also the creation

of homogenous units which means also that we will be the only minority."[126] Under such

conditions, he warned, it may be impossible to expect a restoration of international minority

protection after the war. Moreover, over the course of 1942 Robinson gained first-hand and

detailed knowledge on the extent of population transfers already carried out under Nazi-rule: he

realized early on that population transfers was not just a postwar vision but in fact a reality

across Axis-occupied Europe. Earlier that year he had commissioned Joseph Schechtman, a

Zionist revisionist activist and a close-aide of Jabotinsky, to write a three-volume study on the

history of population transfers with emphasis on the years 1939 to 1942. Schechtman was a

peculiar choice for this task: though he served as Jabotinsky's de-facto ambassador in Poland

between 1936-1939 and expert on the Zionist Revisionist 'Evacuation plan', he had not

established himself at the time as a scholar of European population transfers.[127] Robinson's

decision to hire him for this task might indicate Robinson's growing ideological affinity with

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[126] Institute of Jewish Affairs Committee Meeting, March 21, 1942, WJC Papers, C95 16.

[127] Schechtman's support for population transfers during and after the war is the subject of growing scholarship, see for example Antonio Ferrara, "Eugene Kulischer, Joseph Schechtman and the Historiography of European Forced Migrations," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 46 no. 4 (October 2011), 715-740; Yfaat Weiss, "Ethnic Cleansing, Memory and Property – Europe, Israel/Palestine 1944-1948," *Juedische Geschichte als Allgemeine Geschichte* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), p. 158-188 and Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the League of Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 104-148.

some of the tenets of the Zionist Revisionist position. Arriving in New York as a refugee in late 1941, Schechtman quickly became part of the Jewish postwar planning scene and engaged in writing the study. Over the course of 1942 Schechtman had sent Robinson parts of his research, which detailed the large-scale process of transfers that had taken place in Europe from the start of the war. By late 1942 Robinson already had a clear and over-arching picture of the extent of population movements in Europe – it is important to note that this knowledge was not widely available at the time, as Schechtman's study was the first and most detailed on the topic.[128] As Robinson told his students in his lectures on "National Minorities in Europe" he delivered as a research fellow at Columbia University in the course of 1943 and 1944, from the start of the war the ethnic make-up of Eastern Europe had radically transformed. The German minority had been transferred almost in its entirety from South Tyrol, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. Fewer numbers of Germans were also transferred from Transylvania, Bosnia, Croatia and the Caucasus. Hundreds of thousands of Poles from western Poland were transferred by the Nazis to central and eastern Poland. Romania and Hungary absorbed many of their nationals who evacuated territories annexed by the Soviet Union. And at the same time, previously multinational states such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia were dismantled, and ethnically homogenous states were created in parts of their former territories such as Slovakia and Croatia.[129] When Robinson thus spoke in 1942 on the "current process of the homogenization of the European state unit," he was

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[128] Schechtman began writing his study in late 1941, after his arrival in New-York, and may have started gathering materials for it while still in Europe. Another prominent study on wartime population movements was written shortly thereafter by Eugene M. Kulischer, a Russian born German-educated expert on demography. During the war Schechtman and Kulischer became the leading authorities on population transfers in Europe, working in different capacities for Roosevelt's secret M-project and later for the Office for Strategic Services and collaborating in the Schechtman founded Research Bureau on Population Movements. For Kulischer's wartime studies on migration see Eugene M. Kulischer, *The Displacement of Populations in Europe* (Montreal: The International Labor Office, 1943) as well as Kulischer, *Jewish Migrations: Past Experiences and Postwar Prospects* (New York: Research Institute on Peace and Postwar Problems of the American Jewish Committee, 1943). On the relationship between the two see Ferrara, "Eugene Kulischer, Joseph Schechtman," p. 719.

[129] Jacob Robinson, National Minorities in Europe. Columbia University, training in International Administration. WJC Papers, C15 11.

referring not only to the growing legitimacy of population transfers as a principle for postwar

organization but also to the very fact that the minority group as an element of European national

life was fast disappearing in reality throughout Axis-occupied Europe. "The Jews in Europe have

lost their natural allies – the other minorities," he wrote in 1944. "There are today, and will be

after the war, practically no minorities in Europe. Measures, from which we profited, which were

adopted to solve the problem, will no longer be considered necessary."[130]

Robinson was not the only proponent of diaspora nationalism who lamented the demise

of the vision of Jewish national rights in Eastern Europe as he observed the radical demographic

changes in the region. Similarly to Robinson, Letschinsky too had written extensively during the

war on how postwar population transfers in Eastern Europe would bring about the demise of

Jewish minority rights. Letschinsky began his career as a committed Yiddish Marxist nationalist,

an advocate of Jewish autonomism and territorialism - but in the 1930s increasingly gravitated

toward Zionism.[131] His wartime essays reflected his growing conviction that Jewish autonomism

in Eastern Europe had come to an end and that the center of Jewish life after the war will have to

be rebuilt primarily in Palestine. Already in March 1941 Letschinsky declared "one thing is clear

and that is the most important thing for us: the minority question had disappeared from politics.

It had almost vanished from the minds of political thinkers and planners." "The war," he argued,

"will end with massive popualtion transfers – states would become ethnically homogenous."[132]

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[130] Robinson, "Minority Rights as Part of Our Peace Program."

[131] For more on Letschinsky see Gennady Estraikh, "Jacob Lestschinsky: A Yiddishist Dreamer and Social Scientist," *Science in Context* 20 (2) 2007, 215-237 ; Gur Alroey, "Demographers in the Service of the Nation: Liebmann Hersch, Jacob Lestchinsky, and the Early Study of Jewish Migration" *Jewish History* 20 3-4 (2006), 265-282; Rachel Rojanski, "The Final Chapter in the Struggle for Cultural Autonomy: Palestine, Israel and Yiddish writers in the diaspora, 1946–1951," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 6 2 (July 2007), 185-204. See also this review by Ben-Zion Dinur on Lestchinsky's historiographical approach to Polish Jewish history, Ben-Zion Dinur, "Lestchinsky's Dark View on the Fate of Polish Jewry," *Gesher* 14 4, 18-22.

[132] Jacob Letschinsky, "Jews in the Coming Europe," *Idischer Kaempfer* March 14, 1941, 4-6 [in Yiddish].

In a 1944 essay "How Jews Will Live in Europe" Letschinsky elaborated on this observation. Letschinsky's analysis focused on how the demographic changes in Eastern Europe will completely shatter the structure of the Jewish economy and thus preclude the reconstitution of Jewish life as a minority group. Letschinsky believed that many Eastern European states – Romania, Hungary, Yugoslavia - would expel their minorities, but focused his analysis on Poland. "After the war we will have a completely ethnically homogenous Poland with one minority – the Jews, but its size will not be close to 10%, as before the war, and not close to 30% in the urban areas … but much smaller." This development, he argued, would have a profound impact on the structure of Jewish economic life. The interwar Jewish economy, he argued, was significantly based on trade within community members – the drastic depletion of the size of the Jewish popualtion after the war would mean that Jews would be much more dependent on trade with the larger economy. Yet when Jews traded with other members of the economy they enjoyed the advantage of trade with the Germans and Ukrainian minorities who regularly preferred to buy from Jews rather than from members of the ethnic majority. This situation, he noted, protected Jews from the full effects of the economic boycott in Poland. The disappearance of these minorities will make Jews far more vulnerable to such boycotts. Most importantly, these states will expel minorities as part of a larger policy of economic nationalism – and will thus not help Jews recover those professions and properties they lost during the war. Poland, he argued, will let members of the ethnic majority enjoy the spoils of the Jewish middle class.[133] This means that Jews will face an impossible task – "building their economy from the start" in an increasingly nationalist environment. As Letschinsky put it in another essay "The *Shoah* of European Jewry," after the war "we will face a fateful question" – "if Jewish life is completely

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[133] Jacob Letschinsky, "How Will Jews Live in Europe," *Davar*, 26.09.1944 [in Hebrew].

destroyed and all the roots have been uprooted … and we must build everything anew – then we must ask – where and how? If we are to be reborn again as a group, a collective, then history says the change will have to be radical."[134]

Defending Minority Rights

Robinson's 1943 call on Jewish leaders to forgo minority rights did not reflect a general shift of opinion among diaspora nationalist leaders. Indeed, in the World Jewish Congress meeting convened to discuss Robinson's recommendation many of the delegates decried Robinson's views as an unnecessary call for 'the negation of the diaspora' and as nothing short of an endorsement of the Zionist Revisionist evacuation plan of the 1930s. Goldman was particularly acerbic in his response. "I consider Dr. Robinson's whole approach wrong," he argued, "it would not only be the abandonment of the Galuth, but the ruin of Zionism." Robinson's views, Goldman charged, amounted to an endorsement of Beneš' conception – "which is more dangerous than some antisemitic ideas."[135] Unlike Robinson, Goldman argued that successful Jewish diplomacy could still result in gaining new minority rights guarantees in Eastern Europe after the war. In May 1943, just a month before Robinson drafted his memos, Goldman arranged for a meeting with Beneš – which he attended together with Wise - to get further clarifications on Beneš' position and dissuade him from his opposition to Jewish minority rights. Goldman told Beneš at the meeting that he was sorry to hear of his views on minority rights and that he finds these views hard to reconcile with his liberal credentials. Beneš replied that he had only expressed serious doubts concerning the wisdom of demanding simultaneously a Jewish state in Palestine and political minority rights in the countries where Jews live. Goldman replied that

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[134] Jacob Letschinsky, "The *Shoah* of European Jewry," *Davar,* 15.01.1943 [in Hebrew].

[135] Minutes of World Jewish Congress Peace Planning Committee Meeting, 1943. WJC Papers, C118 8.

what Jews want "is only recognition of the fact that there is a Jewish people in the world, that Jewish citizens of various states have the right to remain members of this Jewish people; that they may continue to instruct their children in the Hebrew language and in Jewish values, to display a deep interest in Palestine and in the Jewish fate everywhere". "This," Goldman concluded, "is what we mean when talking of minority rights." "Whoever told you I oppose such legitimate demands," Beneš responded, "misunderstood me."[136]

Over the course of 1944 and 1945 several other diaspora nationalist leaders rejected Robinson's position and advocated for a return to minority rights. In a 1944 essay, Laserson decried the new voices in the Jewish world – Robinson among them - that called to give up on minority rights in favor of a Jewish national program centered exclusively on Palestine. "It has now become the mode in certain circles … to combine negation of the *galut* with maximalist demands for Palestine." "The authors of this argumentation, however, forget that Zionism is rooted also in the diaspora."[137] Rejecting this view, Laserson published a detailed article outlining a program for a revamped system of minority protection after the war.[138]

Vishniak too, openly attacked Robinson's position. In a 1945 article Vishniak repeated his advocacy for minority rights after the war. Citing Robinson's 1944 article "Minorities in a Free World" in which Robinson heavily criticized minority rights, Vishniak noted his astonishment that even among the Jews - "those who are doomed to remain a minority, whatever the remodeling of the world map" – there are leaders who call to give-up on minority rights after

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[136] For the full meeting report see Leon Kubowitzki to Ernst Fischer, 24 May 1943. WJC Papers, C9 1.

[137] Max A. Laserson, "The Legal Rehabilitation of European Jews," *The Reconstructionist,* 10 4 (1944), 14.

[138] Max A. Laserson, "Minorities Problem Viewed Realistically," *New Europe* March, 1944, 25-27. See also Laserson, "Solving the Minorities Problem by Legal Means," *Journal of Legal and Political Sociology* 3 3-4 (Summer 1945), 51-68.

the war.[139] "As the failure of the League of Nations does not make international organization unnecessary," Vishniak argued, "so the abortive protection of minorities does not prove that the objectives for which it was created no longer exist."[140] Vishniak was particularly disturbed by Robinson's endorsement of the concept of human rights as a substitute for minority rights.[141] The idea of an international bill for the protection of the rights of man had become prominent in internationalist circles in the United States during the war.[142] In 1944 the American Jewish Committee publicly endorsed the idea of human rights as an organizing principle of a postwar European federation in a two-page ad in the *New-York Times*.[143] The American Jewish Committee's support for human rights was part of its broader anti-national agenda – the organization's leaders fiercely opposed a return to minority rights after the war and viewed support for individual rights as a way to obliterate "the concept of minority groups and majority groups" and the "race-state idea."[144] Though Vishniak, as other diaspora nationalist leaders,

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[139] Mark Vishniak, "The International Protection of Minorities and the International Bill of Rights" *Post- War Problems. American Labor Conference on International Affairs*, July 1945, 364.

[140] Ibid., 365-366.

[141] Robinson, "Minorities in the Free World," 453.

[142] For a recent overview of the scholarship on human rights in the 1940s and its relationship to Jewish concerns see the introduction to Nathan Kurz, "A Sphere above the Nations?": The Rise and Fall of International Jewish Human Rights Politics, 1945-1975 (Doctoral dissertation, Department of History, Yale University, 2015), 1-43. See also Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia. Human Rights in History* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 44-83; Mark Mazower, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights," *The Historical Journal* 47 (2004), 379-398.

[143] See the article by Morris Waldman, secretary of the American Jewish Committee. Waldman, "A Bill of Rights for All Nations," *New York Times Magazine*, November 19, 1944. For scholarship on wartime Jewish advocacy for human rights see James Loeffler, "The Particularist Pursuit of American Universalism: The American Jewish Committee's 1944 'Declaration on Human Rights,'" *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 1 (2014): 1–22; Loeffler, "'The Conscience of America': Human Rights, Jewish Politics, and American Foreign Policy at the 1945 United Nations San Francisco Conference," Journal of American History 100, no. 2 (2013): 401–28; Nathan Kurz, "A Sphere above the Nations,"; Rainer Huhle, "'Jewish Rights are Human Rights': Jewish Contributions and Controversies in the International Establishment of Human Rights After 1945, "in: Huhle Rainer (ed.), *Human Rights and History* (Berlin: Stiftung EVZ, 2008), 37-49.

[144] See article by Joseph Proskauer, president of the American Jewish Committee. Joseph M. Proskauer, "Comments and the Third and Fourth Statements, Pattern for Peace," *World Affairs* 107 (1944), 25-34; Waldman, "A Bill of Rights," 15. See also Morris Waldman, "Beyond 'National Self-Determination'," *Contemporary Jewish Records* 7

supported an international bill of human rights they insisted it should supplement rather than

replace the protection of the rights of groups.[145]

    Several diaspora nationalist thinkers rejected Robinson's position because they disagreed

with his analysis that the demographic changes in Europe after the war would be so radical as to

preclude a return to minority rights. Janowsky, for example, argued that Robinson's prediction of

a completely ethnically homogenous order in postwar Eastern Europe was premature. "We do

(1944), 227-238 For a Zionist critical reception of Waldman's article see Ben Halpern, "The Committee Discovers a Cure All," *Jewish Frontier*, September 1944, 32-36. Though Waldman advocated for human rights, he recognized the diminishing support for his organizations anti-national agenda among United States Jews. As he put it in a report he submitted to the American Jewish Committee's administrative committee in 1944, the public had grown skeptical of solving the problem of Jewish minorities through the old method of emancipation and now overwhelmingly espouses the "pessimistic ... anti-emancipation doctrine of political Zionism." See Report by Waldman to AJC's Administrative Committee, January 1944, American Jewish Archives, Papers of Morris Waldman, box 43.

[145] Vishniak, "The International Protection of Minorities," p. 365-6. International lawyer Hersch Lauterpacht voiced a similar point in a letter to Robinson "it is of the greatest importance that the idea of an International Bill of the Rights of Man should not be permitted to be used for the purpose or with the effect of whittling down the existing protection of Jewish rights." Indeed, Lauterpacht believed that group rights should remain part of the postwar rights regime. For more on this see Nathan Kurz, "In the Shadow of Versailles: Jewish Minority Rights at the 1946 Paris Peace Conference," *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 15 2016 (forthcoming, August 2017). Janowsky made a similar point in his commentary on the drafting of the human rights clauses in the United Nations Charter in the 1945 San Francisco Conference. The inclusion of the concept of human rights as a substitute for minority rights, Janowsky argued, constituted a "strategy of retreat" and indicates that in terms of international legal norms "we are back where we started over a century ago". The concept of minority rights had already included equality before the law, Janowsky insisted, and thus the only significant innovation of the concept of human rights was the exclusion of protections for the rights of groups. Moreover, Janowsky argued that the concept of human rights was devoid of the more elaborate mechanisms for enforcement that were established for the protection of minority rights through the League of Nations at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. See Oscar Janowsky, "The Human Rights Issue at the San Francisco Conference. Was It a Victory?" *Menorah Journal* 34 (1946), 29-55. Similarly to Janowsky, Koppel S. Pinson opposed the substitution of minority rights with human rights. Criticizing the American Jewish Committee's advocacy for human rights, he argued that while human rights is "admirable in itself" it "will be ineffective in Central and Eastern Europe, where the minority problem is more serious and, above all, where the roots of democratic life are too weak to provide concrete and material guarantees for the kind of respect for individual personality that is basic to the Anglo-American way of life." In such areas, "group controls and collectivist tendencies play a far greater role in the life of the state, and individual protection can be secured only through adequate group protection." Moreover, referring to Beneš, Pinson argued that human rights was in fact used by East Central Europe states as part of the process of justifying the expulsion of minorities and creating ethnically homogenous states. See Pinson, "Antisemitism in the Post-War World," 110 and 116-117. Raphael Lemkin too feared that the codification of human rights in international law would detract from his pursuit of the genocide convention and his efforts to protect group rights, on this see Mira Siegelberg, "Unofficial Men, Efficient Civil Servants: Raphael Lemkin in the History of International Law," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15 3, 297-316. While human rights were seen as a step backwards to some, they also, it is important to note, were seen as a great step forward for many. René Cassin, for instance, who became president of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) in 1943, saw human rights as the best means to protect Jewish rights in the postwar world and played a leading role in drafting the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and later in human rights advocacy. On Cassin see Samuel Moyn, "Rene Cassin, Human Rights and Jewish Internationalism," in: Jacques Picard, Jacques Revel, Michael P. Steinberg, Idith Zertal (eds.) Makers of Jewish Modernity (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 278-291.

not know what the composition of the population of Eastern and Central Europe will be after the war," Janowksy told Robinson in a 1942 meeting of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, "What then would be the point in stating a definite position that in all likelihood they will be homogenous?"[146] Janowsky expanded on this argument in his 1945 proposal for a federation in Eastern Europe with extensive rights for minorities, *Nationalities and National Minorities*. In his study, Janowsky carefully reconstructed Beneš' wartime statements on population transfers and argued that Beneš was not planning a wholesale deportation of minorities after the war. Rather, Janowsky insisted, Beneš was only planning for "the elimination of those Germans and Hungarians who as disloyal irredentist plotted the destruction of the Czechoslovak state."[147] This analysis led Janowsky to conclude that Eastern Europe will remain an ethnically heterogeneous region after the war with millions of members of ethnic minority groups in need of new guarantees for minority protection.[148]

Yet even some of those who agreed with Robinson's demographic analysis of postwar Eastern Europe still rejected his political conclusions. In his 1945 essay "Antisemitism in the Postwar World," historian and diaspora nationalist advocate Koppel S. Pinson carefully analyzed the plans of the Polish and Czech governments to expel minorities as well as the efforts by the Soviet-sponsored new Romanian government to deny Jews rights as a group.[149] "The tendency now seems to be," Pinson observed, "toward the elimination of national minority problems by

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[146] In a March 1942 Institute of Jewish Affairs meeting Janowsky and Robinson clashed over their predictions for the future of Europe. Robinson argued that it seemed likely that Eastern European states would become ethnically homogenous through large-scale population transfers after the war. Janowsky responded by arguing that Robinson's assessment was not based on hard facts. An ethnically homogenous European order cannot be created, Janowsky argued, "unless at the end of the war you drive [the Germans] ought en masse." See Institute of Jewish Affairs Committee Meeting, March 21, 1942, WJC Papers, C95 16.

[147] Janowsky, *Nationalities and National Minorities,* p.138.

[148] Ibid., 142.

[149] Koppel S. Pinson, "Antisemitism in the Post-War World,"

wholesale shifts and exchanges of population in order to attain national homogeneity in each of the reconstituted states."[150] "This tendency … represents to my mind one of the most serious problems for the collective Jewry of Central and Eastern Europe in the post-war world," for "no matter what transfers of population take place, the Jewish group will always remain a minority group."[151] "The record of Jewish suffering and annihilation during the past twelve years makes imperative, even more than after the last war," Pinson asserted, "provisions for the international protection of minorities."[152] Much like Pinson, Tenenbaum also shared Robinson's demographic analysis of the future of Eastern Europe but rejected the political conclusions he had reached. In his 1945 book on the Jewish future after the war, *Peace for the Jews*, Tenenbaum lamented that "there seems to be a widespread tendency to get rid of troublesome minorities altogether instead of protecting them." "Hitler rooted out some. It is proposed that others be subject to wholesale transfer." And Tenenbaum also acknowledged that in this new nationalist Europe the number of Jews has "shrunk drastically." Still, Tenenbaum asserted, "I am sure that whatever their number, Jews want to remain Jews, and the smaller the minority the stronger the need of protection. I am therefore unqualifiedly for minority rights for the Jewish people." Referring directly to Robinson, "the eminent international lawyer and writer," Tenenbaum forcefully rejected the argument that the failure of minority protection in the past should serve as a ground to prevent their reinstatement in the future.[153]

Similarly to Pinson and Tenenbaum, Polish Jewish international lawyer Raphael Lemkin also advocated for a resurrected and expanded system of minority protection after the war as he

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[150] Ibid., 108

[151] Ibid., 111.

[152] Ibid., 116.

[153] Joseph L. Tenenbaum, *Peace for the Jews* (New York: American Federation for Polish Jews, 1945), 106-107.

analyzed the ethnic transformation of Europe under Nazi rule. In his 1944 study *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Lemkin examined the methods of Nazi occupation throughout Axis-ruled Europe and coined the term 'genocide' to describe the various mechanisms by which the Nazis brought about the physical, economic, social and cultural destruction of national groups.[154] In Lemkin's view genocide was only a descriptive term but also a new legal category that would shape the future of international law for the defense of minorities and protect against the recurrence of state actions against groups.[155] As James Loeffler has recently shown, Lemkin's ideas need to be situated firmly in the context of interwar Jewish politics in Poland of the 1930s and more specifically in its Zionist, diaspora nationalist variety.[156] During this period Lemkin wrote repeatedly for Jewish papers on Jewish national affairs - penning legal advice columns on issues relating to Jewish rights for the popular Yiddish daily *Haynt* and celebrating Jewish national achievements in Palestine.[157] As Loeffler argues, after the outbreak of war and in

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[154] Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944).

[155] Ibid., 93.

[156] James Loeffler, "Cleopatra's Roots: The Polish Zionist Imprint on Raphael Lemkin's Legal Thought," paper presented in the Association for Jewish Studies 48th Annual Conference, San Diego, 2016. Loeffler's piece takes issue with the way Lemkin's relationship to his Jewish identity had been problematized in existing scholarship. To the extent that scholars engaged with Lemkin's thought on Jewish issues, they have either portrayed Lemkin as a Bundist, or, taking his later autobiographical account at face value, portrayed him as a universalist who was moved to endorse genocide not by his own experiences as a Jew in interwar Poland but rather by his obsessive fascination and compassion for the plight of minorities throughout history. Of course, scholars have carefully situated Lemkin in the context of interwar multiethnic Lwów – and its specifically Jewish-Polish-Ukrainian dynamics, but this has been often posited as the background to Lemkin's thought, rather than the specific political context he actively engaged with. See Lemkin's autobiography Raphael Lemkin, *Totally Unofficial: The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). For the main scholarship on Lemkin see Dirk Moses, "Raphael Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide." In *The Oxford Handbook on Genocide Studies*, Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (eds), 19–41 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace;* Mira Sigelberg, "Contending with the Ghosts of the Past: Raphael Lemkin and the Origins of the Genocide Convention." *Columbia Undergraduate Journal of History* 1, no. 1 (2006): 30–48; Siegelberg, "Unofficial Men,"; Phillipe Sands, *East West Street: On the Origins of "Genocide" and "Crimes against Humanity"* (New York: Knopf, 2016).

[157] My own preliminary research into Lemkin's interwar Hebrew and Yiddish writings indicates that there is a trove of materials to study for a better understanding of his intellectual legacy. While this subject exceeds the scope of this chapter, I will share a few interesting discoveries – a Hebrew daily in Palestine referred to Dr. Lemkin as an editor of a major Zionist paper in Poland between the wars and cited articles he wrote for it (I'm currently tracing the

subsequent years Lemkin sought to hide his interwar engagement with Zionist politics, presumably in order to prevent his advocacy for genocide from being tainted by the claim of partisan Jewish politics. Yet a careful reading of *Axis Rule* indicates that during the war Lemkin remained deeply informed and engaged with the specifically Jewish debates on the postwar order. In the chapter in which Lemkin firsts introduced the concept of genocide, he argued that what differentiates genocide from previous similar legal conceptions such as 'denationalization' is the fact that genocide concern not only the cultural erasure of a national pattern of a group but also the "physical decline and even destruction of the population involved".[158] In light of this observation it is important to note that the section on physical destruction in the chapter on genocide is based extensively on writings by Robinson and the Institute of Jewish Affairs. In the three page section, Lemkin cites two of the Institute's publications a total of four times – *Starvation over Europe* and *Hitler's Ten Years War on the Jews,* in which, as we have already seen, Robinson had first concluded that three million Jews had been exterminated in Europe.[159] Lemkin notes that the figures quoted in the section on physical destruction were taken from the Institute's publications and extends his gratitude to the Institute for its permission to use this information. Moreover, in the body of the text Lemkin acknowledges that his estimate of the number of Jews killed in organized Nazi murders – 1,702,500 – is based on the calculations of

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paper), another article referred to Lemkin as a quasi-celebrity in the interwar Polish Jewish community famous for providing legal advice. Moreover, another Hebrew daily had cited the title of a lecture Lemkin had delivered on the renowkn Hebrew poet Hayim Nahman Bialik. While I could not trace yet any further information on the lecture, I am eager to know – what did Lemkin have to say on Bialik's graphic depiction of the violence of the Kisheniv pogrom?

[158] Lemkin, *Axis Rule,* p. 80.

[159] Brois Schub (ed), *Starvation over Europe: (made in Germany) a documented Record* (New York: Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1943) and Institute of Jewish Affairs, *Hitler's Ten Years War.*

the Institute.[160] From these scattered pieces of evidence it seems reasonable to conclude that Lemkin was both deeply familiar with the work of the Institute and that his conception of genocide as a form of physical destruction owed in part to Robinson's early formulation of the magnitude of Jewish destruction. This reading of *Axis Rule* may help understand a rather obtuse letter Lemkin sent Robinson in 1946. Urging Robinson to include the concept of genocide in the Institute's proposal for 1946 Paris Peace Conference, Lemkin observed that he does not need to convince Robinson of the necessity of promoting genocide "since you [i.e., Robinson] have been the great inspiration for genocide."[161] Still, and despite the affinity between Robinson's and Lemkin's similar understanding of the radical ethnic transformation in Europe, the visions they advocated for the future remained radically different.

The Ghost of Minority Rights

The debate among Jewish leaders over the future of minority rights did not reach a conclusion during the war. In fact, as Jewish leaders – Robinson among them - prepared for the 1946 Paris Conference, they still laid out demands for new minority rights guarantees. The 1946 Paris Conference was convened by the Allied victors as part of the process of settling peace treaties with Germany's wartime allies – Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Italy, countries that at the time were home to over 700,000 Jewish survivors. From the very start the Paris conference appeared as only a vague shadow of the peace conference of 1919. The high idealism and internationalist sentiments of the statesmen in Versailles was replaced by the growing divisions of the early Cold War between the 'Western' and 'Eastern' blocs. The conference organizers

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[160] Lemkin, *Axis Rule*, 87-90.

[161] Memorandum and letter by Raphael Lemkin to Jacob Robinson, 28 August 1946, WJC Papers C14 21.

even deliberately omitted the term 'peace' from its title to avoid giving the impression the conference was to design a new political order in the continent.[162]

The conference took place in an atmosphere of deep despair among Jewish leaders over the prospects of reconstructing Jewish life in Eastern Europe. A series of pogroms in Poland prompted tens of thousands of Jews to flee the country to Displaced Persons in Germany. Jewish flight from Poland reached its apogee in June that year following the Kielce pogrom - just weeks ahead of the first sessions of the conference.[163] In Romania and Hungary hundreds of thousands of Jewish survivors lived in dire economic straights. "The most outstanding feature of Jewish life in the former satellite countries," Robinson observed in 1946, "is the lack of their reintegration in the economic life of the country from which they were almost totally eradicated…" "The reason is not the precarious economic situation in the country concerned …," Robinson argued, but "the insufficient measures taken by the governments to restore to Jews their properties, rights and interests, as well as their positions they were robbed of".[164] Moreover, some 40 percent of the 400,000 surviving Jews in Romania were still considered aliens for various legal reasons and a new Romanian law of nationality specifically precluded recognizing Jews as a national

[162] Harold Nicolson, "Peacemaking at Paris: Success, Failure or Farce?," *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 2 (1947). The scholarship on the 1946 Paris Conference remains limited and there is to my knowledge no comprehensive archival-based study of the events of the conference. For a study of the Jewish position in the conference see Kurz, "A Sphere Above the Nations?" For a study by one of the conference participants see Stephen D. Kertesz, *The Last European Peace Conference, Paris, 1946: Conflict of Values* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985).

[163] Daniel Gerard Cohen, *In War's Wake*, 128. For recent overviews of Jewish life in Europe in the immediate postwar years see the essays in Françoise S. Ouzan and Manfred Gerstenfeld (eds.), *Postwar Jewish Displacement and Rebirth, 1945-1967* (London: Brill, 2014); David Bankier (ed)., *The Jews are Coming Back: The Return of the Jews to Their Countries of Origin After WWII* (London: Berghan Books, 2005) as well as David Engel, *Between Liberation and Flight: Holocaust Survivors in Poland and the Struggle of Leadership, 1944-1946* (Tel-Aviv, 1996); Yehuda Bauer, *Out of the Ashes: The Impact of American Jews on Post-Holocaust European Jewry* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1989)

[164] Jacob Robinson, "What can be achieved in the Peace Conference in Jewish Matters?" Memorandum, July 29, 1946, WJC Papers 98 26. On the dire economic conditions of Romanian Jewry see also Clara Bloom, "Romanian Jewry Facing Two Fronts. A Letter from Bucharest," *Davar* 22.07.1946 [in Hebrew]. See also "A Harrowing Account of Our Remnants in Europe," *Davar* 04.03.1945 [in Hebrew].

minority.[165] At the same time, the prospects for Jewish immigration to Palestine were grim, as

Britain remained committed to keeping the gates of Palestine closed. In late June, as Jewish

representatives were making their way to Paris, the British mandatory authorities cracked down

on the Jewish political leadership in Palestine, arresting prominent leaders of the Jewish Agency

as well as thousands of others involved in the *Yishuv* government.[166]

In this political climate representatives of nine Jewish organizations from the United

States, Britain, France and South Africa arrived in Paris in the early summer to pursue the Jewish

case.[167] Though in past international conferences Jewish organizations repeatedly clashed over

ideological divisions – reflecting the tensions between an 'assimilationist' and 'nationalist'

agendas, in Paris Jewish groups agreed to work in unity and formulate a common set of

demands. As Robinson observed, Jewish unity at the conference reflected a radically new

"phenomena of Jewish life in the postwar period … the tremendous reduction of points of

difference among various Jewish groups." [168] Over the course of July and August Jewish groups

formulated their proposed amendments to the treaties with Italy, Romania, Hungary and

Bulgaria. The main documents they drafted dealt with the future of Romania and Hungary and

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[165] See Zacharia Schuster, *The Paris Peace Conference* (booklet) (New York: American Jewish Committee Institute on Peace and Postwar Problems, 1947) as well as "The Romanian Nationality Law and the Jews," *Davar* 20.05.1945 [in Hebrew]. For the World Jewish Congress discussions on the postwar conditions of Hungarian Jewry see World Jewish Congress, "Meeting of the WJC in Paris (evening)," August 12, 1946, WJC papers, C98 24.

[166] On 'Operation Agatha' which had been described in Zionist historiography as 'The Black Saturday' see Joseph Heller, "From 'The Black Saturday' to the Partition Proposal: The Summer of 1946 as a Turning Point in Zionist Policy," *Zion*, 3 4 (1977), 314-361.

[167] The Jewish position in the conference was recently carefully studied in Nathan Kurz' dissertation and forthcoming article. See Kurz, "A Sphere Above the Nations?" as well as Kurz, "In the Shadow of Versailles". The following Jewish organizations were represented in Paris: the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Conference, Agudat Israel, Alliance Israélite Universelle, Anglo-Jewish Association, South African Jewish Board of Deputies, American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Conference, and Conseil Représentatif des Juifs de France.

[168] Jacob Robinson, Interim Report on Our activities at the Peace Conference September 11 and 13 1946, WJC Papers, C133 8.

laid out demands for the protection of human rights, for the restitution of and indemnification for lost Jewish property and for new minority rights guarantees. All of these provisions were aimed at providing the legal basis for restoring Jewish collective rights. Even the demand for human rights was framed in collectivist terms. The human rights article called for freedom of religious practice, for ensuring individuals have a right to pursue any economic activity and for the right of all individuals to "preserve and develop their cultural entity."[169] As one of the Jewish delegates later reminisced, the human rights clause was formulated with the experience of Polish Jewry in the 1930s in mind. The amendment on religious practice was designed to address issues such as the ban on Jewish religious slaughter while the amendment on freedom of economic activity was proposed to address the long history of economic boycotts on Jews.[170]

Yet unlike Jewish success in guaranteeing Jewish rights at Paris Peace Conference of 1919, in 1946 Jewish leaders did not even get a chance to officially voice their demands. The Paris conference precluded the participation of non-state actors. To submit their demands for consideration Jewish leaders were required to find a state that would act as a sponsor and distribute their proposed amendments. In late August Jewish leaders "knocked on every door" and "begged before every delegation" in the hope of finding a sponsor - but no state agreed.[171] The deadline for submitting the amendments passed on August 28 and the Jewish proposal was left completely off the conference agenda. Only a few weeks later did specifically Jewish interests appear on the agenda as Britain and the United States proposed three amendments concerned with the Jewish equality, compensation and restitution in Hungary, Romania and

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[169] "Statements Submitted to the Paris Peace Conference," August 20, 1946. WJC Papers, B144 17.

[170] Jacob Flaiszer, "The Jewish Question in the 1946 Paris Peace Conference," *Metzuda* 5 6 1947-1948, 166 [in Hebrew].

[171] Ibid., 188.

Bulgaria. Though the word Jew did not specifically appear in those amendments, they were widely referred to at the conference as the "Jewish clauses". Members of the Eastern Block and many Jewish leaders viewed them as a half-hearted concession by Britain aimed primarily at deflecting accusations against its policies in Palestine.[172] After some resistance by the Soviet delegation, a revised form of these amendments was ultimately inserted into the treaties. These three amendments became the sole achievements of Jewish groups at the conference. An expanded article on human rights in the treaties with Romania and Hungary that specifically outlawed racial and religious discrimination (but did not include any of the collective rights guarantees Jewish groups originally clamored for); a clause promising compensation for lost property (but which did not specify the amount of the compensation. Jewish groups demanded that the term 'full compensation' be used); and a clause designating the transfer of heirless property to local organizations for the purpose of relief and rehabilitation.[173]

Robinson arrived at the conference in late July and during his stay in Paris wrote several detailed memoranda. In late August Robinson noted his great dismay at the fact that Jewish groups did not even gain the opportunity to officially present their demands to the Allies. "The first impression gained by the study of the more than 200 amendments is the distressing realization of the complete absence of the slightest note taken by the members of the delegations of our numerous memoranda." "Not only is the word 'Jew' taboo," he observed, "but even the camouflaged provisions which could have been interpreted as concerned with the Jews, also are missing."[174] As Robinson argued, most striking in its absence was any reference to the protection

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[172] Schuster, *The Paris Peace Conference,* 14-15 and 20.

[173] Ibid., 18-19 as well as "Statements Submitted to the Paris Peace Conference," August 20, 1946. WJC Papers, B144 17.

[174] Jacob Robinson, "Amendments submitted by the delegation to the Paris Conference," 30/8/1946, WJC Papers C98 26.

of collective rights of minorities. "The general dislike of a renewal of the experiment of the protection of minorities … has been carried to its most radical consequences."[175] Indeed, as he remarked just over a week later "one of the greatest nightmares of all this conference is the ghost of the factually defunct protection of minorities. The word 'minority' is taboo - nothing can be said in its favor."[176] The only proposed provisions dealing with minorities in the treaties, Robinson observed, were those concerned with regulating the transfer of ethnic Hungarians from Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.[177] This sentiment of disdain toward minority protection was voiced at the same time as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia were expelling millions of members of minority groups, primarily ethnic Germans, to their purported ethnic 'homelands' with Allied support. As one Jewish delegate at the conference observed, the conference had taken place against the backdrop of "mass expulsions, population exchanges, and boundary alterations … millions of Germans in Poland and Czechoslovakia had been expelled."[178] "The tragedy of population transfers which accompanies the making of peace," Vishniak declared, "surpasses – both in scope and in intensity – that of the transfers during the war." Jews too, Vishniak noted, had become victims of these expulsion – the Czechoslovak government demanded that Jews either be "removed to Palestine, or else cease being a Jewish minority and assimilate themselves completely with the dominant majority." [179] Indeed, Vishniak

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[175] Ibid.

[176] Jacob Robinson "Interim Report on Our Activities at the Peace Conference September 11 and 13 1946," WJC Papers C133 8.

[177] Robinson, "Amendments Submitted."

[178] Schuster, *The Paris Peace Conference*, 4.

[179] Mark Vishniak, Review of "European Population Transfers 1939-1945" *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 9 2 (1947), 178-180. In March 1945 the Czechoslovak government stated publicly that it would not provide recognition for Jews as a minority group and that it would support the emigration efforts of national Jews from Czechoslovakia. Moreover, the Czechoslovak government refused to naturalize Jewish refugees who lived in the region of Carpatho-Ruthenia which belonged to Czechoslovakia before the war and had been seized by the Soviet Union after the war.

lamented how empty was the promise Masaryk had given Weinreich in 1942 - that Jews do not form part of the "very hazy plans" for postwar population transfers.[180] Jewish delegates at the conference were thus placed in a precarious situation, Robinson argued, because speaking for the cause of minorities under such circumstances became tantamount to speaking on behalf of the defeated, the Germans.[181]

The failure of Jewish groups to achieve new guarantees for minority protection at the conference solidified Robinson's conviction that the era of Jewish diaspora nationalism has come to an end. In January 1945 Robinson repeated this conviction in his response to a proposal for an English translation of Simon Dubnow's tract *Letters on the Old and New Judaism* in which the latter expounded his vision of Jewish autonomism. "The importance of Dubnow's 'prescriptions' to solve the Jewish problem," Robinson argued, "has greatly vanished." "The remaining Jewish communities in the surviving traditional centers of Jewish settlement … will consider a political program not adjusted to the radically changed conditions of a new Jewish world as wholly unrealistic and harmful." Indeed, as Robinson further noted, the Jews of postwar Europe have become "dwarf communities" who now inhibit regimes "which leave no place for autonomous

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See "Jews Will No Longer Be a National Minority in Czechoslovakia; Will Have Equal Rights," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, March 13, 1945. For a report by another contemporary observer see Zacharia Schuster, "Must Jews Quit Europe?" *Commentary*, 1 (1945), 9-16. For more on the denial of group recognition to Jews by the Czechoslovak government after the war, as well as its support for Jewish emigration see Kateřina Čapková, "Dilemmas of Minority Politics: Jewish Migrants in Postwar Czechoslovakia and Poland," in *Postwar Jewish Displacement*, 63-75; Lanciek, *Czechs, Slovaks and the Jews*, 116-145.

[180] Vishniak's comments raise a large historical question – to what extent were Jews actually victims of postwar population transfers in Eastern Europe? This question exceeds the scope of this paper but ought to be studied in detail from a transnational perspective, comparing the experiences of Jews in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Hungary. In the context of this chapter I would like to remark that scholarship on postwar repatriation of Jews from the Soviet Union increasingly reads this story as part of Soviet postwar homogenization policies in Eastern Europe. Scholars look at the trajectory of these repatriates – from the interior of the Soviet Union, to Poland, to DP camps and ultimately to Palestine – as part of a deliberate Soviet policy in support of Jewish statehood, in line with its general support for a nationally homogenous order in Eastern Europe. For a recent take on this issue see Albert Kaganovitch, "Stalin's Great Power Politics, the Return of Jewish Refugees to Poland, and Continued Migration to Palestine, 1944–1946," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 26 1 (Spring 2012), 59–94.

[181] Jacob Robinson, "Interim Report Delivered by Jacob Robinson on Activities at the Peace Conference", September 11, 1946, WJC Papers, C133 8.

public law bodies for religious or national groups."[182] As Robinson later explained, he decided to continue to press for minority rights at the conference not because he believed Jewish groups could in fact secure new collective guarantees in the radically new postwar reality in the region, but because he felt a moral obligation to give the Jewish agenda a strong voice at the conference. "We always took a very realistic view of the possibilities at this juncture of international relations. Yet, though fully anticipating meager results, we decided to go on, to continue to fight." "Why did we do so? … because of our general approach to the Jewish problem as an international one, which commits us to a diplomacy of being present. Our absence from Paris would certainly have been interpreted as meaning that we had given up this basic philosophy in favor of the purely domestic concept of the numerous Jewish problems."[183]

While Robinson had not been surprised by the outcome of the conference, he still acknowledged the overwhelming "feeling of frustration" that dominated "the mood of our group in Paris." "The moral standards in Paris," he observed, "are the lowest I have ever witnessed or read about."[184] The purpose of the conference, Robinson concluded, was "either to evade or avoid a solution."[185] In early September, humiliated by the disregard for the their advocacy, Jewish groups sent a letter of protestation to the Allies in which they expressed their hope that "the statesmen assembled in Paris … are not indifferent to the great tragedy that has overwhelmed the Jews in Europe and of the need for a solution to the problems confronting them."[186] "The special sufferings of the Jewish people at the hands of Hitler, their exposed

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[182] Jacob Robinson to Alex Easterman, June 1, 1945, WJC Papers, C12 1.

[183] Robinson, "Interim Report on Our Activities"

[184] Ibid.

[185] Robinson, "Interim Report Delivered by Jacob Robinson"

[186] Robinson, "Interim Report on Our Activities"

position as a minority in each of the European countries are well-known," noted a Jewish

delegate in his report on the conference, "but it is not apparent that any nation represented in

Paris is ready to take diplomatic action … to protect the Jews who will continue to remain in

Europe."[187] "The most casual observer at the Paris Peace Conference," observed Baron, who

attended a part of the conference, "could not but help noticing the pitiful role played by Jewish

representatives."[188] "The fact that at the Paris peace conference of 1946 the term 'human rights'

was used instead of 'minority rights' of the peace conference of 1919," another Jewish delegated

registered his disappointment, "indicates the radical change that has taken place in the European

situation..." The Jews, as other minorities "are no longer recognized in theory" and the minority

group as a social and political entity of European life "is fast disappearing in reality."[189] This

general mood of humiliation among Jewish delegates was most powerfully captured in an essay

by Jacob Flaiszer, a delegate of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, later to be known as the

eminent historian of totalitarianism Jacob Talmon. In his essay "The Jewish Question at the 1946

Paris Conference" Flaiszer carefully chronicled the efforts of Jewish groups in Paris and

portrayed the conference as a watershed moment in Jewish history – the end of a century-long

tradition of fighting for Jewish rights in international conferences. Comparing the failure of

Jewish delegates in Paris to their success in securing guarantees for minority rights in Versailles,

Flaiszer declared that "the morality of the world had greatly declined between 1919 and 1946." It

was astonishing, he argued, that following the greatest tragedy Jews had ever endured the leaders

of the world proved to be least receptive to new demands for Jewish rights. His essay was replete

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[187] Saul hays, "Jewish Representation at the Peace Conference in Paris," December 5, 1946 WJC papers, C99 2, p. 2.

[188] Salo W. Baron, "The Final Stages of Jewish Emancipation," unpublished essay (written in late 1946 or early 1947), Salo W. Baron Papers, box 412 folder 5.

[189] Schuster, *The Paris Peace Conference*, p. 2.

with powerful emotional epithets to describe the experience of Jewish delegates in Paris: the

events in Paris were "disgraceful", "shameful", marked by constant humiliating "bitter

disappointments" and revealing "cruel" truths about the world. Flaiszer acknowledged that the

Jewish failure at the conference was a product of a new and increasingly nationalist postwar

order. "Against all the best wishes," he lamented, "the sovereign state had not been rejected as

the organizing principle of international life." "How can one demand minority rights … at a

time in which the expulsion of millions from their homes ... has become an accepted solution to

the minority problem?" Flaiszer's piece was ultimately constructed as a narrative of a collective

political transformation: from a life-long commitment to fighting for Jewish rights in Europe to

an endorsement of nation-state Zionism as the only solution for the Jewish future. Facing their

failure at the conference and a radically new nationalist reality across Europe, Flaiszer

concluded, "Jewish representatives in Paris felt in every fiber of their bones the desire of their

generation for a political status, for a place among the nations – for a state."[190]

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[190] Flaiszer, "The Jewish Question," 164-165, 192-193. It is important to emphasize two points with regard to Flaiszer's account of the events in Paris. First, Flaiszer was a devout Zionist long before the conference. As Arie Dubnov has shown in an article on Talmon's thought, Flaiszer was drawn to Ha'shomer Ha'tzair, a Zionist socialist youth movement, in his teens. In 1934 he immigrated to Palestine to study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Shortly before the war broke out, Flaiszer left for Paris to begin his PhD at the Sorbonne, but was forced to flee to Britain after the Nazi occupation of France. In wartime London he molded friendships with leading Zionist figures such as Chaim Weizmann and Louis Namier and in this period began his work for the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Still, it seems that the war did have an impact on his attitude toward Zionism. After the war Flaiszer shed his Polish-"diasporic" family name in favor of the Hebrew biblical "Talmon". For a biographical overview of Talmon's life see Dubnov, "Priest of Jester? Jacob L. Talmon (1916-1980) On History and Intellectual Engagement," *History of European Ideas* 34 2 (June 2008), 133-145. On Talmon's relationship to Zionism, based primarily on post-1945 sources, see Ezra Mendelsohn, "Jacob Talmon between Good and Bad Nationalism," *History of European Ideas* 34 2 (June 2008), 197-205. Second, Flaiszer's overtly critical account of the conference in his Hebrew essay contrasted with a more complex and positive assessment in both an official report he wrote immediately after the conference and in a detailed study of the conference he completed for the Committee of Jewish Organizations that worked in Paris. In both these reports Flaiszer described the clauses regarding compensation and heirless Jewish property as significant achievements. See Flaiszer, "The Jewish Case at the Paris Peace Conference," October 20, 1946, WJC papers B63 16 as well as Flaiszer *The Jewish Case at the Paris Peace Conference. Prepared on behalf of the Working Committee of Jewish Organizations* (draft manuscript available at the Bernard Bernstein Papers, the Truman library.) In 1970 Flaiszer re-published his Hebrew essay in the journal *Gesher* of the World Jewish Congress as part of a volume dedicated to the history of Jewish efforts to protect their rights. The re-published essay was signed with his new family name 'Talmon'. Flaiszer prefaced the article by noting that he decided not to a change a word in the article as to allow the readers to "empathize with the feelings and expectations of the activists

in 1946." See Jacob L. Talmon, "The Jewish Question at the Peace Conference in 1946," *Gesher* XVI (September 1970), 39–64 [in Hebrew].

Chapter Two

'The Arabs will have to Make Room': Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky and Population Transfers between Eastern Europe and Palestine

In November 1939 Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky, founder and leader of the right-wing Zionist Revisionist movement, penned a handwritten note in which he laid out his vision for the future of Jews after the war. Written from London just one month after the Nazi invasion of Poland, Jabotinsky's note reflected his view that the interwar order in Eastern Europe had been irrecoverably shattered and will have to be built anew after the war. In Jabotinsky's radical assessment there would remain practically no ethnic minorities in the region after the war. Ten to twenty millions members of European minority groups would be forced to evacuate form their prewar homes and those who choose to remain would have to assimilate to the majority culture. Millions of Jewish refugees would have to be transferred to Palestine after the war. As for the Arab population in Palestine, Jabotinsky argued, "they will have to make room" for the Jews and leave, perhaps to Saudi Arabia or Iraq with the support of an international loan. "If Balts may be moved" Jabotinsky argued, referring to a population exchange agreement between Hitler and Stalin for the resettlement of Baltic Germans in occupied Poland, "Palestinian Arabs certainly" may be relocated too. Jabotinsky's model for his proposed ethnic transformation of Palestine was the 1923 Greek-Turkish population exchange agreement that sanctioned the transfers of some 1.5 million Orthodox Greeks from Turkey and about half a million Muslims from Greece, many of whom had been displaced during the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922). Jabotinsky took notes from an authoritative study on the agreement written by a renowned expert on the question of refugees, John Hope Simpson. Jabotinsky copied from the study a diagram describing how Greece had become ethnically homogenous in the aftermath of the agreement as well as details

about its financial stipulations. Jabotinsky copied at length only one paragraph from the study, revealing how favorably he viewed the idea of population transfers and the similarities he drew between Greece and what he hoped would be a future Jewish state in Palestine:

> "The exchange of populations, though at the time it caused infinite misery and was an element of crisis for Greece, at least resulted in the solution of a difficult political situation. … It has unquestionably strengthened the Greek state by the influx of a stable and hard working element, whose ideas and ideals are Greek; moreover, the disappearance of irritating minority questions has made it possible for Greece to live on good and even friendly terms with her ancient enemies."[191]

Jabotinsky's 1939 note is an astonishing document for it is radically at odds with his lifetime political activism and thought. Indeed, though Jabotinsky was repeatedly derided in his lifetime as a fascist and right-wing radical, "perhaps the most controversial public figure in the Jewish life of his day," as Michael Stanislawski put it, he had been staunchly committed to the protection of the rights of minorities in Europe and Palestine throughout his career.[192] Jabotinsky was keenly aware of the contrast between his public image as a radical nationalist and his steadfast commitment to the principles of minority protection. "This writer, as some readers may have heard, is a chauvinist and an extremist and generally a political cannibal," he cynically

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[191] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Population Exchanges – Notes in Jabotinsky's Handwriting, in English" Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky Papers (Hereafter: JP), Jabotinsky Institute Tel-Aviv, Alef-1-2/12. For Simpson's study see, Sir John Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem. Report of A Survey* (London: Oxford University Press, Issued under the Auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs), p. 22.

[192] Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin De Siècle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 119.

noted in a 1930 essay, "but he can produce documentary evidence of always having been a staunch adherent of the bi-national, even the multi-national state idea."[193]

Indeed, from the very first days of his political engagement with Zionism and until the late 1930s, Jabotinsky was deeply invested in the politics of minority rights. Jabotinsky helped draft the 1905 Helsingfors program that for the first time placed the fight for collective rights for Jews in the Russian Empire at the center of the political agenda of Russian Zionists.[194] In the years preceding the First World War, Jabotinsky was consumed by the struggle of minorities for national rights within Europe's multiethnic empires. Jabotinsky wrote a dissertation on Austrian socialist Karl Renner's concept of national cultural autonomy. He carefully followed and reported as a journalist on Ottoman nationalities policy during several trips to Constantinople following the 1908 Young Turk revolution.[195] And he consistently advocated for the cause of Jewish as well as Ukrainian national autonomy within the Russian Empire.[196] Jabotinsky remained committed to the cause of minority rights well into the interwar years and supported the League of Nations' system of minority protection. In one 1928 essay he urged Jews not to give up on the "minorities dream" despite the various failures of international guarantees for

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[193] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Bi-National Palestine," Jabotinsky Papers, Jabotinsky Institute, Alef-1-83/7.

[194] On Jabotinsky's role in drafting the Helsingfors program see Joseph Goldstein, "Jabotinsky and Jewish Autonomy in the Diaspora," *Studies in Zionism* 7, no. 2 (1986), 231.

[195] Vladimir Jabotinsky, *Turkey and the War* (London: Unwin, 1917).

[196] Jabotinsky's writings on autonomism have been recently translated again from the Russian and published in Hebrew, see Arye Naor (editor), *Zeev Jabotinsky. Ideological Writings. Vol 1: Liberal Nationalism* (Tel-Aviv: Jabotinsky Institute, 2013), p. 140-242. On Jabotinsky's support for autonomism see also the introduction by Naor, p. 11-56 as well as Joseph Goldstein, "Jabotinsky and Jewish Autonomy," 219–32. On Jabotinsky's support for Ukrainian nationalism see Israel Kleiner, *From Nationalism to Universalism: Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky and the Ukrainian Question* (Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2000). See also Schindler's comprehensive review of Jabotinsky's relationship with Ukrainain nationalism, Collin Schindler, "Jabotinsky and Ukrainian nationalism: A Reinterpretation," *East European Jewish Affairs* 31 2 122-131.

minority rights.[197] And even as Jabotinsky famously advocated for the mass evacuation of Jews

from Eastern Europe in the mid-1930s, he also insisted on continuing the fight for Jewish

equality in Europe.

Jabotinsky's commitment to minority rights in Europe also significantly shaped his

outlook on the future of Palestine. From 1917 until the outbreak of the Second World War,

Jabotinsky advocated repeatedly in favor of a state organized on the basis of Jewish-Arab power

sharing that would epitomize the philosophy of minority rights Jews were clamoring for in

Eastern Europe. Moreover, Jabotinsky insisted time and again that under no circumstances would

Jews support or encourage the expulsion of the Arab population from Palestine. Indeed, few

other Zionist leaders had written with as much passion and zeal on the rights of the Arab

population in the future Jewish state. In 1918 Jabotinsky laid out a proposal for the creation of

bi-national state in Palestine. In 1922 he proposed the establishment of a multi-confessional

Middle Eastern federation with extensive autonomy for each of its constitutive groups. In 1923

Jabotinsky worked on a similar federal plan together with Weizmann. In a proposed constitution

Jabotinsky first drafted in the early 1930s - which he prided himself on writing throughout his

life - he called for full equality, cultural autonomy and an equal share in government

administration for the Arab minority. For every Jewish minister, Jabotinsky proclaimed, there

should be an Arab deputy, and vice-versa. Both Hebrew and Arabic should be used in all official

capacities as the languages of the state. The state budget should be shared proportionally

between Jews and Arabs. A joint Arab-Jewish court should regulate the distribution of land. Jews

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[197] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "The Minorities Dream," *Haynt,* 10.4.1928 [in Yiddish]. Jabotinsky remained committed to the promise minorities protection and to the League of Nations well into the 1930s, even after many other European observers dismissed the League as a failed institution. As late as 1938 Jabotinsky referred to the League as an 'eternal' body and hoped it would emerge as a more powerful political arbiter in Europe in the future. Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Opening Speech of the 7th World Conference of the Zionist Revisionist Movement," *Unzer Welt* 6 (146), Febraury 11, 1938 [in Yiddish]. See also Amir Goldstein, *Zionism and Anti-Semitism in the Thought and Action of Ze'ev Jabotinsky* (Be'er Sheba: The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Zionism and Israel, 2015), p. 401 [in Hebrew].

and Arabs should be recognized as separate autonomous bodies that would independently regulate matters relating to culture and religion.[198]

Given Jabotinsky's staunch commitment to minority rights in Europe and Palestine, how are we to explain his 1939 – and, as we shall see, subsequent calls - for the expulsion of the Arab population from Palestine? As this chapter argues, Jabotinsky's transformation was shaped by his analysis of the future of Jews and the political order in Eastern Europe after the war. Jabotinsky predicated the emergence of a Jewish refugee problem in the millions in postwar Europe. Millions of Jews had been displaced from their homes and professions in Nazi-occupied Europe and would not be allowed to return to their homes even after an Allied victory. As a Zionist Revisionist memorandum put it, "despite the draconic measures pursued under Gestapo rule, it is not improbable that the greater part of these six million Jews will survive the end of the war, and will constitute a problem not merely for the Polish government but even more for the body responsible for reshaping Europe." [199] Eastern European states had been advocating for Jewish emigration in the 1930s and, Jabotinsky argued, would not let masses of Jews return after the war and reclaim property and professions already taken by members of the ethnic majority.

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[198] The draft constitution was republished in Vladimir Jabotinsky, *The Jewish War Front* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1940) p. 186-189. For a detailed discussion of Jabotinsky's various constitutional proposals see Yosef Gorny, *From Binational Society to Jewish State: Federal Concepts in Zionist, 1920-1990* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), p. 97-103 as well as p. 20-30. For Jabotinsky's earlier federal proposals see also Arye Naor, "Jabotinsky's Constitutional Guidelines for Israel," in eds. Avi Bareli and Pinhas Ginossar *In the Eye of the Storm: Essays on Ze'ev Jabotinsky* (Be'er Sheba: The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Zionism and Israel, 2004), 49-92. Though Jabotinsky had no qualms in referring to his vision of the future Jewish state in Palestine as bi-national it is important to note that Jabotinsky's vision differed markedly from that advocated by Brit Shalom, his contemporary advocates of bi-nationalism on the Zionist left. What distinguished between their programs however was not their vision of the constitutional structure of the future state but rather their disagreement over the question of Jewish immigration and the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine. Brit Shalom sought to reach an agreement with the Arab population on Jewish immigration and recognized that such agreement entailed Jews would remain a minority in the future bi-national state. Jabotinsky insisted that Jews first establish a majority in Palestine and only then extend equality and extensive autonomy to the Arab population.

[199] Most strikingly this memorandum was written during 1942 (!) and reflected views expressed in other venues earlier. See The Zionist Revisionist Office in Jerusalem, "Memorandum on the Jewish Problem and Palestine," Jerusalem, May 1942. JP, Gimel 6 1/9.

Indeed, during the war Jabotinsky and other Zionist Revisionist activists had been in contact with the Polish and Czech Governments in Exile in the hope that, much like during the late 1930s, they could cooperate to promote plans for the resettlement of Eastern European Jews in Palestine. The only solution to this unprecedented Jewish refugee problem, they argued, lay in the large-scale transfer of millions of Jews to Palestine within a few short years after the war - an 'Evacuation plan' on a far larger scale than he had promoted in the 1930s. In 1936 Jabotinsky advocated for the immigration 1.5 million Jews from Eastern Europe to Palestine over the course of 10 years. In early 1940 Jabotinsky insisted that two million Jews would have to be transferred to Palestine in the first year after the war alone. The resettlement of such a large Jewish population in Palestine, Jabotinsky believed, could only succeed if land and homes were made available to these refugees, and this would have to take place at the expense of the local Arab population.

Jabotinsky's shift from support for minority rights to an endorsement of population transfers was also significantly shaped by his conviction that the era of minority rights in Europe had come to an end. Jabotinsky carefully followed the disintegration of the system of minority protection in Europe in the 1930s and the growth of support among liberals and fascist alike for the idea of population transfers. On the eve of the war, commenting on a population exchange agreement between Nazi Germany and Italy, Jabotinsky argued that European states would soon attempt to solve their minority problems through a series of bilateral populations exchange agreements. The outbreak of war signaled in his view a radical acceleration of this process: the interwar Versailles order based on minority rights had been completely destroyed under Nazi occupation, and in the aftermath of the war Eastern European states would carry out large-scale transfers of minorities. The role of Zionist leaders, Jabotinsky believed, was to adjust their

political thinking to this new reality of population transfers. After Jabotinsky's death in September 1940, three of his closest associates– Benjamin Akzin, Joseph Schecthman and Eliyahu Ben-Horin – recognized their leaders' newfound support for population transfers, and envisioned themselves as an avant-garde movement that would help popularize the idea of population transfers as a solution to the problem of minorities in Eastern Europe and Palestine.

In the previous chapter we have seen how Jewish diaspora nationalist leaders lamented the demise of the vision of Jewish minority rights as they responded to the extermination of European Jewry and the ethnic transformation of Eastern Europe during the war and in its immediate aftermath. This chapter begins the second part of the dissertation focused on how Zionist leaders, responding to the same developments, abandoned the federalist and autonomist visions of Jewish-Arab power-sharing in Palestine they advocated for in the interwar years and began to envision a Jewish ethnic nation-state.

In recent years scholars have challenged the idea that during in the 1920s and 1930s Zionist leaders had been committed exclusively, or even primarily, to the establishment of a Jewish ethnic nation-state in Palestine. Scholars have shown that during the interwar period not only groups such as Brit Shalom but also prominent Zionist leaders such as David Ben-Gurion, Chaim Weizmann and Jabotinsky supported extensive federalist and autonomist plans for the future of Palestine.[200] Skeptical that Jews could achieve a significant majority in Palestine in the near future, their political visions were based on an assumption of some form of power-sharing between Jewish and Arab autonomous communities. Yet missing from scholarship is an understanding of when and why did these visions decline. When and why did Zionist leaders

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[200] Weizmann's and Ben-Gurion's federalist visions will be discussed in detail in chapter 3. For more on their visions see primarily Gorny, *From Binational Society to Jewish State,* Schumsky, "Zionism and the Nation-State," as well as the seminal study by Yehoshua Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity, 1930-1945* (London: Frank Cass, 1986), chapter 2.

stop thinking about Palestine in federalist and autonomist terms and begin to imagine a Jewish

ethnic nation-state? This chapter begins to answer this question by recovering Jabotinsky's

wartime writings. As one of the Zionist leaders who wrote most passionately and extensively on

the rights of the Arab population in Palestine, Jabotinsky's wartime embrace of population

transfers offers a particularly compelling case for examining the impact of the war on Zionist

thought. Moreover, because Jabotinsky passed away in September 1940, his case calls upon us to

pay particular attention to an important but understudied wartime period, spanning roughly

between September 1939 and late 1942 – that is, before knowledge of the extermination of

European Jews had been registered by Zionist leaders, a time in which these leaders expected

that the war will end with a Jewish refugee problem in the millions. Embracing utopian politics

in the midst of catastrophe, Zionist leaders abandoned the autonomist and federalist political

models that dominated their thinking between the wars and conceived of an ethnic nation-state

with a Jewish majority larger than they had ever before believed was possible.

Before we turn to examine the evolution of Jabotinsky's thought on population transfers,

I would like to offer a few additional historiographical remarks. The first concern the

relationship between Jabotinsky's wartime support for population transfers and his over-arching

philosophy with regard to the 'Arab question' in Palestine – "The Iron Wall." In two 1923

essays, "The Iron Wall" and "On the Morality of the Iron Wall," which constitute the

foundational texts of right-wing Zionism, Jabotinsky rejected the idea, prevalent among many

Zionist leaders, that Jews and Arabs could reach a political agreement regarding the future of

Palestine.[201] Like all native populations, Jabotinsky argued, the Arabs in Palestine will oppose

Jewish immigration and settlement so long as there would remain a sliver of hope Jews might

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[201] Both essay were originally published in Russian in in paper *Razsviet* in 1923. For an English translation see
https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/ironwall.html

give up on their designs for Palestine in the face of resistance.[202] In place of an agreement

Jabotinsky advocated for the creation of an "Iron Wall" in Palestine – a metaphor that meant

establishing a Jewish majority in the country despite Arab opposition. Once Jews constitute a

majority, Jabotinsky believed, the conflict would inevitably subside: The Arab population would

come to terms with the reality of Jewish dominance and friendly relations between the sides

would ensue. In Jabotinsky's view extensive autonomy and minority rights were thus to be

granted to the Arabs in Palestine not as part of a political settlement, but as a generous

expression of the goodwill of the future Jewish majority toward the future Arab minority.

Jabotinsky's sudden shift after the outbreak of war from support for minority rights to an

embrace of population transfers could thus be construed not as an ideological break from the past

but simply as a another political approach aimed at securing Jewish dominance in Palestine.

　　　While it is important to highlight the continuities between Jabotinsky's visions of "The

Iron Wall" and "The Arabs will have to Make Room," it is also imperative to underscore the

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[202] Despite his "hawkish" views on Jewish-Arab relations, Jabotinsky recognized that Jewish settlement will prompt the development of a strong Arab nationalist movement in opposition to Zionism. In this sense his analysis differed markedly from many members of the socialist Zionist left prominent in the *Yishuv* leadership, who at the same time as Jabotinsky wrote these essays dismissed the inevitability of Arab national opposition and believed that a socialist economic transformation in Palestine would diminish the national-religious aspects of the conflict and promote class solidarity between a Jewish and Arab proletariat. Jabotinsky's view were steeped in a Mazzinian philosophy that may be termed 'nationalist internationalism' - the idea that each nation deserves to develop its own national culture and that relations between nations could be made harmonious (though Jabotinsky insisted this harmony will only follow Jewish dominance.) In his autobiography *Story of My Life* Jabotinsky writes that "the stories of Garibaldi, the writings of Mazzini, the poetry of Lepoardi and Giusti, enriched and deepend my superficial Zionism, and developed it as a tangible concept evolving form an instinctive feeling." See Jabotinsky, *Story of My Life* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2016), 50. As Michal Stanislawski has shown, it is important to view Jabotinsky's autobiographical writings less as an accurate historical description and more as an exercise in self-fashioning. At the time of writing his autobiography Jabotinsky was a highly controversial public figure in the Jewish world who sought to create a public image of himself "fit for the public consumption and the ideological battle that defined his adult life." Since most of Jabotinsky's opponents were socialists, he presented himself "as a callow lad who flirted with socialism during his student days in Italy and saw the light and found his way back to the Jewish people through the examples of Garibaldi and Mazzini." Even if Jabotinsky's description of the influence of Mazzini on his thought is exaggerated, he nonetheless felt the need to publicly define himself as a disciple of Mazzini's nationalism. See Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siècle,* P. 119. For more on the influence of Mazzini and Italian thinkers on Jabotinsky's thought see Arie Naor, "With Blood and Sweat/ Shall Arise a Race: The New Jew according to Ze'ev Jabotinsky," *Israel,* 16 (2009), p. 119-142 [in Hebrew]. On Mazzini's vision of nationalist internationalism see Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012), primarily pages 48-54.

differences. This is significant not only for an understanding of the evolution of Jabotinsky's

own thought, but also for a broader analysis of how Zionist leaders came to imagine a majority

Jewish ethnic nation-state in Palestine as such a state came to be in the wake of the war of 1948.

Alon Confino recently proposed to re-examine the history of 1948 through a cultural history

lens. Challenging both the interpretations of Benny Morris that explain the expulsion of

Palestinians merely as a product of wartime contingencies, and of Ilan Peppe who argues these

actions were an inherent aspect of Zionist policy as a colonial enterprise, Confino argues that we

ought to recover the cultural imagination within which Zionist leaders viewed a land without – or

with a significantly diminished Arab population - as a possibility.[203] Confino is mainly

concerned with showing how the surprising early success of the *Hagnah* in the war and the

massive Arab flight was interpreted by Zionist leaders as a miracle – and how this interpretation

give rise to dreams of a land without Arabs which in turn provided context and impetus for

further actions aimed at expelling and encouraging Arab departure.[204] A corollary aspect pursued

in this and subsequent chapters concern how Zionist leaders began to imagine the possibility of a

land without Arabs in the early 1940s as they watched the ethnic transformation in Eastern

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[203] Alon Confino, "Miracle and Snow in Palestine and Israel: Tantura, A History of 1948," *Israel Studies* 17 2 (2012), pp. 36-38. See also Confino, "The Warm Sands of the Coast of Tantura: History and Memory in Israel after 1948," *History and Memory* 27 1 (2015), 48-82.

[204] It is important to note that this explanatory model draws extensively on categories and concept used to explain the Holocaust. The role of victory in prompting more violence calls to mind Christopher Browning's "Euphoria of Victory" model and Confino's focus on how imagining a land without Arabs provided context for Israeli actions draws on his own contribution to the study of how the Nazis imagined a world without Jews as setting an important cultural context for later extermination. Drawing on concepts used to explain the perpetration of the Holocaust has advantages – few other historical questions have been studied so thoroughly and gave rise to such sophisticated and fine-tuned analytical categories. But it also runs several risks. Because the Holocaust is a clear case in which a strong perpetrator attacks an utterly powerless victim it has no place, for example, for understanding how dynamics between perpetrator and victim influenced both the development of events and their moral evaluation. Such categories thus have their limitations when one studies the war of 1948 whose course was shaped not exclusively by Israeli decisions but by military and political dynamics between Israel, Palestinians Arabs, the armies of regional Arab states and, in this second circle, British and Soviet interventions. See Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005) and Alon Confino, *A World Without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

Europe. This relationship between the histories of Eastern Europe and 1948 is particularly

glaring in the case of Jabotinsky and his followers. Schechtman, for example, served as an

advisor to the Israeli government's Transfer Committee in 1948 – where he drew on knowledge

and experience forged as part of the Revisionist Zionist support for population transfers during

the Second World War in order to shape Israeli policies that would legalize and entrench the new

status quo created after Arab expulsion.[205] This chapter does not propose however that the

engagement of Zionist leaders with visions of population transfers during the Second World War

led to a decision to expel Palestinian. This chapter shares Morris' and Confino's position that in

the final analysis Israeli actions in 1948 can only be understood in the specific context of the

war. Zionist leaders certainly could not envision swift victory in a war in the early 1940s (if they

expected such a war would take place at all) and even in late 1947 and in the early months of

1948 many prominent Zionist leaders doubted they would be triumphant in the war and in fact

opposed a deceleration of statehood to prevent the violent clashes in Palestine from escalating

into a regional conflict.[206] Indeed, any discussion of Zionist policy in the 1940s ought to begin by

stressing the weakness of the Zionist position in this period – as the Nazis were exterminating

Eastern European Jewry, the "human capital" Zionists had dreamed would build the future state,

and as Britain, from the mid-1930s, opposed Zionist aspirations and closed the gates of Palestine

to Jewish refugees.[207] This and subsequent chapters thus seek to amplify the sense of

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[205] Schechtman will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. For an examination of Schechtman as a case of knowledge transfer from Eastern Europe to Palestine regarding population transfers, refugee resettlement and evacuee property see Yfaat Weiss, *A Confiscated Memory: Wadi Salib and Haifa's Lost Heritage* (Columbia University Press: 2011) as well as Weiss, "Ethnic Cleansing, Memory and Property – Europe, Israel/Palestine 1944-1948," *Juedische Geschichte als Allgemeine Geschichte* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), p. 158-188.

[206] On the divided vote over Israeli independence see Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 60.

[207] On this see Dan Michman, "The Causal Connection Between the Holocaust and the Birth of Israel: Historiography Between Myth and Reality," *Iyunim Bitkumat Israel* 10 (2000): 234–259 [in Hebrew].

contingency in our understanding of the events of 1948. Rather than speaking about the Zionist

fascination with population transfers as a unified concept, these chapters seek to highlight how

Zionist thinking about population transfers changed during the war. In the first years of the war

Zionist leaders discussed the prospects of Arab transfer in relation to what they believed would

be the need to resettle millions of Jewish refugees in Palestine. Yet from late 1942, as Zionist

leaders learned about the extent of destruction of Jewish life in Europe, they increasingly argued

that the only way to establish a state with a Jewish majority would be by partitioning the land.

Partition – as the 1937 Peel Commissions proposed – entailed some form of population transfers

and exchange, but it was a vague shadow compared to the large-scale resettlement plans that

preoccupied Zionist thinking in the first years of the war.

The second comment concerns another historiographical issue this chapter engages with

– the way the legacy of Jabotinsky had been shaped in scholarship I the past decade. In recent

years scholars have begun to reexamine the legacy of Jabotinsky and emphasize the centrality of

his commitment to equality and minority rights to his political thought. Arie Naor edited a recent

volume of Jabotinsky's writings dedicated almost exclusively to his early essays on minority

rights, autonomism and federalism.[208] Collin Schindler's history of the Israeli right dedicates a

chapter to Jabotinsky's thought on minority rights, examining how his writings on autonomism

in the Russian Empire shaped his views on Arab-Jewish relations in Palestine.[209] In his

pioneering study on the concept of federalism in Zionist thought, Yosef Gorny carefully

discusses Jabotinsky's various federalist plans for Palestine, characterizing the Revisionist leader

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[208] Naor, *Ze'ev Jabotinsky* as well as Naor, "Jabotinsky's Constitutional Guidelines".

[209] Colin Schindler, *The Rise of the Israeli Right: From Odessa to Hebron* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 127-148.

as "a consistent champion of the rights of national minorities to his dying day."[210] Dimitri Schumsky has also written extensively on Jabotinsky's autonomist worldview. In embracing an autonomist philosophy as a solution to the nationalities questions in Eastern Europe and Palestine, Schumsky argues that "there was no difference … between that future member of 'Birth Shalom' Hugo Bergmann and the future revisionist Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky."[211] In his introduction to the English translation of Jabotinsky's autobiography *Story of My Life*, Brian Horowitz too notes that "throughout his life Jabotinsky … did not insist on a Jewish nation-state in Palestine … [but] was satisfied with a multiethnic and multiconfessional state under the conditions that Jews comprised a majority and have political dominance."[212]

By recovering Jabotinsky's wartime support for population transfers, this chapter seeks to challenge his contemporary historical portrayal as an unwavering defender of minority rights. The purpose of this historical revision however is not to simply replace one image of Jabotinsky - a defender of minority rights, with another - a supporter of population transfers, but rather to offer a more contextualized and nuanced understanding of his political worldview and its development in time. Jabotinsky is continuously portrayed as the defender of minority rights not because we know his vision for Palestine would have markedly differed from that of Ben-Gurion in the 1940s, but because his death in 1940 fossilized him in the interwar period - a period marked by the salience of ideas on minority rights in European and Zionist thinking. By

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[210] Gorny, *From Binational Society to Jewish State*, p. 105.

[211] Dimitri Schumsky, "Brit Shalom's Uniqueness Reconsidered: Hans Kohn and autonomist Zionism," *Jewish History* (2011) 25, p. 342. For an elaboration of this argument see also Schumsky, "Zionism and the Nation-State: A Reconsideration" *Zion* 77 (2012), p. 223-254. See also Schumsky's *Haaret'z* editorial, advocating for reviving Jabotinsky's bi-nationalist vision for Palestine in present-day Israel, "Jabotinsky's and the State of All its Citizens," *Haaretz* January 14, 2011 http://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/1.1156855.

[212] Brian Horowitz and Leonid Katsis (eds.,), *Vladimir Jabotinsky: Story of My Life* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2016), 14.

recovering his early wartime writings this chapter seeks for the first time to place Jabotinsky in the 1940s, a period of his life other scholars have either overlooked or discussed only in passing.

Jabotinsky and Population Transfers in the 1920s

Jabotinsky's endorsement of population transfers in his 1939 note is striking not only because of his lifelong commitment to the principles of minority protection, but also because Jabotinsky had repeatedly rejected the idea of population transfers throughout the interwar years, even as some Zionist leaders came to endorse it.

As Jabotinsky reminisced in a 1926 obituary for British Zionist leader and playwright Israel Zangwill, he first learned about the idea of population transfers in 1917 – during a speech by Zangwill and a subsequent exchange between the two.[213] In a party convened in London to celebrate the Balfour declaration, Zangwill had shared his great hope that the Arabs would be convinced to leave Palestine and provide Jews with a greater area for settlement. Following the party Jabotinsky and Zangwill walked together through the street of London. Jabotinsky had asked Zangwill how he could believe that a million Arabs would voluntarily agree to leave their homes. Zangwill replied that it would not be only for the Jews, but as part of a general remaking of the world, the 'unmixing of races'. In Europe and the Near East, Zangwill claimed, ethnic hatreds are too ancient and endemic: The Turks could never overcome their hatred to the Armenians and Greeks; Poles and Ukrainians in Galicia, and Germans and Czechs in Moravia, could never live together. Where no clear separation between such races exists, an international mechanism should be set up to separate them. All the Greeks from Anatolia, Zangwill insisted,

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[213] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Zangwill's Mistake," *Der Morgen Zshurnal*, August 20, 1926 p. 8-10 [in Yiddish]. For scholarship on support for population transfers in Europe before and during the First World War see Matthew Frank, "Fantasies of Ethnic Unmixing: Popualtion Transfers and the Collapse of Empire in Europe," in Panikos Panayi and Pippa Virdee (eds), *Refugees and the End of Empire: Imperial Collapse and Forced Migration during the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave, 2011), pp. 81-101.

should emigrate to Greece, and the Turks from Macedonia to Turkey.[214] Writing in the mid-1920s, Jabotinsky ascribed to Zangwill a great degree of foresight. Six years after our conversation, Jabotinsky reminisced, Zangwill's prediction regarding Greece and Turkey had come true. Yet while Zangwill had predicated the population exchange in the Balkans, Jabotinsky noted, he was wrong in his assumption that such transfers could be carried out on a voluntary and peaceful basis. The Greek-Turkish exchange of populations, Jabotinsky argued, was "brutal, carried out through hunger and tears." Indeed, Jabotinsky was astonished that the League of Nations and what he called the 'enlightened world' had at all given support and credence to such a policy.[215] Just a few months after publishing his piece on Zangwill, Jabotinsky repeated his critique of population transfers. When a paper misquoted Jabotinsky as speaking in favor of the expulsion of Arabs from Palestine, Jabotinsky quickly sent a letter of correction to the editor. "I did not say those words or any words that could be interpreted along these lines." "My opinion," Jabotinsky emphasized, is the contrary "that if anyone tried to push the Arabs out of Palestine, all or a part of them – he would be doing, first of all, something immoral and – impossible."[216]

Jabotinsky's staunch rejection of population transfers in the 1920s was based on his commitment to ideals of minority protection and belief that majority-minority relations in states could ultimately be made more harmonious. Even as in the late 1920s the system of minority protection had failed to make significant gains for minorities, Jabotinsky rejected the idea that

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[214] For a recent overview of Zangwill thought – and his intellectual trajectory from territorialism to Zionism see Laura Almagor, "Forgotten Alternatives: Jewish Territorialism as a Movement of Political Action and Ideology," Doctoral Dissertation (Florence, Italy: European University Institute, 2015), 83-87. As we shall see, the Revisionist Zionist activist Ben-Zion Netanyahu was a prominent supporter of Zangwill's views and republished his essays– among them those in which Zangwill advocated for population transfers- prefaced by an enthusiastic introductory essay.

[215] Jabotinsky, "Zangwill's Mistake,"

[216] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "To the Editor of 'The World'," 29.12.1926 [in Hebrew], Jabotinsky Papers Alef-1 16/2.

Jews should give up their faith in minority rights. In 1927 Jabotinsky urged Polish Jews to vote

for the 'minority bloc' in the parliamentary elections over Pilusdki's party because, he argued,

Pilsudski may soon disappear from the public scene whereas the principle of minority

representation and protection will always remain part of Polish politics.[217] In his 1928 essay

"The Minorities Dream," Jabotinsky called on Jews to continue to fight for the realization of

minority rights and the principles of *gegenwartsarbeit* Zionism he helped formulated in the 1905

Helsingfors program, despite the many shortcomings and failures of the system.[218]

Though in his writings from the 1920s Jabotinsky decried the Greek-Turkish exchange of

populations as brutal, he nonetheless shared an admiration for the Greek state's success at

resettling 1.5 million refugees in the wake of the Greek-Turkish War. This mixture of repulsion

at the moral consequences of the Greek-Turkish agreement with an admiration for its enormous

success as a settlement enterprise would shape, as we shall see, Jabotinsky's later attitude toward

the idea of population transfers. In his 1927 essay, "When a State Colonizes," Jabotinsky

contrasted the failure of the colonization efforts of the mandatory regime in Palestine with the

remarkable success of the Greek state.[219] The essay emerged as part of a larger intra-Zionist

debate over the causes and consequences of the 1926-1927 financial crisis in the *Yishuv*. The

Yishuv experienced a major financial crisis at the time that led to a large wave of Jewish out-

migration and instigated fears over the future of Jewish colonization efforts in Palestine.

Jabotinsky sought to dispel the fatalistic attitudes among Zionist leaders and the Jewish public

over the future of the Jewish settlement in Palestine by highlighting the Greek example: a state

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[217] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "The Elections in Poland," published in Yosef Nedava (ed.), *The Making of Revisionist Zionism*: *Jabotinsky's Writings in Rassviet, 1925-1929* (Tel-Aviv: Jabotinsky Institute, 1985).

[218] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "The Minorities Dream," *Haynt,* 10.4.1928 [in Yiddish].

[219] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "When A State Colonizes," *Haynt*, May 6 and 13 1927 (two installments) [in Yiddish].

that successfully settled more than ten times the amount of immigrants than came to Palestine in the 1920s, with much less funds per capita and within a significantly shorter time frame. Jabotinsky listed many reasons for the Greek success. In particular, he noted the 5 million dunams of land, vacated by expelled Muslims and redistributed to incoming Greek refugees, as a significant factor that positively influenced the Greek resettlement efforts. His main point was that a simple fact separated the Greek success from the failure of the *Yishuv* in Palestine. Whereas in Greece the state was in charge of resettlement, in Palestine Jews had to rely on the mandatory government. The future success of Jewish colonization in Palestine, Jabotinsky argued, thus lay in fully entrusting its management in Jewish hands.[220]

Jabotinsky and the 'Evacuation Plan'

At a September 1935 convention of the Revisionist movement in Vienna, Jabotinsky laid out his famous 'Evacuation plan', a plan for the large-scale transfer of 1.5 million Jews from Eastern Europe to Palestine over the course of ten years. Jabotinsky conceived of the 'Evacuation plan' in the context of the increasing political and economic marginalization of Jews in the region and growing demands by Poland, Romania and Hungary that their 'surplus' Jewish population emigrate. Jabotinsky's vision was based on the idea that the alliance of interests between the Zionist movement and governments in Eastern Europe – particularly Poland - could greatly benefit the Zionist cause. As part of this alliance, the Revisionist movement would organize and seek financing for the emigration of Jews from Eastern Europe, while the Polish and other governments in the region would apply pressure on Britain to open the gates of Palestine to Jewish immigration. As Jabotinsky framed his plan, the plan would be a step in the direction of completely transplanting Jewish life from Eastern Europe to Palestine. The plan never

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[220] Ibid, Ibid.

materialized, to a large extent because Jabotinsky over-estimated the degree of support he could

gain from Poland. After 1935, the Polish government certainly wanted for the majority of its

Jewish citizens to emigrate, but it mattered to it little where the Jews would go.[221] Moreover, the

Polish government was not willing to risk a fight with Britain - by no means an enemy state - for

the sake of opening Palestine for Jewish immigration.[222]

It is important to emphasize the differences Jabotinsky saw between the 'Evacuation

plan' and the idea of population transfers. In Jabotinsky's view population transfers was a

compulsory act, carried out by a majority against a minority. The 'Evacuation plan', in

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[221] Indeed, given British policy in Palestine, Polish leaders did not believe Palestine could offer a site for large-scale Jewish immigration. In 1937 Polish officials had begun to explore the idea of resettling masses of Jews in Madagascar, a French colony. Polish leaders convinced France to sponsor an exploration committee. The committee reached grim conclusions as to the prospects of Jewish resettlement – its most enthusiastic member believed that at most 60,000 Jews could be resettled in Madagascar. In 1940 the Madagascar plan was revived by Nazi Germany. Though Poland explored other territories of Jewish resettlement, the Polish government to did not feel olibgated to secure Jews a territory before pushing for Jewish emigration. The Polish government actively promoted boycotts of Jewish business to induce Jews to leave and in the so-called 1938 Zbąszyń affair Poland stripped tens of thousands of Polish Jews residing in Germany of their citizenship to prevent their return from the Reich to Poland (they would remain stranded for months on a camp on the Polish border). In this regard Poland of the 1930s was not a pro-Zionist regime but a pioneer, much like Nazi Germany, of anti-Jewish policies and methods of Jewish expulsion. As Yfaat Weiss has shown in her comparative study of German-Jewish and Polish-Jewish citizenship, what was remarkable about the fate of Jews in the two countries in the 1930s was how increasingly similar their legal and social position have become. As Dan Diner put it, "[D]espite all the glaring differences between the two regimes, authoritarian Poland introduced measures … scarcely distinguishable from the German 'Aryan' clauses." The relationship between the two regimes in the 1930s, Diner writes, was characterized by "simultaneous affinity and distinction." On the Madagascar plan see Magnus Brechtken, *Madagaskar für die Juden: Antisemitische Idee und politische Praxis 1885–1945* (München : Oldenbourg, 1997); Yfaat Weiss, *Citizenship and Ethnicity: German Jews and Polish Jews, 1933-1940* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2000) [in Hebrew], 12; Dan Diner, *Beyond the Conceivable: Studies on Germany, Nazism and the Holocaust* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 87.

[222] Though the Polish government was not willing to risk an open fight with Britain to promote Jewish emigration to Palestine, it did lend support to the Revisionist movement by providing funds, military training and a limited amount of weapons. That limited form of support was not intended to provide the basis for a revolt against the British Empire. Rather it was aimed at sustaining the Revisionist movement as a viable group in the international debate over the 'Jewish question': Jabotinsky's support for Jewish 'Evacuation' was used by the Polish government to brush off accusations that its own policy calling for the emigration of its Jewish citizens was inherently anti-Jewish. For more on Jabotinsky's evacuation plan see Laurence Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience: The New Zionist Organization and the Polish Government, 1936-1939* (Boulder: East European Monographs); Timothy Snyder, *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2015), primarily chapters three and four; Daniel Baltman "The Dispute in Poland in 1936 over Jabotinsky's Evacuation Plan," in Avi Bareli and Pinhas Ginossar (eds.) *In the Eye of the Storm,* p. 371-388 [in Hebrew]; Eli Tzur "A Dangerous Liaison: Jabotinsky and Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs," in Avi Bareli and Pinhas Ginossar (eds), *In the Eye of the Storm,* p. 371-388 [in Hebrew]; Amir Goldstein, *Zionism and Antisemitism in the Thought and Action of Ze'ev Jabotinsky* (Be'er Sheba: The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Zionism and Israel, 2015)*,* p. 352-375. [in Hebrew].

contradistinction, was to be organized by Jews for Jews. Moreover, Jabotinsky repeatedly

emphasized that the 'Evacuation plan' ought not be compulsory. To ensure that the voluntary

component was meaningful, Jabotinsky insisted on continuing the fight for equality for Jews in

Poland alongside his campaign for the 'Evacuation plan'. Indeed, at the same time as Jabotinsky

advocated for the 'Evacuation plan' he also demanded that Poland issue a new declaration

vouching for Jewish equality.[223] At the outset of the very first speech in Warsaw in which

Jabotinsky laid out the 'Evacuation plan', he reminded his audience about his role in drafting the

Helsingfors program. The 'Evacuation plan', he argued, was in fact not so different from the

program he had formulated in 1905: both envision Palestine as the solution to the 'Jewish

question' alongside a fight for the rights of Jews in Europe.[224]

Scholars have generally overlooked Jabotinsky's continued commitment to Jewish

equality in Europe in the second half of the 1930s. In this reading Jabotinsky was a prophet-like

leader who foresaw the impending catastrophe and was the first to urge all Jews to leave East

Central Europe. But a careful reading of the 'Evacuation plan' reveals it was in fact consistent

with the Zionist interwar worldview that advocated for the development of two Jewish national

centers in Eastern Europe and Palestine. For even if the 'Evacuation plan' had been realized

according to Jabotinsky's wildest dreams – a possibility that appeared outright fantastical at the

time - it would have only managed to bring to Palestine 1.5 million Jewish immigrants from

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[223] In a September 1936 meeting between Jabotinsky and Polish prime minister Felicjan Slawoj-Skladkowski, Jabotinsky demanded that the Polish government issue a declaration "which would, more or less, sound as follows: 'We remain faithful to our motto "for your freedom and for ours". Our freedom we have attained, now we want to help you attain your national freedom. But in Poland irrespective of the development of conditions, you will always enjoy equal civil rights." Weinbaum notes that Jabotinsky's failure to induce the Polish government to issue such a declaration "seriously undermined his ability to defend himself against his critics who charged that he was playing into the hands of an anti-Jewish government." Cited in Weinbaum, *A Marriage of Convenience,* 62-3.

[224] Vladimir Jabotinsky, 'Lecture in Warsaw's Doctors and Engineers Club,' *Unzer Velt,* September 30 1936, 3 (63), pages 4-5, 8 [in Yiddish]. Moreover, in a 1935 Beitar Congress in Krakow, Jabotinsky argued that national work in Europe – the so-called 'gegenwartsarbiet Zionism' - was no less important than settlement in Palestine. See Shavit, *Myhtologies*, p. 68.

eEstern Europe, primarily Poland and Romania over the course of a decade. The Jewish

population of Poland alone however was three million on the eve of the war. At most then

Jabotinsky could assume that in a perfect scenario the 'Evacuation plan' could offer a solution to

only a third of Eastern European Jewry within the next ten year. As for the remaining two thirds

– Jabotinsky believed that they necessitated that Jewish leaders continue to fight for meaningful

equality.

Such a reading of the 'Evacuation plan' as consistent with Jabotinsky's support for

Jewish equality and minority rights in Europe can also be ascertained by examining Jabotinsky's

writings on antisemitism from the 1930s. In several essays Jabotinsky argued that antisemitism

in Eastern Europe, as opposed to antisemitism in Nazi Germany, was a result of objective

economic factors rather than an inherent irrational hate. Eastern European antisemitism,

Jabotinsky contended, was a reaction to the over-preponderance of Jews in the middle class. It

was a natural reaction, in his view, to the overwhelming presence of an ethnic minority in the

economic sphere. Radically reducing the size of Eastern European Jewry through immigration to

Palestine would decrease Jewish representation in the middle class, and, consequently, could

significantly abate anti-Jewish sentiments and policies.[225] Taking all this evidence into account,

it is safe to assert that in the mid-1930s – even as he often publicly spoke about 'liquidating the

Jewish diaspora'- Jabotinsky assumed that in the most successful scenario a Jewish center would

remain in Eastern Europe for at least three or four decades to come.

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[225] Jabotinsky promoted such a view in the 1930s and offered a thorough explanation of his views on antisemitism in his wartime book *The Jewish War Front*. On Jabotinsky's views on antisemitism see Baltman, "Dispute in Poland," p. 376-377; Ya'acov Shavit and Liat Shyater-Livni, "Who Cried Wolf? How Did Ze'ev Jabotinsky Understand the Nature and Intentions of Nazi Germany?" in Bareli and Ginossar (eds), *In the Eye of the Storm,* p. 345-370.

Jabotinsky and the 1937 Peel Commission

One year after Jabotinsky first presented the 'Evacuation plan' in Warsaw, the question of population transfers emerged at the center of the debate over the future of Palestine. To quell the 1936 Arab revolt, Britain had sent to Palestine a commission of inquiry charged with formulating recommendations for a new British policy for the mandate. In July 1937 the Peel Commission laid out a proposal for the partition of Palestine and for a mutual population exchange between Arabs and Jews. According to the plan, 200-300 thousand Arabs are to be transferred from the territory of the proposed Jewish state while 1,250 Jews were to be transferred from the territories allotted to a proposed Arab state. In advocating for population transfers in Palestine, the Peel Commission approvingly cited the 1923 Greek-Turkish Exchange of Populations as a model.[226]

The Peel Commission recommendation was a topic of incessant debate in Zionist circles. After prolonged deliberations, the Zionist executive endorsed the plan. Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann, among other Zionist leaders, approved of the transfer component of the plan. Jabotinsky, carefully following the debate on the Peel Commission recommendations, repeatedly and unequivocally criticized and rejected the partition plan. The main grounds on which Jabotinsky based his opposition to the plan was that a partitioned Palestine would be too small to absorb the millions of Jewish immigrants he hoped would settle in Palestine in the coming decades.[227] But Jabotinsky also rejected the plan on moral grounds, fiercely opposing the idea of transferring the Arab population out of Palestine. Jabotinsky underscored this point in several

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[226] For a history of the Peel Commission and the partition debate see Aharon Klieman, *Divide or Rule: Britain, Partition and Palestine, 1936-1939* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1983) [in Hebrew].

[227] Shavit notes the tragic irony of Jabotinsky's opposition to this plan – which most historian sympathetic to Jabotinsky overlook: Jabotinsky opposed a plan that could have helped resettle hundreds of thousands of Jews in Palestine at the same time as he advocated for the 'Evacuation' of Jews from Europe. See Shavit's observations in footnote 59, Shavit, *Mythologies,* 60.

letters and speeches from 1937, and expanded on it in an article published in the Revisionist

Zionist publication *Hayarden:*

"From a Jewish perspective it [population transfers] is a crime. When the Royal

commission is chatting about 'the great precedent' (that is, the expulsion of about one

million Greeks from Turkey), it is one of those instances in which it plays around with a

term not one of its members has any clue about. ... Until this day, we remained steadfast

about one principle … do not expel a single person! … and now a commission, consisting

of six biased gentleman … proposes what seems to them like a trifling matter: 'non-Jews'

should be expelled from the future Jewish territory. What a 'great precedent' indeed for

all the enemies of the Jews![228]

As this quote shows, Jabotinsky was vehemently opposed to the transfer of Arabs from Palestine.

Jabotinsky emphasized, as he did in the 1920s, his commitment to the principle that not a single

person – Jew or Arab – should be expelled. He also argued that the Peel Commission drew the

wrong lesson from the Greek-Turkish Exchange of Populations. It was not a 'great precedent', as

the commission noted in its report, but a tragedy that involved the expulsion of one millions

Greeks from Turkey. Most revealingly, Jabotinsky argued that the idea of expelling the Arabs

from Palestine should be rejected because it could serve as a precedent for 'the enemies of the

Jews'. Jabotinsky was referring here both to Nazi Germany as well as to Eastern European

governments who were actively promoting the emigration of their Jewish citizens at the time.

Jabotinsky recognized the fine line that separated between humanitarian plans for Jewish

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[228] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Jabotinsky On Partition," *Hayarden* August 13, 1937, 8-9. See also Jabotinsky, "The Proposed Partition of Palestine – Jewish Opponents of the Scheme – Letter to the Editor," *The Manchester Guardian,* December 15, 1937.

resettlement and outright expulsion. In Jabotinsky's view, the fate of the Arabs in Palestine and that of the Jews in Europe were intimately related. Jews could not continue to fight for equality in Europe at the same time as they advocate for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. Moreover, calling for the expulsion of Arabs from Palestine could embolden those who call to expel Jews from their countries in Europe. As late as 1937, and even as he called for the mass immigration of Jews from eastern Europe, Jabotinsky continued to believe in the fight for Jewish equality in Europe – and feared that support for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine could undermine this struggle.

From the 'Evacuation Plan' to the 'Emergency Plan'

Only on the eve of the war do we find initial evidence of Jabotinsky's subsequent support for population transfers. In late 1938 and early 1939 Jabotinsky had issued a new and more radical mass Jewish emigration plan, the 'Emergency plan.' Jabotinsky's revised plan called for the immigration of a million Jews to Palestine within a single year. It was a direct response to the worsening condition of Jews in East Central Europe on the eve of the war. Jabotinsky now believed that a ten-year immigration scheme was too slow to meet the needs of Eastern European Jews for resettlement. Yet if the 'Evacuation plan' of 1936 seemed fantastical, the 'Emergency plan' of 1939 appeared even less realistic. Jabotinsky authored the plan following the failure of the 1938 Evian conference – convened by US president Franklin D. Roosevelt to find a solution to the worsening German-Jewish refugee problem. With the exception of the Dominican Republic, none of the states that attended the conference offered to accept any significant number of Jewish refugees, and Britain remained steadfastly committed to keeping the gates of Palestine closed to large-scale Jewish immigration. Within this international atmosphere, there

was little reason to believe Jabotinsky could garner international support for such a massive Jewish resettlement plan. Still, highlighting the 'Emergency plan' is important for our discussion. The 'Emergency plan' indicates that on the eve of the war Jabotinsky had become completely disillusioned with the possibility of continued Jewish life and equality in Eastern Europe, and advocated for the immediate mass evacuation of Jews to Palestine on a scale and within a time frame from more radical than he had advocated in 1936.[229]

Jabotinsky and the Hitler-Mussolini Agreement

Only on the eve of the war do we find initial evidence of Jabotinsky's subsequent support for population transfers. In the summer of 1939, just a few months before the Nazi invasion of Poland, Hitler and Mussolini had reached an agreement that stipulated the transfer of some 250,000 German speakers from the Alto Adige region in the Italian Alps, also known in German as South Tyrol, to Germany. The agreement did not receive much international attention at the time, but Jabotinsky nonetheless viewed it as a momentous development. The South Tyrol agreement, he argued in a June 1939 essay, had set a precedent "the world will feel and never forget …"[230] The novelty of the agreement, Jabotinsky explained, was that for the first time population transfers was to take place not as a result of war, but as part of an agreement between two friendly states in a time of peace. Jabotinsky hinted that this was an omen of things to come. The idea of population transfers was no longer merely a fascist idea but had now become popular even among the "circles of intelligentsia around the League of Nations in Geneva." Recalling his 1917 conversation with Zangwill, Jabotinsky noted how Zangwill's theory about 'the redistribution of races' had become increasingly popular among European thinkers. In the near

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[229] On the "Emergency plan" see Goldstein, *Zionism and Anti-Semitism,* 403.

[230] Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky, "A Conversation with Zangwill," *Hamashkif,* July 21 1939, 3 [in Hebrew].

future, Jabotinsky argued, the South Tyrol precedent could serve as a method for solving other minorities problems throughout Europe. Indeed, Jabotinsky believed that states in Europe might increasingly draw on the South Tyrol precedent to expel their unwanted minorities. It is important to note that in early 1939 Jabotinsky rejected the notion – prevalent among many observers in Europe – that Europe was headed inevitably toward war. Instead, as this article reveals, he believed states in East Central Europe would begin to solve their conflicts by shifting minority populations to their purported ethnic 'homelands' and replacing the multiethnic European order enshrined in Versailles with a new order based on the principle of ethnic homogeneity.[231]

Was the growth of support in Europe for population transfers good or bad for the Jews? Jabotinsky posed this question in the essay but refrained from taking a conclusive position. The expulsion of Greeks after the Great War, he reminded his readers, constituted "a rejection of all our previous concepts of justice and injustice, of the distinction between humanity and barbarism".[232] Indeed, as Jabotinsky pointed out, the rise in legitimacy of population transfers in Europe would no doubt play into the hands of the enemies of the Jews, who had long hoped to strip Jews of their rights and expel them. Yet this development, Jabotinsky acknowledged, could also promote the Zionist dream. For the first time Jabotinsky introduced the thought that population transfers could be beneficial for Jewish aspirations in Palestine: perhaps, he noted, the South Tyrol precedent "had been set in order to fulfill, in the future, an important role in our own Jewish history."[233]

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[231] On Jabotinsky's belief that there would be no war in Europe see Shavit and Livni, *Who Cried Wolf.*

[232] Jabotinsky, "A Conversation with Zangwill,"

[233] Ibid., Ibid.

Though Jabotinsky presented his views in the essay as a reaction to the South Tyrol agreement, there is reason to believe his increasingly positive views on population transfers crystalized a few weeks earlier as part of an intellectual exchange with Ben-Zion Netanyahu, a historian, journalist and Zionist Revisionist activist. Several weeks before Jabotinsky wrote his essay on the South Tyrol agreement, he had met Netanyahu in his London home. Netanyahu gave Jabotinsky a copy of a volume of speeches by Zangwill he had edited, and Jabotinsky had remarked that this would be his reading material on his subsequent trip to Poland.[234] The volume contained many of the Zangwill essays Jabotinsky had been familiar with and was prefaced by an introduction in which Netanyahu elaborately praised Zangwill for his support for population transfers. "Zangwill regarded as immoral not those who will transfer the Arabs from Palestine to the vast territories they have in the Middle-East, but those who will keep the Arabs within the Land of Israel and allow them to take the place of the most persecuted race who has no place anywhere in the world."[235] During the Great War Zionist leaders mocked Zangwill's proposal for the expulsion of Arabs from Palestine as immoral, Netanyahu noted, but Zangwill's vision of population transfers had now become a popular and accepted solution throughout Europe. Indeed, as Netanyahu further observed, many Zionist leaders embraced Zangwill's vision when they accepted the 1937 Peel Commission recommendations. Though Netanyahu ascribed to Zangwill great foresight, he ultimately lamented the fact that his call for the expulsion of Arabs

[234] The information about the meeting between Jabotinsky and Netanyahu is cited in Shabati Teveth, "The Evolution of 'Transfer' in Zionist Thinking" (Tel-Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1989), p. 17.

[235] Ben-Zion Netanyahu (Ed.), *Israel Zangwill: The Road to Independence* (Tel-Aviv: Hozaah Medinit, 1938), XLI. On the intellectual history of Ben-Zion Netanyahu see the following essays by Adi Armon, "The National Struggles that Shaped the Worldview of Ben-Zion Netanyahu," *Haaretz,* August 5 2016 http://www.haaretz.co.il/literature/study/.premium-1.3029964 as well as Armon, "Ben-Zion Netanyahu: The Formative Years. Chapter Two," *Haaretz*, November 11, 2016 http://www.haaretz.co.il/literature/study/1.3119650. On the relationship between Netanyahu's historiographical approach to Jewish history and his Zionist politics see David N Myers., "Benzion Netanyahu: In life and Death," *Jewish Journal* May 15, 2012 http://jewishjournal.com/opinion/104121/.

from Palestine was no longer feasible: Jews could have carried out such a policy during the tumultuous years of the Great War when the Middle East was engulfed in chaos and was being reshaped, but these conditions are no longer present.[236] "The tragedy of the statesmen who lack foresight," Netanyahu attacked the Zionist leadership in Palestine, "is that they embrace old proposals only when the conditions which make them possible in the first place disappear."[237] A few months after Netanyahu gave Jabotinsky a copy of his book, war broke out in Europe and the chaotic world conditions returned. After Jabotinsky's arrival in New York in March 1940, Netanyahu would serve for a time as his personal secretary.

Jabotinsky and the Postwar 'Jewish Question'

After the Nazi invasion of Poland and the outbreak of war in Europe, Jabotinsky began to support population transfers as a solution to the Jewish question in Europe and to the future of Arabs in Palestine. Speaking to a Jewish audience shortly after his arrival in New York, Jabotinsky declared that the war in Europe would bring about "a thorough shake-up, a world-wide revision of all international and national conditions." This, he predicted, would have a particularly lasting impact on the Jews: it would be impossible to restore Jewish rights in Eastern Europe after the war. Even before the war Jews were rapidly losing their economic positions in Poland as part of a concentrated government effort. The Nazis now accelerated the process, "sending the Jews to Lublin (or to the next ditch) and letting Poles to inherit their miserable jobs." Jews have lost their economic positions in Poland – and they will never be allowed to reclaim their prewar professions. The only solution for the 'Jewish question' after the war lay in a large-scale immigration plan of the vast majority of eastern European Jews from

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[236] Netanyahu, "Israel Zangwill," XLI.

[237] Ibid., XLIII

Europe to Palestine – an 'Evacuation plan' on a far grander scale than Jabotinsky had previously imagined. Jabotinsky now called for "'dumping' the first million in the first year [after the war], the rest to follow at a slower but still accelerated pace." Reversing his longstanding critique of the Greek-Turkish exchange of populations, Jabotinsky for the first time invoked it as a political model: 'The Turco-Greek experiment of 1923, 1,300,000 immigrants within a few months has proved that such miracles are not impossible …".[238]

Jabotinsky's framing of the future evacuation of Jews from Europe to Palestine along the model of the Greek-Turkish agreement went hand in hand with a newfound support for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. In private notes Jabotinsky drafted in November 1939 explored in the introduction, Jabotinsky predicted that 10-20 millions European minorities would be resettled in their 'homelands' after the war, that Jews would be first among them, and that the "Arabs will have to make room." Jabotinsky also invoked the Hitler-Stalin agreement that provided for resettlement of Baltic Germans in the Reich as a political model for Arab resettlement. Jabotinsky did not elaborate on the details of his proposed transfer of Arabs, except for stating that they would have to go 'east' and that perhaps an agreement could be reached with Saudi Arabia or Iraq.[239] In his 1940 book on the future of Jews after the war, *The Jewish War Front*, written just a few months after he drafted his note on population transfers, Jabotinsky expanded on his call for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine in more detail. Indeed, Jabotinsky's 1939 note referenced above may have been a draft or initial sketch of one of the chapters of his book. Though Jabotinsky observed that such a solution was by no means necessary and promised full equality for the Arabs in a future Jewish state, he nonetheless dedicated several pages in his

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[238] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "The Fate of Jewry – Lecture at the Manhattan Center," 19.03.1940, Jabotinsky Papers, Alef-1 59/8.

[239] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Population Exchange."

book to discussing the possibility of the transfer of the Arabs. Particularly noteworthy is Jabotinsky's completely transformed rhetoric on the issue of population transfers. The departure of 900,000 Arabs from Transjordan, he wrote, should not be regarded as "tragedy" or with "dismay". "Any Arab country which should find the courage … for inviting such an immigration of trekkers," he promised, "would immediately have unlimited sums of capital and the world's best experts at its disposal for the most ambitions schemes of land reclamation and irrigation."[240] The title of the chapter reflected the aloofness with which Jabotinsky approached the moral questions concerning the future of Arabs in Palestine – 'The Arab Angle – Undramatized'. Reversing his repeated interwar criticisms of population transfers, Jabotinsky now portrayed this method as a just and necessary political solution. The 1937 Royal Commission's proposal for the transfer of Arab's from Palestine was no longer 'dangerous chatter', as he claimed in 1937, but a 'courageous' and morally 'contagious' proposal. Even "Herr Hitler – detested as he is," Jabotinsky wrote in the chapter, was at fault not for transferring the Germans but rather for dispossessing the Poles while doing so.[241] In the spring of 1940, just months before he would pass away, Jabotinsky worked on a second book in which he sought to lay out in greater detail his vision for the future of Jews after the war. From the preserved outline of the book we learn that Jabotinsky intended to elaborate on the idea of population transfers. The section of the book on the Jewish future begins with a chapter titled: 'Re-distribution of Races as a General Line of World Policy.'[242] It should be recalled that Jabotinsky had claimed he had learned about the concept of 're-distribution of races' from Zangwill in 1917, and in both of his interwar essays in which he mentioned his discussions with Zangwill he had referred to this concept derisively.

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[240] Jabotinsky, "Jewish War Front," p. 221

[241] Ibid., Ibid.

[242] Vladimiar Jabotinsky, "Jews After the War (An outline of a book)," Jabotinsky Papers, Alef-1 7/240

Jabotinsky's endorsement of the transfer of the majority of Eastern European Jews from Europe to Palestine and of Arab population from Palestine is startling given, as we have seen, his consistent and longstanding principled rejection of such ideas before the war. His change of heart is first and foremost a result of his predictions regarding the enormity of the Jewish refugee problem in Europe after the war. Jabotinsky concluded that the aftermath of the war would necessitate a far more radical emigration plan than he had previously envisioned – millions of Jews would have to be transferred to Palestine within a few short years. These radically different emigration plans called for different colonization plans. In the 1930s Jabotinsky believed that with the support of international loans the *Yishuv* could facilitate the integration of about 100,000 immigrants per year into Palestine's existing economic structure. The prospects of millions of Jewish refugees in Palestine within a few years, however, would require in Jabotinsky's view clearing up arable land and providing homes for the refugees – at the expense of the Arab population. This was a lesson Jabotinsky had drawn from the Greek-Turkish exchange of populations. As we have seen, even as he decried the moral barbarity of population transfers between the wars, Jabotinsky nonetheless admired the success of the Greek state in resettling over a million refugees within a short time span - a success he ascribed in part to the fact that Greece expelled a large segment of its Muslim population to clear up homes and land for the incoming Greek refugees.[243]

Jabotinsky's wartime embrace of population transfers must also be understood as based on his predictions regarding the ethnic make-up of Europe after the war. On the eve of the war Jabotinsky was startled by the degree of support population transfers had come to enjoy among liberals and fascist alike; after the outbreak of war he noted that it had become even more

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[243] Jabotinsky, "When A State Colonizes,"

popular, winning the support of US President Roosevelt who spoke about the need for the

postwar resettlement of millions of refugees.[244] Indeed, Roosevelt's statement fitted within a

broader wartime intellectual clamor in Europe and the United States in favor of population

transfers as a solution for the minorities' problem in Europe. Already in October 1939 Swiss

ethnologist George Montandon, who first laid out a proposal for large scale population transfers

in Europe during the First World War, called on the pages of the influential French journal

Merkur for the creation of a 'Poland of the Future' after the war that would annex east Prussia

and parts of west Prussia and expel German minorities from those territories.[245] "Everything

leads us to believe," noted a French scholar several months later, "that the [transfer of

populations] would be one of the major innovations of the peace treaties of the future."[246] C.A

Macartney, a leading British scholar of the minority question, lamented in the summer of 1940

how population transfers has become "the present fashionable panacea for all difficulties

connected with national minorities".[247] Based on these developments, Jabotinsky predicated that

the aftermath of the war would bring about a massive reshuffling of minorities throughout

Europe. For Jabotinsky the era of minorities and minority rights in Europe - for which he fought

for decades - had come to a final end.

Jabotinsky articulated his newfound rejection of the principle of minority rights in a 1940

essay 'Shall We Try?' As Jabotinsky argued at the outset of the essay, there will be no return to

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[244] Roosevelt's support for population transfers is explored in Benjamin Akzin, "The Jewish Question After the War," *Harper's Magazine* (September 1941), p. 435. During the war Roosevelt tasked advisor and geographer Isaiah Bowman with setting up a secret M-project dedicated to studying possible resettlement schemes of postwar refugees. On Roosevelt and Bowman see Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

[245] Gorges Montadon, "La Pologne Future,",*Mercure de France*, November 1940, p. 305-320.

[246] Michel Pierrac, "Les transferts des populations," *Voix de Peuples*, 15 October 1940, 463-470.

[247] Cited in Douglas, *Orderly and Humane*, p.28.

the *status quo ante* based on minority protection in postwar Europe. Jabotinsky was particularly dismissive of the leaders of the World Jewish Congress who fought for the restoration of minority rights after the war. From the start of the war Jewish leaders in London and New York had pressed the Polish and Czechoslovak governments in exile to issue a deceleration on Jewish rights after the war. These diplomatic efforts emerged as a response to genuine fear these groups had that these governments would deny Jews rights after the war, fail to restore their prewar property and professions and encourage their emigration. [248] The efforts to secure a declaration on postwar Jewish equality in Eastern Europe, Jabotinsky argued in his essay, were a meaningless battle that distracted Jews from the more important goal of fighting for a Jewish state in Palestine. In one of the most riveting paragraphs in this essay, Jabotinsky publicly rejected the struggle for Jewish minority rights in Europe after the war. These lines reflect how radically Jabotinsky's thought transformed in the first year of the war – for even in the mid-1930s, as we have seen, he defended the 'Evacuation plan' as consistent with his life-long struggle for Jewish equality and rights in Europe:

> … We are promised that after victory the world will be repaired … In this new order our brothers too will enjoy equality of rights, and a reconstructed League of Nations will watch over them … To no avail I look for a voice of wisdom in this desert of foolishness: Enough with the lie! It is as if Jews have become mad, and have begun plotting their own destruction. … [Jews] are taking part in spreading the illusion … that a day after victory,

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[248] See chapter I of this dissertation for more on the efforts of the World Jewish Congress to secure a deceleration on Jewish equality.

a clause on equality will be inserted into the Peace Treaties, and it would be agreed that

enough had been done for the Jews, that the Jews had been saved."[249]

Jabotinsky's dismissal of the demands of Jewish groups for new guarantees for Jewish equality

went hand in hand with his own efforts to revive the short-lived and feeble alliance of the 1930s

between Eastern European government and the Revisionist movement. Jabotinsky believed that

these governments were hiding their support for Jewish postwar 'evacuation' for fear of the

repercussions holding such a policy publicly would have in liberal quarters in the Allied capitols.

Jabotinsky sought to work together with these governments to promote the idea of postwar

Jewish evacuation and help them frame such policies as progressive rather than anti-Jewish. In

an April 1940 meeting between Abraham Abrahams, director of the political department of the

London office of the Revisionist movement and a close associate of Jabotinsky, and Józef

Retinger, personal secretary of Władysław Sikorski, prime minister of the Polish Government in

Exile, Abrahams told Retinger that he views the postwar goals of the Zionist Revisionist

movement as fully in line with those of Poland, and that he is willing to put the entirety of the

Revisionist movement under the leadership of the Polish government. He also specifically asked

for Polish financial support in order of fund the movement's propaganda efforts in America in

favor of a Jewish army and postwar transfer of Eastern European Jews to Palestine.[250] During the

same months Abrahams also met Benes to discuss similar matters and later remarked that Benes'

views have brought him "great solace." In August that year Abrahams sent Benes a

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[249] Vladimir Jabotinsky, "Shall We Try?" *Hamedina* April 5, 1940. On Jabotinsky's opposition to a Polish deceleration on equality see also, Jabotinsky, *The Jewish War Front,* chapter 8.

[250] Pawel Korzec, "General Sikorski und Seine Exilregierung zur Judenfrage in Polen im Lichte von Dokumenten des Jahres 1940," *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 30 2 (1981), 256 see also David Engel, "The Frustrated Alliance: The Revisionist Movement and the Polish Government in Exile, 1939-1945," *Studies in Zionism* 7 (1986), 20.

memorandum outlining the Revisionist policy on postwar Jewish evacuation – which specifically

mentioned the movement's support for transferring Jewish refugees to Palestine after the war

rather than restoring their rights, property and professions:

> "The Jews have, by deliberate policy of the German government, been expelled from
>
> their economic positions en masse, and these positions have been taken by non-Jews.
>
> This means that the vacuum left by Jews has been filled, and the Jewish position cannot
>
> be restored except at the expense of the vast masses of non-Jewish populations in many
>
> European countries. Such a restoration of the Jewish economic positions would produce a
>
> new set of adverse repercussions more intense than anything that has gone before. This
>
> fact has become obvious even to the opponents of evacuation and has driven many of
>
> them to support the policy."

The memorandum further noted that "those government favorably disposed to the Jews who fear

being castigated as antisemitic," that is, those governments who support Jewish evacuation rather

than their postwar reintegration, should not worry, for the Revisionist movement has started a

propaganda campaign in the United States "for a true understanding of our evacuation policy

with a view of destroying the belief, wherever it exists, that such a policy is inevitably associated

with antisemitism."[251]

Population Transfers in Zionist Revisionist Thought After Jabotinsky

In September 1940 Jabotinsky passed away in upstate New York. His death early in the war

leaves us with very little evidence on the evolution of his thought on population transfers. At the

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[251] A. Abrahams to Edward Benes, August 8 1940, Jabotinsky Papers, Gimel 4 13/5.

same time, Jabotinsky's embrace of population transfers in 1939 and 1940 cannot be dismissed as a trifling moment, even as it stands to contradict much of the views he expressed before the war. Some of Jabotinsky's closest associates and followers in the Zionist Revisionist movement recognized Jabotinsky's embrace of population transfers as significant, and made the support for population transfers a cornerstone of their own general and specifically Zionist wartime politics. Indeed, after Jabotinsky's death, four of his close followers – Benjamin Azkin, Joseph Schechtman, Eliahu Ben-Horin and to a lesser extent also Ben-Zion Netanyahu – argued that the success of the Zionist cause depended on the rise of support for the idea of population transfers in postwar Europe and envisioned themselves as an avant-grade movement that would help popularize these ideas as a solution to the problem of minorities in Eastern Europe and the future of Jews in the Middle East.

The first Zionist Revisionist leader other than Jabotinsky to make support for population transfers a central element of his political activism was Benjamin Akzin (1904-1985). Akzin is primarily known today as a distinguished professor of law and political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Born in Latvia and trained in law in Vienna and at Harvard, Jabotinsky viewed Akzin as a worldly man and in particular prized his keen familiarity with American culture. In the 1930s Jabotinsky appointed Akzin head of the Zionist Revisionist political office in London. In this capacity Akzin helped Jabotinsky reach out to various government legations to promote the 'Evacaution plan'.[252] In 1937 Akzin represented the Revisionist movement in the deliberations over the Peel Commission's partition plan.[253] In 1938 Akzin returned to New-York and shortly after the outbreak of war began publishing a Zionist Revisionist-themed paper,

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[252] Akzin, *From Riga to Jerusalem,* 264-265

[253] Ibid., 276-277.

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American Jewish Chronicle.[254] After Jabotinsky's arrival in the city in March, Jabotinsky asked

Akzin to return to political activity with the movement and to set-up a one man mission in

Washington, DC. In Washington Akzin met with various European ambassadors and American

officials in an effort to promote the two main items on the Zionists Revisionist wartime agenda:

the establishment of a Jewish army and the endorsement of an immigration scheme for millions

of Jewish refugees from Europe to Palestine.[255] In May 1940 Akzin met with William Pell, a

State Department official, to discuss the Allied stance on population transfers and lobby for a

large-scale Jewish immigration scheme after the war. Pell explained that the Allies were in

disagreement over this issue: the British see population transfers as "one of the methods of

Hitlerism against which they fight" while President Roosevelt believes that "such shifts will be

necessary." Akzin then proposed the help of the Zionist Revisionist movement in popularizing

the idea of population transfers "by getting American journalists to take it up as the last word in

constructive liberalism" and by "increasing the political pressure for it by cooperating with the

central European states."[256] In April 1941 Akzin met with Retinger and asked him to raise the

issue of postwar Jewish evacuation from Eastern Europe in future talks with President Roosevelt

as well as for Polish support for the Zionist Revisionist propaganda efforts in the United

States.[257]

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[254] See Akzin's piece on the paper's program in its first issue Akzin, "Our Program," *American Jewish Chronicle* 1 1 (November 1939), 3.

[255] "Dr. Akzin goes to Washington," *Hamashkif*, 22.05.1939, p.2. and "Dr. Akzin's Diplomatic Work in Washington," *Hamashkif*, 05.01.1941, p. 2.On Akzin's work for the Revisionist movement see Akzin's memoir, Benjamin Akzin, *From Riga to Jerusalem: A Memoir* (Jerusalem: Publishing House of the World Zionist Organization, 1989). On his wartime activities see Rafael Medoff, *Militant Zionism in America: The Rise and Impact of the Jabotinsky Movement in the United States, 1926-1948* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press), 45-72 as well as Rinatya Robinson, *A Useful Storm: The Revisionist Movement 1925-1940* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2010), p. 297-317.

[256] Akzin to the Presidency, May 7 1940, Jabotinsky Papers, Gimel 5 / 4 /1.

[257] Minutes of the Zionist Revisionist Executive Meeting, April 12, 1941, Jabotinsky Papers, Gimel 5 1/3.

In August 1940 Jabotinsky passed away from a heart attack – Akzin was among a small group of followers who spent the final hours with Jabotinsky on his deathbed.[258] In the following months Akzin's mission in Washington DC, beset by poor funding from the start, had crumbled. In May 1941 Akzin officially left his work for the Revisionist Movement and took up a research position with the United States Congress, specializing in the study of military laws of occupation. But even as he moved away from fully engaging with Zionist politics, Akzin remained committed to the Zionist Revisionist cause. In September 1941, fulfilling his promise to Pell to help popularize the idea of population transfers, Akzin published an essay in the influential *Harpers* magazine entitled "The Jewish Question after the War."[259] This essay was the first public Jewish defense of the idea of population transfers published during the war written under the spirit of Jabotisnky, whom Akzin referred to in the essay as "the most brilliant thinker and leader in contemporary Jewry." Indeed, the essay offered a distillation of the views Jabotinsky had articulated early in the war. The Nazis had removed Jews in eastern Europe from their homes and professions, and the local population quickly occupied their former positions. Eastern European governments had been clamoring for Jewish emigration in the 1930s – there was no reason to believe that after the war they would "reintegrate the Jews in their possessions and jobs, throwing out the non-Jews who in the meantime had occupied them."[260] Even the leaders of Czechoslovakia – the most liberal of eastern European states – had publicly promised that the Jews would not come back and reclaim their prewar property. And the Polish Government in Exile - though issuing various declarations on Jewish equality to win favor with

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[258] "The Last Hours and the Funeral of the Leader," *Hamashkif*, 19.9.1940, p.2. See also the moving description of the scene of Jabotinsky's heart attack in Akzin's memoir, Akzin, *From Riga to Jerusalem*, 316-317.

[259] Akzin, "The Jewish Question After the War,"

[260] Ibid., p. 431.

"Western liberal opinion" - is prevented only by "diplomatic caution" from declaring its continued commitment to the policy of Jewish evacuation. The aftermath of the war, Akzin thus argued, would see the emergence of an unprecedented Jewish refugee problem. The postwar world, he declared, would be divided with regard to the Jews into two parts "that which the Jews will have to leave and that which they will be unable to enter." The only solution lay in the large-scale transfer of millions of Jewish refugees to Palestine. This transfer will take place as part of a general reorganization of the European order along ethnically homogenous lines after the war. "There are regions in Europe the internal peace of which depends on a better distribution of population than that brought about by history."[261] The transfer of Jews from Europe to Palestine would be the most complex of these many postwar transfers, he argued, because Jews would have to be brought over by sea and because the local population and surrounding states would actively resist this immigration.[262]

Akzin's plan hinted that the transfer of millions of Jews to Palestine after the war will result in "active resistance" by the local population, but he refrained from mentioning the possibility of transferring the Arab population from Palestine.[263] This issue was raised shortly

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[261] Ibid., 436.

[262] Ibid., 437.

[263] Though I did not find evidence Akzin specifically called for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine during the war several details in his memoir indicate his support for such a solution. First, Akzin notes that during his time in London he helped Edward Norman, an American Jewish philanthropist, draft his proposal for an Arab-Jewish population exchange agreement that advocated for the the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians Arabs in Iraq as part of a new irrigation scheme, and for the immigration of Iraqi Jews to Palestine. Akzin notes however that at the time he thought the program was completely unfeasible. Moreover, in a section in his memoirs in which Akzin expounds his views on Zionism and the Palestinians, he notes how his positions on the issue were shaped by the set of problems related to "minorities, refugees and the process called population exchange." "Many Jews decided to replace their precarious life as a minority with territorial concentration … millions of Indians, muslims from India, Greeks, Turks, Germans, French from Algeria and more – some of them willingly, other with force or duress – left their places of residence in country's with a foreign ethnic majority. Arabs from Israel and Jews from Europe and Arab countries joined this stream. If for all other mass swarms of refugees the right solution was resettlement in a new country, especially in countries where their ethnic kin formed a majority, and not the return to their countries of origin, there is no reason to demand a different a solution for Arabs who left Israel. As for the minority that remained in Israel, they have an unquestionable right to live in it as equal citizens. But if among the

after the publication of the article in a conversation he held with the renowned American political scientist and international relations scholar Quincy Wright. Akzin and Wright got to know each other during the war as part of their mutual activities in the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, an international relations think-tank that sought to shape the United States' postwar policy.[264] Wright responded to Akzin's vision of transferring millions of Jews to Palestine after the war by arguing that "there is no room in Palestine for all the Jews that want to emigrate … unless you want to transfer the Arabs." Akzin evaded the issue of Arab expulsion and responded by arguing that Palestine could successfully develop with a population far larger than Wright anticipates is maximal.[265] Akzin left the conversation frustrated. Wright exemplified to him the American liberal point of view that fails to fathom the passions nationalism plays in European life. "He sincerely wishes to see as few differentiations between human beings as possible," Akzin observed in a report on the meeting, "if there is the slightest possibility of assuming that a pretended differentiations does not exist, or is merely artificial, temporary, or skin-deep, he does so with enthusiasm." "He has not experienced nationality and therefore finds it hard to believe such an animal really exists," Akzin added, "an attitude fairly wide-spread among the intelligentsia in the USA."[266] Akzin saw this intellectual mindset as dangerous because it meant that "the Jewish problem would then become a minor one" after the war –

Arab minority there are those who are tired of living as a minority and prefer to emigrate to an Arab country where they will live among their co-nationals, then Zionists, who acted similarly, should understand them."Akzin, *From Riga to Jerusalem*, 308-309 and 147-148.

[264] On Quincy Wright's involvement in the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace see Robert P. Hillmann, "Quincy Wright and the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace," *Global Governance* Vol. 4, No. 4 (Oct.– Dec. 1998), pp. 485-499 as well as Trygve Throntveit, "A Strange Fate: Quincy Wright and the Trans-War Trajectory of Wilsonian Internationalism," *White House Studies*, 10 4 (2011), p. 361-377.

[265] Memorandum, Conversation with Quincy Wright. Central Zionist Archives (CZA), Benjamin Akzin Papers, A401/36. I wish to thank Nathan Kurz for sharing this document.

[266] Ibid.

assimilated into the larger world problems rather than solved as a separate national issue.[267] In

his paper *American Jewish Chronicle*, Akzin crusaded against this "international mindedness"

which he regarded as especially "characteristic of Jews of the present generation" who believe

one ought to "terminate the existence of any specific national or cultural group, as a preliminary

to the brotherhood of nations."[268]

While Akzin did not specifically write about the transfer of Arabs, this second aspect of

Jabotinsky's vision of postwar population transfers would be elaborated on by another prominent

Revisionist Zionist activist – Eliyahu Ben-Horin. A publicist, editor of a Zionist Revisionist daily

and a close associate of Jabotinsky, Ben-Horin would run the Revisionist Zionist movement's

executive from 1935 until 1943. For a few years after Jabotinsky's death, Ben-Horin effectively

served as the head of the Revisionist movement and its office in New York. In 1942 Ben-Horin

took part in drafting the New Zionist Organization resolution on the postwar order declaring that

Palestinian Arabs who do not wish to live in a Jewish state should be offered "full compensation

for the immovable property left behind them" if they choose to immigrate.[269] A year later, Ben-

Horin authored a detailed plan for the transfer of the Arab population from Palestine, published

in a book on the future of the Middle East *The Middle East: Crossroads of History*.[270] The plan

mirrored Jabotinsky's vision: millions of Jews would have to be settled in Palestine after the war;

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[267] Akzin to Wright, September 4, 1942, CZA, Benjamin Akzin Papers, A401/36.

[268] See for example Benjamin Akzin, "Escape into Internationalism?" *American Jewish Chronicle*, 1 3 (December 15, 1939) 3.

[269] Rafael Medoff, *Zionism and the Arabs: An American Jewish Dilemma, 1898-1948* (Connecticut: Prager, 1997), p. 117.

[270] Eliyahu Ben-Horin, *The Middle East: Crossroads of History* (New York: W.W Norton, 1943). The plan was republished in a 1944 essay Ben-Horin, "The Future of the Middle East," *Harper's Magazine* (December 1944), p. 82-90. For more on Ben-Horin and his plan see, Nur Maslaha, *Imperial Israel and the Palestinians: The Politics of Expansion* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), p. 60-62 and Masalah, "From Propaganda to Scholarship: Dr. Joseph Schechtman and the Origins of Israeli Polemics on Palestinian Refugees," *Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies,* Vol. 2 no. 2 (2004), p. 191.

to successfully resettle and absorb such a larger Jewish population, a transfer of the local Arab population to Iraq would be required; and such a transfer would ultimately lead to better relations between Jews and Arabs. "I suggest that the Arabs of Palestine and Transjordan be transferred to Iraq, or the united Iraq-Syrian state," Ben-Horin wrote, "that means shifting about 1.2 million persons. A larger number were involved in the Greek-Turkish exchange of populations: many more in the internal shifts in Russia.[271] Such a large-scale transfer, Ben-Horin argued, should take place within 18 months, the same time period during which the Greek-Turkish exchange of populations was executed. "If both the transfer and colonization of the Arabs and the colonization of the Jews in Palestine are carried out with firmness and justice," Ben-Horin concluded, "the time is not far off when the Jews and Arabs in the Middle East will live in peace and amity."[272] Ben-Horin made clear that this ethnic transformation of Palestine will take place alongside – and will thus be legitimized by – planned population transfers in Europe after the war. As he wrote in an article for *Harper's Magazine* that distilled some of the main argument of his book, "millions of people still have to be shifted after this war: Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia to Germany, Germans from East Prussia to Germany, Poles from provinces which will be incorporated into Russia to Poland, Italians from the Fiume-Trieste region to Italy, and many more." "Why not apply similar measures in the world's orphan area in the Middle East?"[273]

Much like Akzin, Ben-Horin hoped to popularize his population transfers plan by reaching out to prominent statesmen in the United States. In 1943 Ben-Horin became executive director of the American Resettlement Committee for Uprooted European Jewry, an offshoot

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[271] Ben-Horin, *The Middle East,* p. 230-231.

[272] Ibid., p. 234.

[273] Ben-Horin," The Future of the Middle East," p. 87.

organization of the Zionist Revisionist movement in the United Sates. In this capacity he worked closely with Ben-Zion Netanyahu to gain support for the Revisionist program of mass evacuation. The Committee was short-lived, but it left a mark by publishing a full page ad in the *Times* that advocate for the resettlement of Palestinian Arabs in Iraq.[274] In 1945 Ben-Horin met with former US President Herbert Hoover, a Zionist sympathizer who also supported the idea of population transfers during the war, in order to gain his support for his Arab resettlement plan. At the beginning of the war Hoover advocated for a plan for a resettlement of Jews in Alaska. Impressed by Ben-Horin's vision, Hoover revised his plan and began to publicly support Ben-Horin's plan for the transfer of European Jews to Palestine and resettlement of Palestinians Arabs in Iraq.[275]

While both Akzin and Ben-Horin supported population transfers, it was another prominent Revisionist Zionist activist, Joseph Schechtman, who emerged as the staunchest Zionist defender of the idea of population transfers during the war.[276] Schechtman's intellectual trajectory mirrored that of Jabotinsky: both were born in multiethnic Odessa and spent the early years of their Zionist careers fighting for Jewish minority rights. During Ukraine's short-lived independence, Schechtman was elected a member of the Jewish national council and took part in in shaping the first Jewish experience in national autonomy. His friendship with Jabotinsky was forged during this period, as both advocated for the creation of Jewish self-defense units as part of an agreement with the Ukrainian government. In 1925, Schechtman took part in founding the

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[274] Medoff, *Militant Zionism*, p. 95.

[275] For a discussion and critique of this ad and proposal in the Jewish press at the time see Hayim Greenberg, "The Irresponsible Revisionists," *Jewish Frontier* 10 (1943), 6-8. See also Medoff, *Zionism and the Arabs*, 139.

[276] Ben-Zion Netanyahu argued that in fact Schechtman came to support this idea of population transfesr from conversation with him and Ben-Horin on the eve of the war. See Antonio Ferrara, "Eugene Kulischer, Joseph Schechtman and the Historiography of European Forced Migrations," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 46 no. 4 (October 2011), P 722.

Revisionist movement together with Jabotinsky, served for a time as his personal secretary and between 1936-1939, at the height of the campaign for the 'Evacuation plan', acted as Jabotinsky's ambassador in Poland. In this capacity Schechtman published a proposal for the large-scale transfer of Eastern European Jews to Palestine "The Self-Evacuation of the Diaspora," that studied the financial, political and moral aspects of dealing with the problem of the lack of Jewish 'Lebensraum,' as he put it, in Europe.[277] In 1941, Schechtman arrived in the United States and quickly made himself a name as an expert scholar on European population transfers in Europe. Shortly after his arrival in the New-York Schechtman had begun researching and writing a comprehensive study for the Institute of Jewish Affairs on wartime population transfers in Europe, published in 1945 as *European Population Transfers*.[278] At the same time Schechtman also engaged with various other organizations dealing with the questions of postwar migrations. He founded a research group – The Research Bureau on Population Movements – that brought together several scholars of European migrations to discuss postwar policy, such as the Kiev-born Eugene M. Kulischer. Schechtman also served as an advisor for Henry Field's 'Migration Project' (M-Project), commissioned by president Roosevelt to explore avenues for large-scale postwar migrations of refugees. In 1944-1945 Schechtman was also employed as an expert on migrations by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the predecessor of the CIA.[279]

Though Schechtman presented his work as a product of objective scholarship, his interest in population transfers was tied to his Revisionist Zionist politics. Like Jabotinsky, Akzin and Ben-Horin, Schechtman saw the success of the Zionist cause after the war as tied to growing

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[277] Joseph Schechtman, *Selbstevakuation Der Diaspora*, 1937, Jabotinsky Papers, Pey 227 – 1/6.

[278] Joseph B. Schechtman, *European Population Transfers*, *1939–1945* (New York 1946).

[279] For more on Schechtman and Kulischer see Antonio Ferrara, "Eugene Kulischer, Joseph Schechtman," 715-740. I have copies of the protocols of the Research Bureau on Population Movements but currently unable to trace the file.

support for population transfers in Europe and the Middle East. In his works Schechtman thus

sought to legitimize and popularize the idea of population transfers. His 1946 influential study of

wartime population transfers, *European Population Transfers*, *1939-1945*, concluded with a long

survey of the writings of contemporary intellectuals and leaders who voiced support for such a

solution. Schechtman also outlined various guidelines for the execution of successful transfers –

noting the importance of speed in its execution as well as proper planning with regard to the

distribution of evacuee properties. Schechtman also proposed a legal and moral principle for the

justification of population transfers. Since he believed that outright compulsion is immoral and

requires much violence, Schechtman formulated a concept he called 'reverse' or 'negative

option'. According to Schechtman, so long as an individual has a right to opt out of a planned

transfer scheme by declaring loyalty to his home state, transfer plans could not be considered

'compulsory'.[280] Schechtman repeated these arguments in a 1946 essay "Legal Basis for

Population Transfers." "Removing a minority, even when the removal is made compulsory," he

argued in this essay, is a measure aimed to prevent conflict between nationalities. Such actions

constitute "a bold and hard solution" but "the only one worth trying". To judge population

transfers by "the criterion of good and bad is a distortion of the basic idea of the transfer

scheme."[281]

  Schechtman drew on his expertise in European population transfers to justify and

promote plans to resettle the Arab population in Palestine. In 1945 Schechtman advocated for a

population exchange agreement that would provide for the resettlement of Palestinian in Iraq and

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[280] Schechtman, *European Population Transfers*.

[281] Joseph B. Schechtman, "Legal Basis For Population Transfer," *The Central European Observer,* April 26, 1946.

of Iraqi Jews in Palestine along the lines of Ben-Horin's vision.[282] After the war Schechtman continued to advocate for population transfers in Palestine, serving as a consultant for the Israeli government's transfer committee. Established during the 1948 war, the committee's main function was to provide the new Israeli government with knowledge relating to the political, legal and international aspects that would allow it to prevent the return of Arab refugees who were expelled and fled during the war. In this capacity Schechtman drafted a new and detailed proposal for a population exchange agreement between Israel and Iraq.[283] Unlike his 1945 plan, this new plan sought to deal with the reality of a massive Arab refugee problem in the wake of the 1948 war. "The question is no longer that of transferring a sedentary, deeply-rooted Arab population," Schechtman observed, but rather that of the reality of some 500,000 to 600,000 already displaced Palestinian Arabs."[284] Rather than resettling those refugees in their former homes – where they will live as a minority among a Jewish majority – Schechtman proposed their resettlement in Iraq in exchange for the departure of Iraqi Jews to Palestine.[285] Schechtman also called for the transfer of some of the remaining Arab minorities in Israel as part of the plan. "There is every reason to believe that uprooted Palestinian Arabs would be responsive to plans

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[282] Joseph B. Schechtman, "The Jewish Minority in Iraq," *YIVO Bleter,* (New York: 1945), 218-235.

[283] As Masalha points out, the Israeli government funded this research. In 1949 Schechtman republished this study in a book on population transfers in Asia. See Masalha, *From Propaganda to Scholarship,* p. 191 and Joseph B. Schechtman, *Population Transfers in Asia* (New York: Hallsby Press, 1949), p. 84-141. For more on the transfer committee see Benny Morris, "Yosef Weitz and the Transfer Committees, 1948–49," *Middle Eastern Studies* 22 4 (1986), 522-561; Elhanan Oren, "From the Transfer Proposal of 1937-1938 to 'Transfer de Facto' of 1947-8," *Iyunim beTkumat Israel*, 7 (1997) 75-85 [in Hebrew]. See also paper by Rafi Stern "Uncertain Comparisons: Zionist and Israeli Perceptions of India and Pakistan during Decolonization."

[284] Schechtman, *Population Transfers in Asia*, p. 131.

[285] Schechtman's conviction that the Yishuv leadership and then the State of Israel should have "finished the job" in 1948 and expelled the entirety of the Arab population was voiced by several other Zionist activists. Perhaps the most glaring case is that of Avraham (Sharon) Schwadron, who was well known in the 1930s as a proponent of Arab expulsion. In his 1948 booklet "Chauvinistic Comments on the Arab Issue" Schwadron dismissed as disingenuous the voices on the Israeli left and Mapai party that lamented the expulsion of the Arabs as a moral travesty, and argued that the conversation in Israel should focus only on how to promote the departure of more Arabs. See Schwadron, *Chauvinistic Comments on the Arab Issue* (Tel-Aviv, 1949) [in Hebrew].

for their resettlement in Iraq," he concluded, "with full compensation by the state of Israel for property left behind."[286]

As we have seen, following Jabotinsky's death three prominent Zionist Revisionist activists promoted the idea of population transfers. While we have no evidence indicating their positions were shaped directly by Jabotinsky, such an assumption seems plausible given their lifelong political association with him. Moreover, all three had begun to advocate for population transfers only after Jabotinsky had done so. And all three were committed to preserving and fostering Jabotinsky's political legacy after his death. As Ben-Horin wrote in a 1942 special issue of *Zionews*, the organ of the Revisionist movement in the United States, marking the third anniversary of Jabotinsky's death, "our main responsibility is to live up to the standards and ideals of the man who entrusted us" with his legacy. And though "there is obviously no way of determining whether our interpretations of his will are correct or not… we must constantly be on guard against misrepresentations of his legacy."[287] It is thus remarkable to note that Schechtman had dedicated his own contribution to the memory of Jabotinsky that year to the subject of Jabotinsky's newfound support for population transfers. Schechtman's piece hailed Jabotinsky's "courage to face realities." "On more than one occasion," Schechtman observed, Jabotinsky "made effective revisions in our methods and tactics." Perhaps the most telling example, Schechtman argued, was seen in Jabotinsky's "reaction to the idea of transfer and exchange of populations." Schechtman recalled how Jabotinsky expressed "complete disapproval" of such methods when he learned about the 1937 Royal Commission's proposal to expel the Arab population of Palestine. Yet only two years later, in response to the agreement between Hitler

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[286] Schechtman, *Population Transfers in Asia,* p. 133.

[287] Eliyahu Ben-Horin, "Looking Back at Jabotinsky," *Zionews* Vol. 14 no. 29-30 (1942), p. 15.

and Mussolini to resettle the German minority from South Tyrol in the territories of the Reich, Jabotinsky had completely changed his views on the subject. Jabotinsky had recognized that the transfer of populations had now become the "reality" across Europe and revised his position accordingly. "It is noteworthy that even the greatest enemies of World Jewry," Schechtman concluded, " … were deemed worthy of emulation by him if there was any basis of truth in their actions."[288] More than a decade later Schechtman returned to the subject of Jabotinsky's support for population transfers in his 1956 biography of Jabotinsky *The Life and Times of Vladimir Jabotinsky. Fighter and Prophet. The Last Years.* Yet whereas in 1942 Schechtman had argued that Jabotinsky had begun to support population transfers in 1939, in his biography Schechtman argued that Jabotinsky had in fact first supported this vision in 1937. As evidence Schechtman cited a conversation Jabotinsky held with Edward Norman, an American-Jewish philanthropist, in which Jabotinsky responded approvingly to a proposal for a voluntary Arab transfer from Palestine to Iraq as part of a large scale development and irrigation plan.[289] Schechtman also noted that in Jabotinsky's last book, *The Jewish War Front*, he had "fully endorsed the idea of a voluntary Arab transfer from Palestine," though that he still insisted such transfers were not a mandatory requirement for greater Jewish immigration to Palestine.[290] Schechtman's effort to read Jabotinsky' support for population transfers back to 1937 does not bode with the historical record. As Schechtman himself noted in his 1942 essay, Jabotinsky had fiercely rejected the Peel Commission's transfer proposal at the very same time.[291] It seems that Schechtman sought to read back Jabotinsky's support for population transfers into the mid-late 1930s, perhaps in order

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[288] Joseph B. Schechtman, "Our Mentor – The Gentile," *Zionews* Vol. 4 no. 12-14 (1942), p. 25.

[289] Schechtman, *The Life and Times of Vladimir Jabotinsky. Fighter and Prophet. The Last Years* (New York: Eshel Books, 1986). Schechtman's notes that he had private access to Norman's diary from the period.

[290] Ibid., p. 324-326.

[291] Schechtman, "Our Mentor,"

to portray his mentor as a steadfast supporter of population transfers like he himself had become.[292] This portrayal of Jabotinsky as a supporter of Arab expulsion has vanished from the historical memory and subsequent historiography. Scholars and the public overlooked the Jabotinsky Schechtman portrayed in his writings and instead privileged the memory of Jabotinsky of the early 1900s to the late 1930s as the defender of minority rights.

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[292] Schecthman's argument had little impact on the historiography except for being discussed in Shabtai Teveth's 1989 paper "The Idea of Population Transfers in Zionist Thought." Teveth responds to Schechtman and asserts that though there are indications Jabotinsky had become more fond of the idea of population transfers in his last years, "based on Jabotinsky's writings" there are no indications he conceived of a plan to transfer the Arab population from Palestine. Still, Teveth concludes that had Jabotinsky experienced the holocaust, "which ended any hope of bringing eight million Jews to Palestine," he would have supported the transfer of Arabs from Palestine as the only means possible to establish a Jewish majority in the country. Tevet, *The Idea of Transfer*, p. 15 and 21.

Chapter Three

'If a Jewish state were possible, I would be strongly for it': David Ben-Gurion, Chaim Weizmann and Jewish-Arab 'Parity'

In January 1930 Chaim Weizmann, president of World Zionist Organization, sent a letter to his friend Felix Warburg, a German-born American Jewish philanthropist and Zionist activist. "If a Jewish state were possible," Weizmann wrote, "I would be strongly for it." "I am not for it because I consider it unrealizable. If Palestine were an empty country, the Jewish State would have come about, whether we want it or not." "Palestine being what it is," he added, "the Jewish state will not come about whether we want it or not – unless some fundamental change takes place which I cannot envisage at the present."[293]

Weizmann's letter is a riveting document – a confession by the architect of the Balfour Declaration that a Jewish state will not come into being. And it is a strange document in light of subsequent history, the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine in 1948. Yet Weizmann's historical assessment was not altogether wrong. The letter was written following the 1929 riots, the first full-fledged revolt by the Palestinian Arab population against growing Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine that saw a death toll in the hundreds.[294] Following the riots the British government began to significantly review its policy in Palestine. One month after Weizmann wrote his letter, the British government issued the Passfield White Paper that called to severely limit Jewish immigration and land purchases and for the formation of an Arab majority legislative council. And though the British government soon qualified the Passfield

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[293] Weizmann to Felix M. Warbug, 16 January 1930, Chaim Weizmann, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann* (series A. Hereafter Weizmann's letters), Vol. 14, p. 201.

[294] On the 1929 riots as a watershed moment in the history of the *Yishuv* see Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929*, (Waltham, Ma: Brandeis University Press, 2015) and Avraham Sela, "The 'Wailing Wall' Riots (1929) as a Watershed in the Palestine Conflict," *The Muslim World* 84.1-2 (1994), p. 60-94.

White Paper, it nonetheless reflected an emerging policy shift away from privileging Zionist

aspirations in Palestine and toward promoting greater political rights and representation for the

Palestinian Arab majority. This new policy direction culminated in the adoption of the 1939

White Paper. The White Paper famously capped Jewish immigration to Palestine, but it is largely

forgotten that it also stipulated that the establishment of a "Jewish national home" had been

completed, that the mandate will be terminated within ten years and that Palestine be declared an

independent Palestinian state – that is, a state with an Arab majority and a Jewish minority.

Zionism had become a road not taken.[295]

The fear of the change of course in British policy during the 1930s prompted Zionist

leaders to promote various visions of political compromise based on the idea that Palestine

would become a shared Jewish-Arab state. After 1929, Weizmann openly recognized that

Palestine would have to become be a bi-national state and for several years was willing to agree

to a political settlement in which Jews would become no more than a 40% minority in Palestine.

David Ben-Gurion, chairman of the Zionist Executive in Jerusalem, was at the forefront of

attempts to negotiate a political compromise with Arab leaders. The guiding principle of Ben-

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[295] The radical change in British policy toward Jewish aspiration in Palestine in the 1930s has been carefully documented among scholars of British colonial policy. As Ron Zweig put it, "the changing international situation since the mid-1930s had gradually transformed the context of British policy throughout the Middle East. British support for the creation of a Jewish National Home, and the lofty idealism which had inspired its colonial policy in Palestine gave way to a new calculus of interests and influence in which the Jewish community in Palestine – or so it was believed in London – had nothing to offer." Still, scholars of Jewish national thought continue to read the history of Zionism in the period form the vantage point of 1948 – as if a Jewish state was to soon emerge, and not from 1939 – the point in which the promise of establishing a Jewish national home was terminated. One of the main goals of the first half of this chapter is to more firmly connect the literature on British policy with the literature on Zionist policy and show how the perception of the change in British policy pushed Zionist leaders to adopt radical compromise approaches. See Ron Zweig, "The Palestine Problem in the Context of Colonial Policy on the Eve of the Second World War," in Michael Cohen and Martin Kolinsky (eds.) *Britain in the Middle East in the 1930s: Security Problems, 1935-1939* (London, Macmillan: 1992), 206. For a comprehensive study of British policy in Palestine in the period see Michael Cohen, *Britain's Moment in Palestine: Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917-1948* (London: Routledge, 2014). On the attitudes of the British Labor and Conservative parties to Zionism see Michael J. Cohen, "Weizmann and the British: Triumph and Tragedy," in Uri Cohen, Meir Chazan (eds.) *Weizmann. The Leader of Zionism* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Institute for Jewish History, 2016) as well as Joseph Gorny, *The British Labour Movement and Zionism, 1917-1948* (London: Routledge, 1983).

Gurion's compromise vision was the concept of political parity – though he insisted that Jews

ultimately become a majority in Palestine, he proposed a future state based on 50%-50% power-

sharing arrangement between Jews and Arabs in all government and state functions. Political

parity had in fact become the official political program of some of the main political institutions

of the Zionist movement during the 1930s. In 1931 the socialist *Mapai*, the main political party

in the *Yishuv*, adopted parity as its political program, and in 1936 the Jewish Agency, the

executive arm of the Zionist movement, endorsed parity as its proposal to the Palestine Royal

Peel Commission.[296]

Scholars have interpreted the prevalence of autonomist, federal and binational ideas in

interwar mainstream Zionist thought in two radically different ways. Historians such as Anita

Shapira, Yosef Gorny and Shabtai Teveth analyzed many of these visions in their works but

tended to dismiss them as an expression of a short-lived tactical concession, a deliberate ruse, or

a set of utopian ideas that existed alongside the "true" commitment of Zionist leaders to establish

a Jewish nation-state in Palestine.[297] In a recent influential article "Zionism and the Nation-State:

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[296] In October 8 1936, three days before the Peel Commission arrived in Palestine, the executive of the Jewish Agency issued a declaration to the effect that "the supreme organs of the Jewish agency have time and again declared the principle of non-domination as the guiding policy of the Executive towards the Arab population in Palestine. … The Executive of the Jewish Agency therefore resolves that the principle of constitutional parity should be proposed by the Jewish Agency as the basis of our proposals with regard to the form of government and representation of inhabitants of this country." "Resolution of the Executive," November 8 1936, Ben-Gurion Archives and Library, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (hereafter Ben-Gurion Papers), item 249433. On the adoption of the principle of political parity by *Mapai* see Anita Shapira, *Land and Power* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1992), p. 263-264 [in Hebrew].

[297] Indeed, in a number of pioneering studies published in the 1980s and early 1990s Yosef Gorny, Anita Shapira and Shabtai Teveth among others reexamined the history of Zionist political thought and highlighted Zionist support for federal ideas of Jewish-Arab power sharing in the mandate period. Yet these scholars overall downplayed the significance of these federalist and autonomist ideas for understanding the development of Zionist policy in the period. Gorny portrayed these federalist visions as a set of utopian ideas that existed alongside, without necessarily influencing, the struggle of Zionist leaders for a Jewish state. And Shapira and Teveth portrayed Zionist leaders' support for federalism and parity as a tactical approach or even a deliberate ruse aimed at confusing the British authorities and Arab leaders as to the ultimate goal of the Zionist movement, the establishment of a Jewish nation-state. As we shall see in this chapter, these works however did not consider the possibility that was palpable in the minds of Zionist leaders in the period: that the Zionist enterprise might fail in the face of growing Arab opposition and an increasingly anti-Zionist British policy, and thus that these federalist programs reflected a form of genuine

A Reevaluation," Dimity Schumsky proposed a diametrically opposed interpretation.[298]

Criticizing historians of Zionism for anachronistically imposing the post-1948 category of a

Jewish nation-state on interwar Zionist thought, Schumsky argued that mainstream Zionist

leaders such as Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky did not strive for, and in fact ideologically opposed,

the creation of Jewish a nation-state. Instead, drawing on ideas of national autonomy and

minority rights that shaped Jewish national thought in Eastern Europe, these leaders envisioned

Palestine as a Jewish-Arab state with extensive national autonomy for each national group.[299]

Schumsky's work importantly highlights the rich history of opposition by Zionist leaders and

thinker to the idea of the ethnic nation-state. As we have seen in the previous chapter in the case

of Jabotinsky, and as we shall in this chapter in the cases of Ben-Gurion and Weizmann, the

rejection of the ethnic nation-state and support for a state based on extensive autonomy for Jews

and Arabs in Palestine form central themes in these leaders' interwar politics and thought. But

Schumsky's account nonetheless too sweepingly dismisses the insights of an earlier generation

of historians, and ultimately obscures our understanding of the history of Zionism. For the main

goal of Zionist leaders in the interwar period was not to establish a bi-national Jewish Arab state

in Palestine, but rather a Jewish demographic majority. Once Jews constitute a majority, Zionist

leaders insisted, they will oversee the establishment of a Jewish-Arab state based on extensive

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political compromise rather than a skillful trick in the inevitable march toward statehood in 1948. See Shapira, *Land and Power,* Yosef Gorny, *The Arab Question and the Jewish Problem* (Am Oved: Tel-Aviv, 1985) [in Hebrew], Gorny, *Policy and Imagination: Federal Ideas in Zionist Political Thought* (Jerusalem: Yad Yizhak Ben Zvi, 1993) [in Hebrew], Shabati Teveth, *Ben-Gurion and Palestinian Arabs: From Peace to War* (Jerusalem: Schoken, 1985) [in Hebrew], Teveth, "Ben-Gurion and the Arab Question," *Katedra* 43 (1986), 52-68.

[298] Dimitri Schumsky, "Zionism and the Nation-State: A Reconsideration" *Zion* 77 (2012), p. 223-254.

[299] It is important to note that Schumsky overlooks the period spanning roughly between 1918-1922 – before, as we shall see, British began to cap Jewish immigration - in which a significant number of Zionist leaders and thinkers – from Max Nordau and Israel Zangwill to Weizmann and Ben-Gurion – believed a significant Jewish majority and thus a Jewish state could be established within a few years through massive Jewish immigration. On this see period see Yisrael Kolet,"The Zionist Movement and the Arabs," in *Zionism and the Arab Question* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Institute, 1979) [in Hebrew].

autonomy for each group – a dream version of the state of nationalities Jews were clamoring for in Eastern Europe. The primacy of Zionist leaders' commitment to the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine over instituting Arab-Jewish autonomy and equality has enormous consequences for our understanding of the history of these federalist and autonomist visions. During the 1920s, as we shall see, when Ben-Gurion and Weizmann believed gradual Jewish immigration under the terms of the mandate would ultimately lead to the establishment a Jewish majority, they opposed any Jewish-Arab compromise vision that would have changed the *status quo* in a manner that would grant Palestinian Arabs greater political representation, autonomy and rights. Such arrangements, they argued, would have to await the establishment of Jewish demographic superiority. Only from the late 1920s, once Ben-Gurion and Weizmann believed that the British were reneging on their support for Zionist aspirations and feared for the possibility of ever establishing a Jewish immigration, did they begin to push for an immediate political compromise agreement with the British and Arab leaders for Jewish-Arab power-sharing in Palestine. The current discussions on the one-state solution foster a new historical imagination that allows us to reexamine the history of the *Yishuv* in the interwar period from the perspective that seemed most plausible to its contemporaries. During the 1930s a Jewish nation-state appeared as a far off dream, and Zionist leaders recognized that Palestine was either to become a shared Jewish-Arab state or an Arab nation-state.

This chapter offers a new interpretation of the history of federalist and autonomist ideas in interwar Zionist thought by emphasizing the importance of the question of the Jewish majority to the development of their views. The chapter is divided into two parts that explore the development of Ben-Gurion and Weizmnan's thinking on Jewish-Arab autonomy respectively. There are three main reasons why Ben-Gurion and Weizmann are the focus of this chapter. First,

they were two of the most prominent leaders of the Zionist movement in the interwar years.

Second, during the 1930s both were at the forefront of attempts to promote and negotiate a

federal compromise plan in Palestine. Lastly, as we shall see in the next chapter, in 1942 both

were the main architects of the Biltmore program – the first program in which Zionist leaders

explicitly laid out the demand for the establishment of a Jewish nation-state in Palestine.

Analyzing why they shifted from supporting Jewish-Arab parity in the 1930s to a Jewish nation-

state during the war thus offers a particularly compelling lens to examine the main theme of this

dissertation – the wartime decline of autonomist visions of Jewish nationalism and the

emergence of a Jewish ethnic nation-state as the dominant form of Jewish nationalism.

Ben-Gurion and Federal Autonomy

From his very first days of political activism and until at least the late 1930s Ben-Gurion

envisioned Jewish settlement in Palestine as a form of territorial cultural autonomy rather than a

project aimed at the creation of a Jewish ethnic nation-state. In embracing this vision Ben-Gurion

sought to adapt the categories of Jewish nationalism and autonomism prevalent in Jewish

national thought in Eastern Europe of his day to the political realities in Palestine. Yet whereas

Jewish supporters of autonomism in Eastern Europe such as Simon Dubnow advocated for

Jewish cultural rights as a dispersed community within a larger imperial framework, Ben-Gurion,

deeply influenced by Ber Borochov's ideas, insisted that Jewish autonomy in Palestine be

concentrated in a specific territory.[300]

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[300] For the influence of Ber-Borochov on Ben-Gurion see Yisrael Bartal, "From the 'Holy Land' to an Historical
Land': Zionist Autonomism in the Early Twentieth Century," in Aviezer Ravitsky (ed.), *The Land of Israel in
Jewish Thought in the Twentieth* (Jerusalem: Yad Yizhak Ben-Zvi, 2004) [in Hebrew] as well as Yosef Gorny's
study of the transformation of Poaeli Zion in Eretz Yisrael's political thought from the beginning of the twentieth
century until the First World War, Gorny, "From the Idea of Autonomy to a State," *Keshet* 39 10, 119-139 [in
Hebrew].

After he first arrived to Palestine in 1906, Ben-Gurion was elected head of the small *Poaeli Zion in Eretz Yisrael* party, an offshoot of the *Poalei Zion* movement in Russia. Ben-Gurion and the members of the party advocated for the development of Palestine as a site of Jewish territorial autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. After the 1908 Young Turk revolution, Ben-Gurion was enthralled by the possibility of reforming the empire into a state of nationalities, much like the vision Jewish and other nationality groups were advocating for in the Tsartist and Habsburg empires. Ben-Gurion Ottomanized: he relocated to Istanbul to study law, grew a mustache, dressed in Ottoman garb and planned to be elected to represent Jews in the Ottoman assembly. Ben-Gurion sought to organize the Jewish communities across the empire into a national movement and urged Jews to declare loyalty to the Ottoman state, give up on their foreign citizenships and the various privileges they enjoyed through the system of capitulations. Even after the outbreak of the Great War Ben-Gurion remained committed to a vision of Jewish autonomy within an Ottoman federation. Only after he was banished from the empire in 1915 by an official decree did his faith in a Jewish alliance with the empire wane. Based in New York for the remainder of the war, Ben-Gurion advocated for applying international pressure through the United States to gain the right for Jewish territorial autonomy in what he believed would still be an Ottoman Palestine after the war.[301]

The aftermath of the war radically transformed the political status of Palestine. The Ottoman Empire was dismembered and Palestine became a British mandate under the supervision of the League of Nations. In the 1917 Balfour declaration the British Empire

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[301] See David Ben-Gurion, "Ahead of the Future," originally published August, 1915 and republished in 1931 in Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors* (Tel-Aviv: Davar, 1931) [in Hebrew]. *We and Our Neighbors* is a collection of writings on autonomism and Jewish Arab relations assembled by Ben-Gurion in 1929 and published in 1931. The volume is accessible online as part of a project to publish Ben-Gurion's writings. All references to *We and Our Neighbors* refer to this version: http://benyehuda.org/ben_gurion/index.html. For Ben-Gurion's views on Palestine in the Ottoman period see Yisrael Bartal, "From the 'Holy Land' to an Historical Land'" as well as Gorny, "From the Idea of Autonomy to a State." For Ben-Gurion's personal life in this period, see Anita Shapira, *Ben-Gurion: Father of Modern Israel* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 2015), 25-43.

expressed its commitment to develop Palestine as a "Jewish national home". From the early

1920s onward Ben-Gurion repeatedly insisted that main goal of the Zionist movement in these

new political conditions was to establish a state. In 1925 Ben-Gurion declared, "Zionism means

the establishment of a state. Once you take out of Zionism this inner principle, it becomes

neutered and empty."[302] Yet the state Ben-Gurion envisioned during the 1920s and early 1930s

was not an ethnic-nation state – he insisted that his goal was not to establish a "Prussian-like"

state - but a federated state consisting of two separate Jewish and Arab autonomous communities

within a larger imperial or federative framework. As Ben-Gurion put it in a 1925 speech,

"National Autonomy and Neighborly Relations," the ethnic diversity of Palestine made it

inconceivable that a single set of laws and government - be it Arab or Jewish - be established in

Palestine. Comparing the fledgling Jewish autonomy in Palestine to the struggle of Jews for

national rights in Eastern Europe, Ben-Gurion insisted that Jews could not justifiably clamor for

minority rights in Eastern Europe if at the same time they seek to establish dominance and rule

over the Arab population in Palestine.[303] Underlying this view was Ben-Gurion's conviction that

Jews in Palestine were to remain a minority for decades to come. During this period Ben-Gurion

advocated for the immigration to Palestine of select, young Jewish socialist pioneers rather than

the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe. Palestine would thus be in his view a Jewish national

center that would thrive alongside, not instead of, the vibrant Jewish cultural centers in Eastern

Europe. And though Ben-Gurion hoped Jews would ultimately constitute a majority in Palestine,

he believed this would be a slow process requiring decades of immigration. In the late 1920s

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[302] David Ben-Gurion, "Two Factors," excerpt from speech at 14th congress of the World Zionist Organization, 1925, republished in Ben-Gurion, *We and our Neighbors*.

[303] David Ben-Gurion, "National Autonomy and Neighborly Relations," originally delivered as a lecture before the second voter assembly of Ahdut Ha'voda party and published in *Kunrtas*, the party's journal. Republished in Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*.

Zionist demographer Arthur Ruppin estimated that even under a favorable immigration rate of 30,000 Jews per year, it would take some 30 years for the number of Jews in Palestine to equal that of Arabs. Ben-Gurion was familiar with Ruppin's calculations, and estimated at the time that the soonest Jews could become a majority would be within twelve years, and then too under an utopian scenario - that 30,000 Jewish immigrants settle in Palestine each year, that all of those immigrants will be married young couples, and that each couple would give birth to five children.[304]

Though Ben-Gurion repeatedly spoke in favor of a future state based on extensive autonomy for Jews and Arabs, it is important to emphasize that in the 1920s he actively opposed the two dominant initiatives of Zionist leaders to increase Arab representation and rights in Palestine through an agreement with Arab and British leaders that would revise the terms of the mandate. Following a series of violent clashes in 1921, the British issued the Churchill White Paper that sought to balance Jewish and Arab claims over Palestine and adjusted Jewish immigration to the principle of the 'absorptive capacity of the land' – aimed as an assurance to Arab leaders that Jewish immigration will not result in Arab economic displacement. Based on this new line of policy, High Commissioner Herbert Samuel proposed the establishment of a legislative council with an Arab majority that would give Palestinian Arabs a prominent voice in the administration of the land. The legislative council was a legal instrument developed at the same time by the British colonial office to deal with ethnic strife in other mixed territories throughout the Empire in order to fulfill its mandate promise of promoting self-determination of

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[304] "Summary of Conversation between Brit Shalom and the Executive Organ of the Histadrut," Ben-Gurion papers, item 233656. Also Republished in Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*.

the local populations.[305] According to Samuel's proposal the council will be prevented from

legislating against the Balfour deceleration. In its 1924 assembly, the socialist Zionist party

Ahdut Ha'avoda debated its official policy toward the council idea. Moshe Kaplinsky, a

prominent voice within the socialist Zionist movement, proposed endorsing the council program

with variations and called for the establishment of a legislative body in Palestine based on two

chambers – a lower chamber elected on a proportional basis and a higher chamber elected on the

basis of political parity between Jews and Arabs. The higher chamber will be allowed to veto any

legislation that violates the Balfour declaration. Kaplinsky argued that the Zionist movement

would not be able to justify its settlement enterprise for long if it continues to base its policy on

the support of a British colonial enterprise that denies representation from the majority of the

population, especially as Arab nationalism is rising throughout the Middle East.[306] Ben-Gurion

vigorously rejected Kaplinsky's proposal. Any political program that would see the

establishment of a parliament or a legislative assembly favors the Arab majority, he argued, and

thus means "giving away the Land of Israel to the Arabs."[307] Ben-Gurion thus insisted that

Zionist leaders should oppose any change to the *status quo* until the demographic reality favors

the Jews. This line of reasoning also informed Ben-Gurion spirited rejection of Brit Shalom's

advocacy for an agreement with Arab leaders over the creation of a council and a bi-national

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[305] For a history of plans for the creation of a legislative council in Palestine see Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National movement, 1918-1929* vol. 1 (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1974) and Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement, 1929-1939: From Riots to Rebellion* vol. 2 (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1977); Yehuda Haim, "Zionist Policies and Attitudes towards the Arabs on the Eve of the Arab Revolt, 1936," *Middle Eastern Studies* vol. 14, no 2 (1978), 211-233. Susan Pedersen has recently emphasized the importance of the legislative council idea in the 1930s as a barometer for the increasing importance of Palestinian Arab self-determination in Palestine in that decade. See Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 356-393.

[306] Gorny, *The Arab Question*, 178-179.

[307] David Ben-Gurion, "On the Form of Government and Neighborly Relations," lecture at Ein Harod, republished in *We and Our Neighbors*.

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state in which Jews would remain a minority.[308] Ben-Gurion participated in the 1925 founding

assembly of Brit Shalom in. In his speech at the assembly, Ben-Gurion argued that while he

shares Brit Shalom's constitutional vision of Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine, he rejects their

proposal to amend the juridical structure of the mandate in a way that could prevent Jews from

ultimately becoming a majority. Brit Shalom proposed at the time that Jews could reach an

agreement with Arab leaders based on the idea that Jews would remain a minority but have an

equal share in government.[309] In a 1927 meeting with the leaders of Brit Shalom, Ben-Gurion

repeated these arguments. Reaching an agreement on the future of Palestine based on the current

demographic reality, he argued, would imply the end of Zionism and the establishment in

Palestine not of a bi-national state but an Arab state.[310]

While Ben-Gurion opposed the various council proposals during the 1920s, he

nonetheless shared many of the moral qualms over the Zionist settlement enterprise expressed by

Kaplinsky and Brit Shalom. Indeed, Ben-Gurion's repeated engagement with, rather than

dismissal of, the moral argumentation of the bi-national Zionist left reflected the value he

assigned to their positions. Steeped in the socialist, democratic and anti-colonial thought of

European socialist movements of his day, Ben-Gurion expressed repeated unease over the

Zionist reliance on a British colonial apparatus for the fulfillment of its settlement goals and the

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[308] On the establishment of Brit Shalom see Shapira, *Land and Power,* 226-238. On the ideological development of Zionist binationalism see Yfaat Weiss, 'Central European Ethnonationalism and Zionist Binationalism', *Jewish Social Studies* 11, 1 (2004), 93–117 as well as Dimtiri Schumsky, *Between Prague and Jerusalem: Prague Zionism and the Idea of a Binational State in Palestine* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center, 2010) [in Hebrew]. For a recent overview and reconsideration of the scholarship on Brit Shalom and Zionist binationalism, see Steven Aschheim, *Beyond the Border: The German Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 6–44.

[309] David Ben-Gurion, "The Debate (In the Assembly of Brit Shalom)," republished in republished in Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*.

[310] David Ben-Gurion, "The Debate (A conversation with the members Brit Shalom)," republished in Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*.

denial of political representation from the Arab majority in Palestine.[311] Moreover, Ben-Gurion

regarded the morality of the Zionist movement as an important form of political capital. In the

1920s and 1930s the Zionist movement competed with the Bund and other socialist movements

for every young Jewish socialist pioneer. Zionism had to be cast as a just enterprise to attract the

Jewish youth.

During the 1920s Ben-Gurion thus developed an elaborate justification for his rejection

of democratization in Palestine and laid out an alternative program to promote Jewish-Arab

autonomy and equality. Ben-Gurion repeatedly argued that the creation of a legislative council

would merely empower the *effendis*, the powerful Arab landlords, at the expense of the

oppressed Arab masses. To rectify this situation, Ben-Gurion insisted that the Zionist movement

ought to raise class-consciousness among the Arab population and take part in the creation of a

new Arab leadership class and an Arab workers movement. Ben-Gurion began publishing a

socialist paper in Arabic with translations of writings by thinkers such as Ferdinand Lassalle,

Maxim Gorky and the Yiddish socialist writer Avrom Reyzen, and took part in the establishment

an Arab workers union modeled after the *Histradrut*, with a self-managed health care and

education systems.[312] The creation of a viable Arab workers movement was to lead to a future

Palestine based on a program Ben-Gurion termed 'the common organization' - a socialist state

consisting of separate Jewish and Arab workers movements, each acting as an autonomous

organization with regard to matters concerning culture and economy but with a common

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[311] David Ben-Gurion, "A Reply to Wedgwood. Lecture at the Fifth Congress of Ahdut Ha'avoda," republished in Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*.

[312] Teveth, "Ben-Gurion and the Arab Question," 199.

government presiding over issues related to the organization of the state - such as the railroads, the mail and those common to all workers.[313]

Ben-Gurion's insistence that development of an Arab working class was a precondition for Arab political representation and autonomy allowed him to morally reconcile his commitment to the preservation of the political *status quo* with socialist democratic principles. Arab political autonomy, Ben-Gurion argued, would have to await the emergence of a new Arab leadership class. It also enabled him to argue – perhaps even to convince himself - that the Arab-Jewish conflict was fleeting, a case of misplaced class anger rather than an ethnic or religious clash. Once the local Arab population will be freed from the oppression of its powerful landowners, the *effendis*, and see the benefits of a socialist organization of the land, Ben-Gurion insisted, Arab hostility toward Jewish immigration would wane. This explanation again reflected Ben-Gurion's imposition of Eastern European Jewish categories of thought on the reality in Palestine. The idea that pogroms and anti-Jewish sentiments among the local population in Eastern Europe were a product of misplaced class hostility was common among all varieties of Jewish socialist thinkers and socialists analysts of antisetmsim of his day - it was a belief that united otherwise opposed groups such as Socialist Zionists and the Bund. Once "the people" were to be freed from class oppression, they argued, amicable relations between Jews and other nationalities will ensue.

The 1929 riots – that constituted the first full-fledged revolt by the Palestinian Arab population against growing Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine and saw a death toll in the hundreds - left a lasting mark on Ben-Gurion's vision of the future of Jewish-Arab

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[313] David Ben-Gurion, "The Rights of Jews and their Neighbors in the Land of Israel," originally published in 1918 and republished in Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*. For more on the idea of the 'common organization' see the following articles and speeches in the same volume "The Jewish and Arab Worker," "Our Attitude Toward the Arab Worker," "To the Arab Workers," "International Workers Union in the Land of Israel," "The Foundations of an International Workers Union."

relations. In his writings from the period Ben-Gurion described the riots as a watershed moment

in the history of the *Yishuv*. The riots, he argued, emboldened the once minority voices among

the Arab community who believed Jewish settlement could be halted by force. They raised

doubts among Jews over the future prospects of settlement activities. And most alarmingly for

him the riots galvanized renewed and serious reservations among the British and international

observers over the moral legitimacy and political costs of supporting continued Jewish

immigration to Palestine.[314] Indeed, after 1929 Ben-Gurion's thinking on Palestine was

significantly shaped by the fear that the British might soon renege on the promise of the Balfour

declaration and seek to establish in Palestine a majority Arab state governed by an Arab majority

national legislator. The 1930 Passfield White Paper, which was officially endorsed by the British

government in response to the 1929 riots, confirmed Ben-Gurion's fear. The White Paper called

to severely limit Jewish immigration and land purchases and for the establishment of an Arab

majority legislative council in Palestine. Though the Passifield Paper was soon qualified by the

British government, the creation of the council remained a central goal of British policy

throughout most of the 1930s. Support for the legislative council program was the cornerstone of

High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope's policy between 1931-1938 - even as he oversaw the

massive demographic growth of the Jewish population in Palestine between 1933-1935.

Wauchope sought to let enough Jews into Palestine to offset Zionist fears of being a small

minority in an Arab majority state while instilling enough alarm among Palestinian Arabs over

the growth of the Jewish *Yishuv* to push them to compromise. This policy blew up in mid-1936

with the outbreak of the Arab Revolt. [315] The revolt spurred the British government to

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[314] David Ben-Gurion, "Our Political Direction after the Riots," Lecture in the founding conference of the Mapai party, January 4, 1929, republished in Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*.

[315] For an analysis of Wauchope's policies see Teveth, *Ben-Gurion*, 211-212.

significantly review its mandate policy, a process that culminated in the 1939 White Paper which, as noted, endorsed the demand of Arab leaders for the establishment in Palestine of an Arab state based on the underlying principle of the legislative council – majority rule.

After 1929 Ben-Gurion concluded that the *status quo* that allowed for gradual Jewish immigration under British support was no longer sustainable and that the Zionist movement ought to take initiative and outline its own program for the constitutional structure of Palestine as an alternative to the legislative council program. From 1929 until mid-1936 Ben-Gurion was at the forefront of attempts to negotiate a political agreement with Arab leaders on terms he hoped both sides could find acceptable. In 1929 Ben-Gurion sought to publish a collection of his writings on autonomism and Jewish Arab-relations in a book entitled *We and Our Neighbors*, which he believed could serve as a testament to his life-long commitment to Jewish-Arab equality ahead of negotiations with Palestinian Arab leaders.[316] From the early 1930s and until 1936 Ben-Gurion organized a series of meetings with Arab leaders in Palestine, among them the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin Al-Huessini, in the hope of reaching an agreement. The guiding principle of Ben-Gurion's new proposals was the concept of political parity - in any future government in Palestine, Ben-Gurion argued, Jews and Arabs should have equal representation - 50%-50% - regardless of each group's proportion of the country's population, but only so long as no caps will be put on continued Jewish immigration (though in 1936 he did propose capping Jewish immigration for the following five years at its 1935 level, which was a high 60,000). Moreover, Ben-Gurion proposed in several occasions the inclusion of this bi-national Palestine within a broader Arab federation in the Middle East – hoping that Arab political unity could offset the fears of Palestinian Arabs over becoming a minority in

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[316] Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*. In the face of opposition to its publication within his party, the publication was delayed until 1931.

Palestine.[317] In November 1929, four months after the outbreak of the riots, Ben-Gurion laid out

a detailed program for the future of Palestine, "Principles for the Establishment of a Government

in Eretz-Yisael" that outlined his vision of Jewish-Arab parity. This plan saw Palestine as

developing in three stages over the next fifteen or so years during which power will increasingly

be devolved from the British mandatory authorities to local Jewish and Arab communities. Once

the number of Jews in Palestine "will not be smaller than the number of Arabs," Palestine will be

declared an independent federal state, based on territorial autonomy for numerous Jewish and

Arab cantons consisting of at least 25,000 residents each, with a central government elected by

two legislative chambers highly reminiscent of Kaplinsky's vision – the first consisting of

absolute parity between Jews and Arabs, and the second representing the cantons and elected on

a proportional basis.[318] Ben-Gurion's specific proposal was rejected in the 1931 *Mapai* executive

meeting that debated the party's attitude toward the British legislative council plan. One of the

participants in the meeting in fact argued the Ben-Gurion's proposal went too far and amounted

to an abandonment of the dream of a Jewish state. Still, the principle of political parity was

adopted as the official *Mapai* policy line, at the time the central political parity in the *Yishuv*.[319]

Ben-Gurion's embrace of parity from 1929 through the late 1930s marked a significant

departure form the vision of autonomy he promoted in the 1920s. During the 1920s, as we have

seen, Ben-Gurion opposed changing the *status quo* in Palestine, rejected the authority of the

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[317] Yehoshua Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity 1930–1945* (London: Routledge, 1986), 65. In September 1934 Ben-Gurion discussed the issue of a federation in his diary. He argued that he believes the legislative assembly will be establish by the British very soon unless an agreement is reached with the Arabs and hoped he could get the Arabs on board for a proposal to share executive powers in the country if Palestine was also to be tied to a larger Arab federation. See Ben-Gurion Dairy, September 4, 1934, Ben-Gurion Papers, item 222617. On Ben-Gurion's fears over the creation of the legislative assembly see also his August 1934 letter to Weizmann, "Protocols of the Meeting of the Executive Committee," August 5, 1934, Ben-Gurion papers, item 231198.

[318] David Ben-Gurion, "Principles for the Establishment of a Government in Eretz-Yisael," November 23, 1929, Ben-Gurion Papers, item 88352. Republished in Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*. For more on this proposal see Yosef Grony, *The Arab Question*, p. 278-279 as well as Teveth, *Ben-Gurion,* p. 160.

[319] Shapira, *Land and Power* p. 263-264 , Teveth, *Ben-Gurion* p. 191, Gorny, *The Arab* Question, p. 289.

existing Arab leadership and insisted that any future constitutional changes in Palestine must be negotiated only once Jews form a majority. After 1929 Ben-Gurion sought to put in motion a plan that would effectively begin to revise the terms of the mandate at a point in which Jew still constituted a minority and eventually turn Palestine into a bi-national Jewish-Arab state. For Ben-Gurion this meant that the Zionist movement will compromise on and ultimately revise its greatest political achievement: The Balfour declaration and the mandate charter's recognition that Palestine was to see the establishment of a Jewish national home, which made no reference to Arab national aspirations.

Ben-Gurion's vision of political parity constituted a middle way between the programs of Jabotinsky and Brit Shalom. Unlike Jabotinsky, who at the time advocated for the establishment of a Jewish majority state as precondition for the subsequent extension of autonomy and minority rights to the Arabs, Ben-Gurion recognized that Palestine would be a state equally shared out of a political agreement between two national groups – the Jews and Palestinian Arabs. But unlike Brit Shalom, Ben-Gurion insisted that Jews should ultimately constitute a majority in such a state. Ben-Gurion's compromise vision did not win over the support of Palestinian Arab leaders. From the point of view of a nascent national movement that demanded turning Palestine into democratic state with majority Arab rule, Ben-Gurion's proposal was preposterous – a demand by a minority to become a majority and enjoy at least 50% representation in all the future political functions of the state.[320]

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[320] For Ben-Gurion's discussions with Arab leaders over these proposals and their reactions see David Ben-Gurion, *My Talks with Arab Leaders* (Jerusalem: Keter Books, 1972). As the records of these conversations were written by Ben-Gurion it is important to treat this book with caution as a historical source.

Even after the outbreak of the Arab revolt in 1936, Ben-Gurion remained committed to his vision of political parity and a federal arrangement in Palestine.[321] Ben-Gurion only abandoned his federal proposals briefly in 1937 (he returned to them again in 1938) when he excitingly endorsed the Peel Commission recommendations, formulated as part of British efforts to conceive of a new policy for the mandate in the midst of violence, which called to partition Palestine and establish separate Jewish and Arab states.[322] Ben-Gurion envisioned the small Jewish state outlined in the proposal as a nucleus of a future larger Jewish state that would be achieved through territorial expansion.[323]

Though Ben-Gurion endorsed the establishment of a Jewish state in 1937, it is important not to overestimate the significance of the Peel Commission episode in its time. The Peel Commission has been the subject of outsized scholarly attention, mainly because its vision of partition and support for population transfers anticipated the reality that emerged in Palestine in 1947/1948. But it ought to be remembered that the commission was far less significant in its historical time than its place in subsequent historiography suggests. The commission's recommendations were at no point adopted as official British policy and were in fact tabled by the government just a few months after they were first proposed. And while the partition aspect of the report was laid to rest, the British government nonetheless remained committed to the immigration component of the report. It is largely forgotten that the Peel Commission outlined a new British immigration approach. From 1922 onward the discussion on Jewish immigration to Palestine was framed by the discourse of the 'economic absorptive capacity of the land.' British

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[321] For an examination of the impact of the Arab revolt on Labor leaders' perception of Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine see Meir Chazan, "Mapai and the Arab-Jewish Conflict, 1936-1939," *Israel Studies Forum*, vol. 24/2 (2009), 28-51.

[322] On Ben-Gurion's attempt to reach an agreement with Arab leaders after the failure of the partition plan see Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion* (Tel-Aviv: Am-Oved, 1975), p. 390.

[323] Yosef Gorny, *The Arab Question*, p. 333.

and Zionist leaders quarreled over what specifically that concept meant - Ben-Gurion and Weizmann argued that the 'absorptive capacity' of Palestine lay in the range of 40-60 thousand Jewish immigrant per annum. Yet the assumption of Zionist leaders always was that the principle of absorptive capacity laid the ground for continued and steady Jewish immigration and ultimately the creation of a Jewish majority. The Peel Commission report however determined that "the principle of economic absorptive capacity … is at present inadequate and ignores factors in the situation which wise statesmanship cannot disregard. Political, social and psychological factors should be taken into account." The report outlined a new approach – a "high level" of Jewish immigration, meaning that Jews under no circumstances become more numerous than a certain percentage of the population defined by the British government. The report put that number at 12,000 Jewish immigrants per year for the next five years.[324] This new policy approach culminated in the adoption of the 1939 White Paper. The White Paper capped Jewish immigration at 10,000 immigrants per year (with an additional 25,000 certificates for Jewish refugees on humanitarian grounds) and capped the "high level" of the Jewish population in Palestine at 30%.[325] This conception - that the Jewish population in Palestine would not exceed some 30% of the population - was widespread in British policy and intellectual circles in the 1930s. This new immigration policy took shape at the same time as the Jewish refugee problem from Nazi Germany became more acute and as Eastern European governments were advocating for the 'evacuation' of masses of their Jewish citizens.

On the eve of the war then Ben-Gurion's attitude toward the future prospects of Zionism was that of great despair. He recognized that Eastern Europe Jewry is "being chocked and

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[324] *Palestine Royal Commission Report. July 1937*, CMD 5479, 306-307. Accessed at http://biblio-archive.unog.ch/Dateien/CouncilMSD/C-495-M-336-1937-VI_EN.pdf

[325] British White Paper of 1939, accessed at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brwh1939.asp

destroyed" but also that the Zionist movement cannot offer a solution to this growing Jewish problem.[326] In his testimony before the Peel Commission Ben-Gurion in fact acknowledged that even under condition of favorable cooperation with the British government it may take 30-40 years to bring a critical mass of millions of Jews from Eastern Europe to Palestine.[327] Privately Ben-Gurion remarked that at most the Zionist movement could succeed in bringing tens of thousands of Jews to Palestine in the near future.[328] The failure of the Zionist movement to offer a site of refuge for European Jews at the moment of their greatest crisis, Ben-Gurion lamented in a riveting May 1938 speech, may make the whole Zionist enterprise obsolete in the eyes of Jews and European governments. Zionism, he declared, will soon become devoid of "its political value" and "fall off the international stage" as a solution to the Jewish problem.[329]

Weizmann and Zionist Binationalism

Much like Ben-Gurion, from the late 1920s until the late 1930s Weizmann too supported a vision of Palestine as a bi-national Arab-Jewish state. In fact, the vision Weizmann proposed during this period was much closer to the bi-nationalism of Brit Shalom than the parity proposals of Ben-Gurion. Whereas Ben-Gurion insisted that under no circumstances will Jews enjoy less than 50% percent political representation in the future state in Palestine, and never yielded from his commitment to establish a Jewish majority, Weizmann proposed a state with minority Jewish

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[326] Cited in Shavit and Reinharz, *The Road to September* 1939 (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 2013) 31.

[327] Palestine Royal Commission, Notes of Evidence Taken on Thursday, 7th January 1937. Ben-Gurion Papers, item 234096.

[328] Shavit and Reinharz, Ibid,

[329] Ben-Gurion, "Our Role in This Moment," Lecture develived at the fourth convention of Mapai, May 7, 1938, Ben-Gurion Papers, item 87969.

representation - around 40%, and publicly doubted the feasibility of establishing a Jewish majority in Palestine.[330]

Weizmann's support for a bi-national political arrangement in Palestine during the 1930s marked a significant departure from the vision of Zionism he had advocated for during and after the First World War and in the early 1920s. Weizmann was the key architect of the 1917 Balfour Declaration. For Weizmann the Balfour declaration promised nothing short of a British commitment to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Palestine was to be Jewish, he argued at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, as much as Britain was British.[331] Weizmann envisioned the British mandate as transitory regime until a significant Jewish population center is established in Palestine.[332] In the early 1920s, as the British began to limit Jewish immigration and increasingly sought to accommodate Arab aspirations in Palestine, Weizmann came tor realize that his vision of imminent Jewish statehood was no longer feasible. Still, he continued to advocate for the establishment of a Jewish majority in Palestine through a slow and gradual process of

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[330] Despite, as we shall see, Weizmann's repeated recognition in the 1930s that the dream of establishing a Jewish state was bygone and willingness to reach a far-reaching compromise that will leave Jews as a minority in Palestine, scholars have tended to downplay this part of his political activity and thought and read Weizmann through the prism of eventual Jewish statehood. Yosef Gorny, who carefully studied Weizmann in this period, nonetheless misinterprets this episode and dismisses Weizmann's activity for bi-nationalism as an expression of short-lived "heretical thoughts″ which were "merely theoretical." Benny Morris writes that Weizmann "toyed around with the idea of bi-nationalism for a short-while" and that his advocacy for bi-nationalism was a "momentary political trick". Morris also suggests Weizmann endorses these views only during 1930-1931 and never agreed to cap Jewish immigration even though, as we shall see, he remained committed to these ideas long after and in 1936 in fact proposed capping Jewish immigration. See Gorny, *The Arab Question*, p. 273 and Morris, "Weizmann and the Arabs," in Benjamin Ze'ev Kedar (ed.), *Chaim Weizmann: The Scientist, the Statesmen and Architect of Science Policy* (Jerusalem: Israel National Academy, 2005)*,* p. 186.

[331] Michael J. Cohen, "Weizmann and the British: Triumph and Tragedy," in Uri Cohen, Meir Chazan (eds.) *Weizmann. The Leader of Zionism* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Institute for Jewish History, 2016), 229.

[332] Yisrael Kolet,"The Zionist Movement and the Arabs," p. 17.

immigration in cooperation with the British mandatory authorities and in accordance with the so-called absorptive capacity of the land.[333]

From the late 1920s, however, Weizmann had begun to express growing doubts over the feasibility of establishing a Jewish majority in Palestine. The major 1927 financial crisis in the *Yishuv* - which led to a significant wave of Jewish out-migration - challenged his evolutionary approach that saw Jewish settlement as growing in tandem with the economic development and increasing absorptive capacity of the land.[334] And similarly to Ben-Gurion, after the 1929 riots, Weizmann became convinced that British policy was moving in the direction of establishing a legislative council and an Arab majority state in Palestine. During this period Weizmann began to advocate for a bi-national Jewish-Arab state, convinced that 'time was running out' and that the Zionist movement ought to reach a constitutional agreement over the future of Palestine. Indeed, from 1929 until the mid 1930s Weizmann described himself as a bi-nationalist and as ideologically akin to Brit Shalom. Much like Brit Shalom, Weizmann realized that a new constitutional arrangement in Palestine would mean that Jews would remain a minority. Unlike Brit Shalom, however, Weizmann doubted such an agreement could be reach directly with Arab leaders and insisted that what mattered most for Zionist aspirations was receiving the support of the British government.

Already in a 1927 speech Weizmann spoke about Palestine as a 'common homeland' for Jews and Arabs.[335] Two years later, Weizmann reiterated his support for Palestine as a 'common

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[333] On Weizmann's shifting outlook on the prospects for Jewish immigration during the mandate period see Aviva Halamish, "Weizmann and Jewish Immigration between the World Wars," in *Weizmann. The Leader of Zionism*, 261-298.

[334] On how economic analysis shaped Zionist views on Jewish immigration see Cohen, "Weizmann and the British," 230-236.

[335] Weizmann, "What we Work For," Speech at the convention of the organization for Eretz Yirsael, Berlin, 27.6.1927,*Weizmann's Speeches* (Tel-Aviv: Mitzpeh, 1936) Vol. 2, p. 420 [in Hebrew].

homeland' in a speech he delivered at the Central Asian Society in London, and argued that the

creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine need not necessarily be the end goal of the Zionist

movement. Jews, Weizmann argued, only demand that the British authorities fulfill the promise

of the mandate "and it is impossible to tell if that would lead to the establishment of a majority."

Moreover, Weizmann insisted that it was important that Palestine be based on a political

arrangement in which Jews do not rule over others and would not be ruled over by others.[336]

Several months later, in a letter he sent Robert Weltsch, editor of the influential Berlin-based

Juedische Rundchau and a prominent supporter of Brit Shalom, Weizmann expounded on his

newfound support for bi-nationalism. In this letter Weizmann portrayed his support for this

vision as his lifelong conviction rather than a more recent development. "As to the principles of

future policy in Palestine and cooperation with the Arabs on bi-national lines," Weizmann wrote,

"I have never swerved from it, and knowing very well that it is unpopular amongst the Zionist I

have never hesitated in giving expression to my views: I have done it only recently in a speech

delivered before the Central Asian Society."[337]

Several months later Weizmann explained the grounds for his support for bi-nationalism

in a letter to his friend and bi-nationalism supporter James Marshall, the son of American-Jewish

leader Louis Marshall. In this letter Weizmann elaborated on these views and expounded on his

pessimistic interpretation of the prospects of Zionism. Weizmann observed how the international

moral climate regarding Zionism transformed between 1917 and 1930. At the time of the Balfour

declaration, Weizmann reminisced, no international observer had asked for the consent of the

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[336] Weizmann, "The Zionist Movement during the Mandate Period," Speech delivered at the Central Asian Society in London, 12.11 1929, *Weizmann's Speeches,* Vol. 3 543-556. See also the following speech where Weizmann discusses Palestine as a common homeland, "Speech at the German Zionist Convention in Jena," January 1930, Ibid., p. 539.

[337] Weizmann to Robert Weltsch, 25 November, 1929, *Weizmann's Letters*, Vol. 14 p. 110.

Arabs for Jewish settlement in Palestine. The Jewish national home was intended to be a Jewish state with the Arab population enjoying equality of rights as individuals rather than as a national group. Indeed, for the expression of their nationality the Arabs in Palestine were expected to turn to "the surrounding Arab countries - Syria, Iraq, Hedjaz, etc." "Was that a dream? I do not know. I mention these facts of almost contemporary history, as history only, without wishing to put them forward, still less to press them, as a postulate. Let them stand as a landmark of the ground which has been lost in these ten years ..." "Now" Weizmann lamented, "we should be content with a bi-national state, provided it was truly bi-national. … But equality in rights between partners as yet very unequal in numbers, requires careful thought and constant watching. Palestine is to be shared by two nations: one is there already in full strength, while the other so far a mere vanguard has reached it." "The force of inertia," Weizmann argued, "works in favor of the Arabs … While we accept the principle of equality between Jews and Arabs in the future Palestinian State, the Arabs press for having that State constituted immediately, because circumstances would enable them now to distort it into an Arab dominion from which no path would lead us back to real equality."[338]

Between l927 and 1929, when Weizmann publicly spoke about his support for binationalism he used the vague term 'a common homeland' - a term that, incidentally, was also officially used in the 1921 Twelfth Zionist Congress to describe the Zionist vision of Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine, and thus could be interpreted by observers as not deviating from the official Zionist policy of his day.[339] In August 1930, however, at the time in which the Hope Simpson Commission was reviewing British policy in Palestine in the wake of the riots, Weizmann first publicly employed the concept of Palestine as a specifically bi-national Jewish-

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[338] Weizmann to James Marshall,17 January 1930, *Weizmann's Letters*, Vol. 14, p. 205-211.

[339] Kolet, "The Zionist Movement and the Arabs," 18.

Arab state in speech before the World Zionist Actions Committee. "We must agree to Palestine becoming a bi-national state," Weizmann declared, "it is impossible to continue the talk about a Jewish State as we did during the period when the world was engaged in war. Our present slogan must be 'peaceful cooperation.'"[340] Zionist leaders, Weizmann argued, must change their "mental outlook and ... consider reality ... We cannot drive the Arabs out of Palestine. Two nations must exist in Palestine." The aim of the Zionist movement, Weizmann added, "is not a Jewish State" but "the creation of the material foundation for an autonomous and productive Jewish unit."[341]

Several weeks after Weizmann delivered this speech, the Simpson Report and the new Passfield White Paper were published and confirmed Weizmann's greatest fears. The new British policy called to significantly limit Jewish immigration and land purchases and establish a legislative council in Palestine. Viewing the Passfield White Paper as a personal failure, Weizmann tendered his resignation from the presidency of the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization.[342] Over the course of the following months, contacts by Weizmann and British Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald led to the issuance in 1931 of the Macdonald letter as an official British interpretation of the Passfield White Paper - the letter in effect cancelled the White Paper clauses against Jewish immigration and land purchases.[343] But even as British policy reverted to a more favorable line, Weizmann remained steadfast in his conviction that there was no alternative to formulating a long-term policy for Palestine along bi-national lines. In May 1931 Weizmann expressed these sentiments in a letter to his friend Gisela Warburg.

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[340] "Palestine Must Become Bi-national State, Weizmann Tells Actions Committee," *JTA*, August 29, 1930 http://www.jta.org/1930/08/29/archive/palestine-must-become-bi-national-state-weizmann-tells-actions-committee

[341] Ibid.

[342] "Weizmann Quits Presidency of Z.O and Jewish Agency Over Simpson Report Situation," *JTA*, October 21, 1930, p. 1 http://pdfs.jta.org/1930/1930-10-21_1788.pdf?_ga=1.226974365.1898787102.1488487265

[343] On Weizmann's role in fighting the Passfield White Paper see Cohen, "Weizmann and the British," 227-260.

"Perhaps I was too far ahead of the other Zionists; they are still stuck with the illusions of the utopian time of Zionism, as it was 25 years ago. I probably see too much of the difficult realities of life here, and of the political situation." "650,000 Arabs live in Palestine," Weizmann wrote, "they do not want to let us in and their numbers increase every day … And all the while we tear each other to pieces in barren discussion about the long term final aims [i.e., the creation of a Jewish state]. I have lost all illusions in these 15 years of unceasing efforts. No manna drops from heaven for us. And God will not destroy the enemies in our path. We live in a cold, hard epoch; miracles do not occur; we have to earn everything by hard and bitter work."[344]

In early July, just a week ahead of the Seventeenth Zionist Congress, Weizmann's views became a topic of a heated debate in Zionist circles. In interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Weizmann expressed his supports for the creation of a legislative council based on Jewish-Arab political parity. Weizmann added in the interview that he is not committed to the establishment of a Jewish majority in Palestine and that the insistence of Zionist leaders – referring mainly to Jabotinsky - to publicly lay out such a demand could be construed by outside observers as an expression of support for the expulsion of Arabs from Palestine.[345] Weizmann's statement was a cause of much uproar in the opening session of the congress. Facing accusations from prominent delegates at the congress that he abandoned the Zionist cause, Weizmann clarified his statement and apologized for insinuating that those who argue for a Jewish majority also support Arab expulsion.[346] But Weizmann nonetheless remained committed to the other principles he outlined in the interview. In his speech at the congress Weizmann reiterated his

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[344] Weizmann to Gisela Warburg, London 25 May, 1931, *Weizmann's Letters*, Vol.15, p. 155-156.

[345] "News Brief," *JTA*, July 14, 1931 http://www.jta.org/1931/07/14/archive/at-the-stormiest-session-of-the-zionist-congress as well as "Weizmann's Interview with JTA," *Davar,* July 14, 1931 p. 1.

[346] "Debate over Weizmann's Interview with JTA" and "Weizmann's Statement," *Davar*, July 08 1931, p. 1 as well as "Weizmann Explains Statement," *JTA*, July 08, 1931 http://www.jta.org/1931/07/08/archive/weizmann-explains-statement

support for a future Palestine based on political equality between "two autonomous cultural"

units which do not rule over one another regardless of each's groups demographic proportion of

the population.[347] Moreover, in a proposal he submitted to the political committee at the congress

Weizmann suggested that the Zionist movement should consent to the creation of a legislative

council with 40% Jewish representation - in other word, for a status of a minority in Palestine.

Though Weizmann had hoped to regain his seat as president of the World Zionist Organization at

the congress, the delegates rejected his candidacy.

Over the course of 1932, still deeply alarmed by the prospect for Zionism, Weizmann

sought to promote his vision of a bi-national state in Palestine through direct negotiations with

Wauchope. As he reported to Chaim Arlosoroff, head of the political department of the Jewish

Agency, in an October 1932 letter, the British government intends to quickly move forward with

the legislative council plan - Weizmann estimated the government would establish the council by

the end of 1933. Warning against an attitude of rejectionism in Zionist circles, Weizmann

proposed that Zionist leaders should seek to shape the council plan. Wauchope had told

Weizmann that a fifty-fifty representation was out of the question, but that the council will not be

allowed to legislate policy on immigration and land purchases. Weizmann responded that it was

impossible to protect against such legislation in advance. Weizmann then proposed to Arlosoroff

that they should press Wauchope for the 60%-40% representation plan he first proposed at the

Zionist congress, and hope to renegotiate the terms of representation when the Jewish population

grows.[348] Arlosoroff shared Weizmann's pessimistic outlook on the direction of British policy. In

a response letter to Weizmann, Arlosoroff observed that similar councils had been recently

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[347] "Weizmann Speech," *Davar*, July 06, 1931 Davar p. 2 and 4.

[348] Weizmann to Chaim Arlosoroff, 28 October, 1932 *Weizmann's Letters*, Vol. 15, 348-351.

established in Iraq and Syria and that the British will thus imminently move in such a direction in Palestine. Unlike Weizmann, however, Arlosoroff rejected the idea of compromise. The prospects for Zionism had become so dire, he argued, that the only remaining alternative to protect the future of Zionism was a coup d'etat in Palestine - the establishment of a Jewish government by force until Jews establish a majority.[349]

Between 1933-1935, as Weizmann witnessed the large-scale immigration of 150,000 Jews to Palestine during the so-called Fifth Aliyah, his pessimistic attitude waned. Weizmann hoped hundreds of thousands more Jews could be brought to Palestine in the coming years. When Wauchope revived the legislative council scheme again during 1935 and early 1936, Weizmann thus embraced a policy of deliberate confusion aimed at delaying the plan - writing to Macdonald that Jewish-Arab parity was now "out of the question" and later to Wauchope that he opposed the plan because it was not based on Jewish-Arab political parity.[350] Weizmann's optimism however had its limits. The success of Jewish immigration depended on the support of the British authorities and as Weizmann knew very well Wauchope had no intention of letting Jews form a majority in Palestine. Wauchope's policy was a clear example of what Weizmann at times referred to as the British divide and rule approach. As noted earlier, Wauchope had planned to let enough Jews in to offset Zionist fears of being a small minority in an Arab majority Palestine while instilling enough alarm among Palestinian Arabs over the growth of the Jewish *Yishuv* as to push them to compromise. This policy blew up in mid-1936 with the outbreak of the Arab Revolt. Weizmann, fearing as in 1929 a change in course of British policy,

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[349] See Chaim Arlosoroff to Chaim Weizmann, November 21, 1932. Arlosoroff letters to Weizmann are accessible online at http://benyehuda.org/arlosoroff/130.html

[350] Weizmann to Malcolm Macdonald, 5 July 1935, *Weizmann's Letters*, Vol. 16 ,467; Weizmann to Sir Arthur Wauchope, 22 February 1936, Ibid, vol. 17, p. 191. See also Weizmann to Sir Robert Vansittart, 5 February 1936, Ibid., 176-7.

reverted to his compromise approach. In June that year Weizmann considered accepting the Arab

demand for a complete suspension of Jewish immigration for a certain period of time and

discussed this matter with Nuri Pasha al-Said, prime minister of Iraq.[351] He wrote former High

Commissioner Samuel that he is willing to negotiate a cap on Jewish immigration at 40,000

certificates a year for the next ten years, so long as the British will not renounce their

commitment to ultimately let Jews immigrate in accordance with the absorptive capacity of the

land.[352] When the British announced they will send to Palestine a new Royal Commission,

Weizmann revived his parity plan as a framework for a new policy in Palestine for the next ten to

fifteen years.[353] And in his August 1936 statement before the Palestine Royal Commission,

Weizmann argued that Zionist leaders will agree to the formation of a legislative council on the

basis of Jewish and Arab autonomies and under some specific constitutional guarantees,

referring it seems to his 10-15 parity framework plan.[354] Though Weizmann was still proposing a

compromise based on some form parity, he was no longer willing to contemplate a status for

Jews as a minority with less than equal representation as he suggested in the early 1930s - the

massive demographic growth of the *Yishuv* precluded that possibility in his view.[355] Much like

Ben-Gurion, in 1937 Weizmann enthusiastically endorsed the Peel Commission recommendation

to partition Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. But Weizmann's great hopes over the partition

plan dissipated just a few months after the publication of the report, as he sensed that the British

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[351] Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion,* p. 342.

[352] Weizmann to Sir Herbert Samuel, 4 September 1936, *Weizmann's Letters*, Vol. 17, p. 329. See also Gorny, *The Arab Question,* 320.

[353] Weizmann, "Facing the Attack," lecture in a convention in Amsterdam, 20 September 1936, *Weizmann's Speeches*, V. 4, p. 837-9 and Gorny, *The Arab Question,* ibid.

[354] Weizmann, Statement before the Palestine Royal Commission, Jerusalem, August 1936, published in *Chaim Weizmann*, p. 246-268.

[355] Weizmann, "Facing the Attack," Ibid.

were abandoning the plan and that "a new political orientation is in the air" - the "acceptance of the Arab demand for the establishment in Palestine of an independent Arab State and the reduction of the Jews to the status of a permanent minority, to be guaranteed by the euphemistically termed 'minority rights'."[356] This new policy culminated with the publication of the 1939 White Paper. On the eve of the Second World War, then, the grave fears that led Weizmann from the late 1920s to promote a policy of compromise along bi-national lines became the political reality - the White Paper stipulated that Palestine was to turn into an Arab state within ten years.

Conclusion

As we have seen in this chapter, during the 1930s both Ben-Gurion and Weizmann supported turning Palestine into a form of a bi-national Jewish-Arab state based on separate autonomies for the Jewish and Arab communities. Ben-Gurion, Weizmann and Zionist leaders' support for the vision of Jewish-Arab parity in Palestine ought to be understood in the context of their general ideological rejection of ethnic nationalism in the interwar years and commitment to establish in Palestine a dream version of the state of nationalities Jews were clamoring for in Eastern Europe. But it was only in the 1930s - as they became convinced that the British were reneging on the vision of the Balfour deceleration and were committed to establish in Palestine a majority Arab state with Jews remaining a minority – that these federal, bi-national and autonomist visions shifted from the realm of theory and ideology to become concrete political proposals. During the 1930s Ben-Gurion and Weizmann concluded that the Zionist movement faced only two alternatives – either establishing in Palestine a shared Jewish-Arab state or remaining a minority

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[356] Weizmann to Sir John Schukburgh, 31 December 1937, *Weizmann's Letters*, V. 18, p. 281 and Weizmann to Sir Osmond d'Avigdor-Goldsmid, 31 December 1937, *Ibid* p. 279.

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in a majority Arab state.

Zionist leaders were not altogether wrong in their political assessments. The 1939 White Paper confirmed their greatest fears and publicly stated that the British Empire seeks to establish in Palestine an independent Palestinian state with an Arab majority within ten years. The White Paper Policy remained in effect throughout the Second World War and in fact was reaffirmed by the British governments in 1945 as its vision for the future of Palestine after the war. As we shall see in the next chapter that focuses on the first wartime years, it was only after the outbreak of war that Zionist leaders for the first time publicly laid out a plan for the creation of a Jewish ethnic-nation state in Palestine. Expecting millions of Jewish refugees in postwar Europe, Zionist leaders hoped that they could transfer millions of Jews to Palestine after the war and radically transformed the Jewish-Arab demographic balance, establishing a state with a Jewish majority larger than they had ever before believed was possible.

Chapter Four

A New Greece: David Ben-Gurion, Chaim Weizmann and the Origins of the 'Jewish Commonwealth'

In a May 1942 conference in New York, Zionist leaders from the United States and Palestine adopted the 'Biltmore program'. This program, which had been formulated by David Ben-Gurion, chairman of the Zionist Executive in Jerusalem, and Chaim Weizmann, president of World Zionist Organization, called for the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish Commonwealth and for the immigration of millions of Jewish refugees to Palestine after the war. The Biltmore program was the first time the Zionist movement publicly laid out a program for the establishment of a Jewish nation-state. One of the most poignant responses to the Biltmore program was written by Shlomo Kaplinsky, a Zionist socialist leader and between 1927-1929 head of the settlement department of the Zionist executive. In 1939 Kaplisnky was appointed by the Jewish Agency to head the Committee on Jewish-Arab Relations, tasked with outlining policy recommendations for a Jewish-Arab agreement in Palestine. In a lecture delivered in Haifa, Kaplinsky criticized the Biltmore program as a retreat from a broad-based consensus among Zionist leaders in the 1930s in favor of the establishment in Palestine of a bi-national state consisting of separate autonomy for Jews and Arabs and based on political 'parity' - equal representation for each national group within a future legislator regardless of its proportion in the country's population. Kaplinsky had begun to promote such a program already in the early 1920s but faced opposition within the ranks of his party. From the late 1920s however, as we have seen in the previous chapter, prominent Zionist leaders such as Ben-Gurion and Weizmann had too embraced the vision of Jewish-Arab parity. During the 1930s 'parity' had in fact become the official political program of some of the main political institutions in the *Yishuv*. The Biltmore

program, Kaplinsky lamented in his speech, had now replaced the consensus on parity with "patriotic chatter" and a "policy of deceit." The Biltmore vision could never come into being, he argued, because it contradicted the very bi- national reality in Palestine.[357]

This chapter reconstructs the origins of the Biltmore program in Ben-Gurion's and Weizmann's thought from Kaplinsky's point of view – as a shift from the dominance of federal and bi-national visions in Zionist thought on the future of Palestine to an embrace of a Jewish nation-state program. Scholarship on the origins of the Biltmore program has generally portrayed the program as the culmination of a long-planned Zionist vision of establishing a Jewish nation-state.[358] But such accounts overlook the novelty of the idea of a Jewish ethnic nation-state, and more specifically, how it emerged out of Zionist leader's wartime analysis of the future of Jews after the war and the changing ethnic landscape and visions of nationalism in Eastern Europe.

As we shall see in this chapter, early in the war Ben-Gurion and Weizmann learned about the plans of the Polish and Czech governments in exile to 'evacuate' a large part of their prewar Jewish populations after the war. Expecting a Jewish refugee problem in the millions in an

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[357] Shlomo Kaplinsky, "Thoughts on Sovereignty, Autonomy and Federalism: On the Political Problem of *Eretz Yisrael*," the lecture is dated to December 1941 but seems to have been delivered later as it refers to the Biltmore program as well as to subsequent events. Published in Kaplinsky, *Vision and its Fulfillment. Selected Writings and Lectures* (Merhavia: Ha'shomer Ha'tzair Press, 1950), 348-375 [in Hebrew]. On Kaplinsky's work as the head of the Commission on Jewish Arab Relations see "The Commission on Jewish-Arab Relations. Report to the Jewish Agency." August 19, 1942, Ben-Gurion Archives and Library, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (hereafter Ben-Gurion Papers), item 103132. On the adoption of the principle of political parity by *Mapai* see Shapira, *Land and Power* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1992), p. 263-264 [in Hebrew]. In October 8 1936, three days before the Peel Commission arrived in Palestine, the executive of the Jewish Agency issued a declaration to the effect that "the supreme organs of the Jewish agency have time and again declared the principle of non-domination as the guiding policy of the Executive towards the Arab population in Palestine. ... The Executive of the Jewish Agency therefore resolves that the principle of constitutional parity should be proposed by the Jewish Agency as the basis of our proposals with regard to the form of government and representation of inhabitants of this country." "Resolution of the Executive," November 8 1936, Ben-Gurion Archives and Library, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (hereafter Ben-Gurion Papers), item 249433.

[358] See for example Anita Shapira, *Land and Power* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1992) [in Hebrew]; Yosef Gorny, *The Arab Question and the Jewish Problem* (Am Oved: Tel-Aviv, 1985) [in Hebrew]; Yoav Gelber, "Zionist Policy and the Fate of European Jewry, 1939-1942" *Yad Vashem Studies* vol. 13 (1979), p. 188-190 and Penkower Monty Noam, "American Jewry and the Holocaust: From Biltmore to the American Jewish Conference," *Jewish Social Studies* vol. 47, no. 2 (Spring 1985).

increasingly ethnically homogenous order in postwar Eastern Europe, Ben-Gurion and

Weizmann laid out a plan for the immigration of millions of Jewish refugees to Palestine.

Between the wars Zionist leaders promoted the selective immigration of Jewish pioneers and

middle class professional to Palestine, and expected it would take several decades of a favorable

Jewish immigration rate for Jews to equal or slightly outnumber the Arab population in

Palestine. Yet by early 1940 Zionist leaders embraced a radically new demographic calculus. A

massive postwar Jewish statelessness problem in Eastern Europe, they argued, will allow them to

establish a Jewish majority in Palestine larger than they had ever before anticipated was possible

and significantly outnumber the Arab population in Palestine. The prospects of an overwhelming

Jewish majority in Palestine also transformed Ben-Gurion and Weizmann's visions of Jewish-

Arab relations. As we have seen in chapter 2, early in the war Jabotinsky abandoned his interwar

support for a future state in Palestine with extensive autonomy for Jews and Arabs and advocated

for the expulsion of the Arab population from Palestine after the war. During the early years of

the war Weizmann too supported large-scale Arab transfer, and Ben-Gurion disavowed of his

interwar support for visions of Jewish-Arab parity. Historians such as Benny Morris have

carefully surveyed the views of prominent Zionist leaders on the issue of population transfers

and Jewish-Arab relations in the future Jewish state, yet it is remarkable that scholars have

overlooked the critical wartime Eastern European context that gave rise to a new vision of a

Jewish ethnic nation-state.[359]

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[359] Indeed, it is remarkable that despite the extensive literature on Zionism and population transfers, scholars did not emphasize this wartime and Eastern Europe context of Zionist thought on the topic. Indeed, scholars have generally explored the expulsion of Palestinian in 1948 either as merely a product of wartime contingencies (Benny Morris) or as an inherent aspect of a Zionism as a settler colonial enterprise (Ilan Pappe and Nur Maslhah). See Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: One World Publications, 2006) and Nur Maslaha, *Imperial Israel and the Palestinians: The Politics of Expansion* (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

From an Arab State to a Jewish State

The outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939 galvanized grave fears among Zionist leaders over the fate of European Jewry, but it also spurred new hopes for the future. Just as the First World War brought about the Balfour Declaration, Zionist leaders argued, the aftermath of the present war could offer an opportunity to radically reshape British and international policies in favor of Zionism and halt the drift toward the establishment of an Arab majority state in Palestine as laid out in the 1939 White Paper.[360] Zionist leaders viewed the war a break in historical time, a chance to change the direction of history, and throughout the war were consumed by debates over the postwar order. Just days after the Nazi invasion of Poland, Ben-Gurion reminisced about Jewish achievements in the First World War and declared "the World War of 1914-1918 brought us the Balfour declaration, this time we need to bring about a Jewish state."[361] The protocols of the Jewish Agency Executive that met regularly in Jerusalem during the war deal repeatedly with the future of Zionism after the war. "When historians of the Jews will read the protocols … of this war," observed a member of the executive in 1941,"they will be amazed by the intellectual grandeur of this executive, that during such a painful storm dedicated itself to planning" for the future of Zionism and the Jews after the war.[362] "Have we become paralyzed? Have we lost the sense of danger?" Labor Zionist leader Berl Katzenlson criticized the mood of optimism in Zionist circles in an April 1942 speech. "We live, we discuss, we debate with each other … but all we talk about is what would happen after the war." "I am not against those who talk about the tomorrow. I only speak out against those who run away from engaging with the today." Katzenslon feared that the fixation in the *Yishuv* on the future came at

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[360] See chapter 3.

[361] Ben-Gurion, "Lecture," September 08 1939, Ben-Gurion Papers, item 87879.

[362] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 16.05.1941, CZA (Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem).

the expense of preparing for the dangers of the present - in early 1942 the specter of a Nazi invasion of Palestine still seemed imminent.[363]

Zionist leaders' optimism about the future was based on a single assumption that dominated their thought in the early years of the war – they believed millions of Jewish refugees would remain stateless in postwar Eastern Europe and that the only solution to this massive refugee problem would be found in their the resettlement in Palestine. Plans for large-scale resettlement of Jews from Eastern European were repeatedly proposed and discussed during the mid to late 1930s. Eastern European governments – mainly Poland but also Romania and Hungary – spoke about millions of 'excess' Jewish citizens, and advocated for their resettlement in territories outside Europe. From 1933 Nazi Germany began to limit and ultimately strip Jewish of their citizenship rights, effectively expelling some 400,000 Jewish refugees from the territories of the expanding German Reich. At the same time, Zionist leaders advocated for the resettlement of masses of Jews from Eastern Europe in Palestine. In 1936 Jabotinsky famously laid out the 'Evacuation plan' and Ben-Gurion and Weizmann too variously proposed large-scale Jewish resettlement.[364] During the 1930s however these plans repeatedly failed to materialize and many of their proponents regarded them as mere rhetorical calls rather than concrete and realizable political plans. From 1936 Britain had increasingly capped Jewish immigration to Palestine. And as the 1939 Evian Conference soon revealed, no country – with the exception of the Dominican Republic - was willing to absorb any significant number of the hundreds of

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[363] Berl Katzenlson, "Before Tomorrow Arrives," speech delivered in the opening convention of the *Histadrut*, reprinted in *Davar*, 22.04.1942 [in Hebrew].

[364] Dvora Hacohen discusses Ben-Gurion's and Weizmann's statements in favor of mass Jewish immigration in the 1930s, however she does not note that they were mainly an expression of belligerent rhetoric – in part designed to suggest that the Zionist movement is concered by the crisis in Europe, rather than a plan they believed was realizable. See Dvora Hacohen, "Ben-Gurion and the Second World War: Plans for Mass Immigration to Palestine," in Jonathan Frankel (ed)., *Jews and Messianism in the Modern Era: Studies in Contemporary Jewry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1991), p. 249. See also Dvora Hacohen, *From Fantasy to Reality: Ben-Gurion's Plan for Mass Immigration, 1942-1945* (Ministry of Defense, Israel, 1994) [in Hebrew].

thousands of Jewish refugee in Europe, let alone the millions more Eastern European states

claimed should be 'evacuated.' The war, Zionist leaders believed, had radically transformed the

scale of the Jewish problem in Europe. Throughout Eastern Europe Nazi Germany had

ghettoized and uprooted millions of Jews from their prewar homes and professions. The Polish

and Czech governments in Exile had informed Zionist leaders early in the war they would not

seek to economically reintegrate, and in fact actively promote the departure, of these Jewish

masses after the war. The edifice of Jewish life in Eastern Europe had been destroyed. Zionist

leaders thus estimated that the aftermath of the war would see the emergence of Jewish refugee

problem in the scale of some two to five million. As Ben-Gurion put it in October 1942, "The

tragedy of millions" of Jewish refugees in Europe "will become the redemptive force" of

Zionism.[365]

Weizmann was the first Zionist leader to gain comprehensive knowledge of the extent of

the expected postwar Jewish refugee problem. As we have seen in chapter I, between 1940-1941

Polish and Czech leaders had privately expressed to Jewish leaders their plans to 'evacuate' a

significant portion of their pre-war Jewish population after the war. Edward Beneš, president of

the Czechoslovak Government in Exile, told Chaim Weizmann in December 1941 that the

country's Jewish population would have to be "diluted" by about a third after the war." Benes

elaborated on these views in a meeting with British Jewish historian and close-Weizmann aide

Louis Namier who later prepared a detailed memo for Weizmann on Jewish postwar immigration

demographics.[366] Similarly, prominent leaders of the Polish Government in Exile had told Selig

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[365] David Ben-Gurion, "Lecture at the Fifth Convention of *Mapai* in Kfar Vitkin", October 25 1942, Ben-Gurion Papers, Item 87739.

[366] See Chapter I of this dissertation, "The End of Minority Rights: Jacob Robinson and the Fate of Jewish Diaspora Nationalism." Namier's memo, "Numbers and Exodus" was later published in the journal *The New Judea* in Febraury-March 1942 and republished in Louis B. Namier, *Conflicts. Studies in Contemporary History* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1942), 163-173.

Brodetsky, director of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, that only about a third of the

country's prewar population would be allowed to remain in Poland after the war and Jewish

leaders became convinced that the Polish government would use the chaos of the postwar years

to finally realize its plans for Jewish resettlement.[367] Based on these meetings, Weizmann had

estimated that about a third of the prewar Jewish population of Eastern Europe would become

stateless and be in need of immigration after the war.[368] Weizmann expanded on this observation

in a January 1942 letter to Anthondy D. Rothschild. "My own conversations, and also the

conversations that British representatives had with the Czechs and the Poles in this country, drive

me to the conclusion that at least one-third of the Jewish population of these States cannot be re-

integrated when the states are restored." "… [T]he Jewish people of Czechoslovakia will have to

be thinned out to two thirds of its original density. Taking into consideration Romania, Hungary,

Poland, and some of the Balkan states, one may assume that between 2-3 millions Jews at least

will find themselves homeless …".[369]

Weizmann expanded on these observations in a September 1941 meeting of Jewish

leaders in London which both Brodetsky and Namier attended. There are eight million Jews in

countries occupied by the Nazis, Weizmann argued, and these numbers are increasing as the

Germans advance into Russia. The Nazis are perpetrating a "physical destruction" of European

Jewry in a rate that could not be determined, and thus there may only remain "six or seven

million Jews after the war". The livelihood of the Jewish middle class in Eastern Europe has

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[367] Ibid, "The End of Minority Rights,"

[368] A.J Drexel, Biddle (Legation of the United States of America near Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia) to the Secretary of State, 27 December 1941, Weizmann Archives (WA). See also Biddle's summary dispatch from the meeting A.J Drexel, Biddle (Legation of the United States of America near Provisional Government of Czechoslovakia) to the Secretary of State, Summary Dispatch, 27 December 1941, WA.

[369] Weizmann to Anthony D. Rotschild, January 22 1942, in Meyer Weisgal (ed), *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann* (series A.) (London: Transaction Books, 1933) [hereafter Weizmann's letters], volume 20, 257-260.

"gone forever."[370] Based on his conversation with leaders of Eastern European governments Weizmann asserted that the majority of Jews who had already been driven out of their homes would not be able to reclaim their property and re-integrate into their pre-war societies after the war. The new Poland that would be created after the war, Weizmann argued, would not seek to "digest" the large masses of Jews that lived in it before the war. Indeed, Weizmann added, even before the war Polish officials argued that there were a million or a million and half too many Jews in Poland. After the war there would thus remain two and a half to three million Jews in Europe "for whom the only solution could be Palestine."[371]

Weizmann outlined a vision for large-scale postwar immigration of these refugees aimed at resettling them in Palestine. Weizmann proposed that first the young Jewish survivors should immigrate to Palestine at a rate of about 100,000 per year. The remainder of the Jewish population in Europe would prepare for their immigration in training camps in their prewar countries. Weizmann argued that the prospect of the imminent immigration of the Jewish masses from Eastern Europe would alleviate tensions and anti-Jewish sentiments in those countries, which would allow them to remain there until they would be able to immigrate. Weizmann's immigration plan reflected a significant shift from the scale of immigration he proposed during the 1930s. His most radical proposal, laid out in response the 1937 Peel Commission report, envisioned the immigration of 50-60 thousands Jews to Palestine per year. But there is reason to believe Weizmann doubted the feasibility of that radical plan at the time. In a 1937 conversation with Polish foreign minister Jozef Beck, Weizmann had argued that the Polish government could not expect Palestine to be able to absorb more than 25-30 thousand Jewish immigration per

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[370] "Note of Meeting Held at the Court, St. Swithin's Lane, E.C.," Protocol, September 9, 1941, Ben-Gurion Papers, Item 1751.

[371] Ibid.

year.[372] Weizmann's new plan thus saw the immigration of four times the number of Jews per year than he believed could be settled in Palestine in the late 1930s. This new plan reflected his recognition of the enormity of the postwar Jewish refugee problem and his realization, as Namier and Brodetsky put it in the meeting, that large-scale removal of Jews from Eastern Europe will take place alongside the shifting of millions of minorities after the war.[373]

In July 1941 Weizmann publicly laid out for the first the demand for the establishment of a Jewish state after the war that would offer a solution to what he argued would be "the greatest mass migrations in the history of mankind as a result of Jewish homelessness."[374] In January 1942 he expanded on his vision of a future Jewish state in detail in an article "Palestine's Role in the Solution of the Jewish Problem" published in *Foreign Affairs*. In this article Weizmann laid out a new vision of Zionism: the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine will no longer develop as a national center alongside but rather come to replace the Jewish population centers in Eastern Europe and the failed protections of minority rights. "In the reconstruction of the new and - let us hope - better world," Weizmann argued, "the reintegration of the Jew will ... present a peculiarly difficult problem, and one which which is likely to tax both the energies and the good will of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe." "The experience of the past twenty years, and the vexed problem of "minorities" which has caused so much trouble in Europe, hardly give much ground for a satisfactory solution on the spot." The only solution for the millions of Jewish refugees after the war, Weizmann declared, lay in their immigration to Palestine.[375]

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[372] Halamish, "Weizmann and Jewish Immigration," 290-201.

[373] "Note of Meeting Held at the Court,"

[374] "Weizmann Demands Full Sovereignty for a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine," *JTA* July 15 1941, http://www.jta.org/1941/07/15/archive/weizmann-demands-full-sovereignty-for-a-jewish-commonwealth-in-palestine

[375] Chaim Weizmann, "Palestine's Role in the Solution of the Jewish Problem", *Foreign Affairs*, 20, 2 (Jan. 1942),

Similarly to Weizmann, Ben-Gurion too had reached early in the war the conclusion that the aftermath of the war would necessitate the immigration of millions of Jewish refugees to Palestine. And like Weizmann, Ben-Gurion too shared the view that this would be a product of the changing ethnic landscape of Eastern Europe after the war and the inability of millions of Jewish refugees to reintegrate into their former homes. As he put it in a February 1941 speech, even if Poland and Romania will restore equal rights for the Jews after the defeat of Hitler, "no one will ever believe" that they will also work to reconstruct the Jewish communities and restore their livelihood and property, "and this will be the case throughout Europe."[376] Ben-Gurion was well aware of the plans of the Polish and Czech Governments in Exile to expel a significant number of their prewar Jewish population after the war. In early 1942 Ben-Gurion met Lord Moyne, British minister for the Middle East, who informed him that the exiled governments are planning to get rid of some three millions Jews after the war.[377] In an October 1942 Zionist executive meeting Ben-Gurion shared a report on Benes' plans for the Jews after the war.[378] And Ben-Gurion also dismissed the efforts of what he termed the 'court Jews' in Poland to press the Allies to achieve new guarantees for minority rights.[379] "Do you believe Jews will go back to their towns in Poland and that the rich Poles will integrate them, build them new homes? Do you believe that the Polish government will rebuild the lives of those uprooted Jews?" Ben-Gurion

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324-338.

[376] David Ben-Gurion, "Press Conference at the Jewish Agency Office in Jerusalem," 26 February 1941, Ben-Gurion Papers, Item 87822.

[377] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 4.10.1942, CZA.

[378] Ibid, Ibid.

[379] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 29.06.1941, CZA. In an October 1942 lecture Ben-Gurion asserted "the Jewish masses after the war will prey for the good will of foreign governments – if not hostile governments … they will not be able to enjoy the equality of rights the exiled governments promise them, even if these writes are to be written on paper after the war." David Ben-Gurion, "Lecture at the Fifth Convention of *Mapai* in Kfat Vitkin,".

asked the members of the Jewish Labor Committee in December 1942 who accused him of giving up on the fight for Jewish rights in Europe, "I do not believe that will be the case."[380]

Carefully attuned to wartime debates on population transfers, Ben-Gurion argued that the failure of Jews to reintegrate into postwar Eastern Europe would be part of the broader efforts of the Allies and Eastern European states to create of a new, ethnically homogenous order in the region without ethnic minorities. "In the present war the idea of the transfer of populations," Ben-Gurion observed in 1941, "is steadily gaining in popularity as the surest and most practical means of solving the thorny and dangerous problem of national minorities." "The war has already brought about the resettlement of large numbers of peoples in East and South Europe," he added, "and in the plans of the post-war settlement, large-scale transfer of populations in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe are taking an increasingly important role."[381] In his meeting with Moyne, Moyne had in fact proposed resettling millions of Jews in Prussian territory from which Germans will be expelled after the war. Ben-Gurion later reported on the meeting to the Zionist executive and shared his assessment of Allied plans for population shifts in Eastern Europe. "[the Allies] are planning on uprooting millions of people after the war, their plan is to establish a new order in Europe that will last once and for all," he argued, "they will take revenge at the Germans - not a single German will remain outside Germany, … there's Hungary, Romania, they plan to settle the fate of those countries through large scale population transfers."[382]

Within this emerging postwar reality, Ben-Gurion argued, the only solution for the millions of Jewish refugees in postwar Europe will be what he termed a "Jewish transfer," the

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[380] "Protocols of Meeting of Jewish Labor Committee," May 3 1942, Ben-Gurion Papers, item 87750 [in Yiddish].

[381] David Ben-Gurion, "Notes on Zionist Policy," 15 October 1941, CZA Z4\31083-72.

[382] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 4.10.1942, CZA.

large-scale resettlement of millions of Jews in Palestine within a few short years. In October

1941 Ben-Gurion laid out this vision in detail in a memo entitled "Notes on Zionist Policy," a 25

page essay – the longest of his political writings - on his plans for the future of Zionism after the

war.[383] Most remarkable about this document is Ben-Gurion's argument that the creation of a

Jewish state through the transfer of the Jewish masses from Eastern Europe to Palestine reflected

not the culmination, but a radical reformulation, of the goals and the meaning of the Zionist

movement. Ben-Gurion offered a new narrative of Zionist history divided into two periods and

punctuated by the transformative effect of the war. The first period, spanning forty years - not

incidentally for Ben-Gurion who was enthralled by biblical mythology the span of a biblical

generation and the number of years Moses wandered the desert before he brought the Jewish

people from Egypt to the cusp of the promised Land of Israel – was marked by the salience of

the spiritual center approach. As we have seen in chapter 3, during this period Ben-Gurion saw

Jewish settlement in Palestine developing as a form of Jewish autonomy through gradual

immigration of Jewish pioneers. The outbreak of war now offered an opportunity to begin a new

period in Zionist history – the period of the nation-state. "Zionism today can no longer mean

what it has meant … in the past forty year," he wrote, that is "the orientation of a spiritual center

in Palestine, effected through moderate Jewish immigration." "Zionism today can no longer

mean even just a Jewish majority in Palestine, as the Revisionist maintained for some time –

because the immediate need of the Jews for a country of their own is not to be measured by of

Arabs who happen to be in Palestine, but by the number of Jews – many times greater – who

have been completely and hopelessly uprooted form many countries of the Diaspora." Instead,

Ben-Gurion declared, the Zionist movement should strive to create s state through large scale

Jewish immigration of the Jewish masses from Eastern Europe to Palestine. "Given a Jewish

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[383] David Ben-Gurion, "Notes on Zionist Policy,"

state, I see no reason why such a number should not be absorbed there, not over a long period of years, but within a short time, that is within several years, as was done in Greece, as an immediate, planned, state undertaking." In an October 1942 meeting of the Zionist executive, Ben-Gurion further elaborated on his point. "I have revised my understanding of Zionism after the war. We must stop thinking in the terms of the past …". "The fundamental aspect of those terms," he argued, "was that we viewed Zionism as a gradual process, a historical process spanning over many years, we thought that first we will bring over 1,000 Jews per year, then 10,000 Jews per year, then we might get to several tens of thousands until we reach 50,000 per year, and if anyone spoke about 100,000 per year then that was considered a very large number. We cannot continue with this process after the war." "… The role of Zionism after the war … is to transfer two million Jews to Palestine, the entire young generation of Europe. … such a large scale transfer already took place in our lifetime, 2 million Greeks were resettled in Greece in 18 months."[384] Several months later Ben-Gurion articulated these ideas again and invoked post-World War I Greece as his example for the future of Zionism. "Twenty years ago a massive transfer of close to two million Greeks from Turkey to European Greece took place," Ben-Gurion declared, "this did no last more than eighteen month." "The question must be asked: why would we be prevent from carrying out such a quick to transfer of masses of Jews from Europe's ghettos to Eretz Yisrael?"[385]

From Parity to Jewish Rule

The specter of transferring millions of Jews to Palestine after the war forced Ben-Gurion and Weizmann to radically rethink their vision of Jewish-Arab relations. Their various interwar

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[384] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 16.10.1942, CZA.

[385] David Ben-Gurion, "Lecture at the Fifth Convention of *Mapai*,"

proposals for political parity and Jewish and Arab autonomies were based on the assumption that Jews will likely remain a minority in Palestine for decades to come. After the outbreak of war however they began to imagine a radically different demographic scenario. Within a few short years, they argued, Jews could constitute a decisive majority in Palestine – a shift from some 20%-30% of the population on the eve of the war to 70%-80% in the immediate postwar years.

Though both Ben-Gurion and Weizmann repeatedly emphasized their continued commitment to Arab equality and national autonomy in the future Jewish state, they completely ruled out the idea of a Jewish-Arab power sharing arrangement and the vision of political parity. Ben-Gurion in fact had begun to downplay the sincerity of his interwar support for parity, arguing that he never intended for parity to be the final political arrangement in Palestine but only an interim program under the mandate. "I was one of those who strongly advocated parity between Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate," Ben-Gurion observed in his Biltmore conference speech, "but I doubt whether a regime of parity without a mandatory is practicable, or whether a self-governing state can operate at all under such a system, which may mean a permanent deadlock."[386] Political parity, Ben-Gurion argued in an October 1942 Zionist executive meeting, "is a form of absurdity, there is not a single state in the world organized on the basis of this principle."[387] "I supported parity under mandate rule – when a third party could make decisions, then we said; we cannot remain a minority …". In a subsequent meeting of the Zionist executive Moshe Sharett, head of the political department of the Jewish Agency, reported that several British officials are considering the idea of Jewish-Arab parity after the war. Werner Senator, a member of the executive and a supporter of Bit Shalom in the 1930s, argued that the

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[386] David Ben-Gurion, "Speech at Extraordinary Zionist Conference of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs", May 10, 1942, Stenographic Protocol, the Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem.

[387] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 15.10.1942, CZA.

Zionist movement should respond positively to these proposals – the concept of parity had been a core principle of the Zionist movement between the wars.[388] Moreover, Senator added, there was no guarantee the Zionist movement would succeed in gaining international support for the transfer of two million Jews to Palestine - Zionist policy should thus also consider the possibility that Jews could remain for a time a minority. Ben-Gurion rejected these proposals. Parity, he insisted, was now entirely out of the question. After the war there will remain only two alternatives – either Palestine becomes an Arab state as currently intended or it becomes a Jewish state. In his Biltmore conference speech, Ben-Gurion warned about the grave dangers for Jews as a minority in a future Arab state in Palestine. When Haj Amin Al Husseini was asked in 1937 by the Royal Peel Commission whether a future Arab state would be able to "assimilate and digest" the Jewish community in Palestine, Ben-Gurion reminisced, he replied in the negative and refused to rule out the idea of expelling the Jews in a process "painful as it may be." When contemplating the status of Jews as a minority in a future Arab state in Palestine, Ben-Gurion chillingly remarked, "we should not forget the bitter experience of the Assyrians in Iraq, to whom protections were guaranteed by the Anglo-Iraq treaty as well as by the League of Nations."[389]

The prospects of resettling millions of Jewish refugees in Palestine also prompted a vigorous debate in Zionist circles over the transfer of Arabs from Palestine. As we have seen above, Ben-Gurion and Weizmann were deeply aware of Allied plans for postwar population transfers as well as the specific plans of Eastern European states to expel Jews after the war. And both Ben-Gurion and Weizmann realized that the resettlement of millions of Jewish refugee in

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[388] For more on Senator and his views on Jewish Arab relations see Adi Livny, "A Portrait of a Pragmatic Radical: Werner Senator and the Hebrew University," *Under Review*.

[389] Ben-Gurion, "Speech at Extraordinary Zionist Conference,"

Palestine within a few short years would require an enormous amount of arable land and economic resources that may only become available at the expense of the Arab population.

During the 1930s Ben-Gurion and Weizmann invariably considered the possibility of the transfer of a segment of the Arab population from Palestine. But such visions were generally fleeting ideas – gestured in a letter, raised briefly in a conversation with British officials - that never materialized into a concrete plan.[390] Indeed, with the exception of the short-lived Peel Commission affair, at no point did Ben-Gurion and Weizmann imagine Arab transfer as a means of significantly shifting the demographic balance in Palestine in favor of Jews.[391] The demographic disparity between Jews and Arab was too large to make any such vision seem plausible. Both remained committed to the view that the creation of a Jewish majority would be a slow, gradual, decades-long process. In the several instances in which they did propose Arab transfer, they envisioned a resettlement scheme that would concern at most tens of thousands of individuals.

After the outbreak of war Weizmann had begun to vigorously advocate for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine and sought to gain British, American and Soviet support for such a plan. From 1939 through 1942 Weizmann had enthusiastically endorsed the so-called "Phillby Plan." From the late 1930s Sir John Phillby, a British intelligence officer, promoted a plan for the incorporation of Palestine as an autonomous Jewish unit into an Arab federation led by Saudi

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[390] Morris carefully examines several letters and statements by Ben-Gurion and Weizmann on the topic – but does not remark that these were fleeing ideas, proposed alongside so many other visions for the future of Palestine, which we consider as significant only in light of the events of 1948. See Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, primarily 43-46.

[391] It is important to mention however that both Ben-Gurion and Weizmann embraced the Peel Comission's recommendations for Arab transfer with great enthusiasm. "The transfer clause," Ben-Gurion noted in his dairy shortly after the commission published its recommendations, "is more important to us than all our territorial demands." Cited in Yaacov Shavit, Jehuda Reinharz, *The Road to September 1939: The Jewish Community in Eretz Israel, the Jews of Poland and the Zionist movement on the Eve of the Second World* War, (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2013), 90 [in Hebrew]. The Peel Commission also proposed that a far smaller number of Jews – 1,250 – be transferred from the territories allotted to a proposed Arab state.

king Ibn Saud. This plan faltered in the 1930s, but after the outbreak of war Phillby believed

conditions were set for its revival. Saudi Arabia faced a major financial crisis – mainly as a result

of the stoppage of pilgrimage to Mecca and Medinah – and Phillby hoped Zionist leaders could

secure funding and loans for the kingdom in exchange for Ibn Saud's agreement to the plan.

Phillby's plan called the transfer of millions of Arabs from Palestine - Western Palestine,

including Transjordan, was to be handed over to the Jews clear of its Arab population except for

in Jerusalem.[392] The Phillby plan deeply preoccupied Weizmann in the first years of the war –

Weizmann became obsessed with its prospects and discussed it in practically all of his meetings

with high-ranking British and American officials in the first years of the war, among them with

Churchill, Roosevelt, Moyne and US Undersecretary of State Summner Welles.[393] In these

meetings Weizmann repeatedly raised the issue of Arab transfer from Palestine and proposed

that Britain and the United States could convince Arab leaders to support the resettlement of

Arabs from Palestine.[394] Churchill and Roosevelt viewed the plan favorably, including its

transfer component – but the plan fell apart in late 1942 when Ibn Saud formally rejected any

cooperation with the Zionist movement. Still, Weizmann's enthusiastic advocacy for the plan

reflected the link he saw between the postwar settlement of millions of Jewish refugees in

Palestine and the transfer of the Arab population from Palestine. As Weizmann observed in

October 1939, when he first learned of Phillby's plan, "The world would be faced at the end of

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[392] See Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity,* p. 85.

[393] Weizmann's support for the Phillby plan reflected his longtime hope of reaching an agreement with Arab leaders over the inclusion of an autonomous Jewish Palestine in a broader Arab federation. This line of thinking shaped the short-lived 1919 Faisal–Weizmann Agreement, an agreement that envisioned Palestine integrated into an Arab federation of Greater Syria led by Emir Faisal as well as Weizmann's efforts in 1938 to reach a federal agreement with Egyptian leaders for the inclusion of Palestine in an Arab federation. For more on Weizmann vision of Palestine in an Arab federation see Gorny, *Policy and Imagination,* p. 21-24 and 68.

[394] See Porath, Ibid., p. 95. Porath examined these contacts with a focus on British sources. For an examination of these contacts through American government sources see Rafael Medoff, *Zionism and the Arabs: An American Jewish Dilemma, 1898-1948* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), p. 119-121. For the conversation between Weizmann and Moyne see "Note on Interview with Dr. Weizmann," September 1 1941, Ben-Gurion Papers, item 205643.

the war with a very serious Jewish problem - of Jewish populations being evacuated from East

European countries - and the man who could supply a possible solution for this problem would

have a considerable claim on the world for benefits in return."[395]

At the same time as Weizmann was seeking British and American support for the postwar

transfer of Arabs, he also discussed this matter in January 1941 with Soviet Ambassador in

London, Ivan Maiskii. In their meeting, Weizmann proposed that about a half a million Arabs

will be transferred form Palestine after the war and suggested that two million Jews from Eastern

Europe would be settled in their place. Maiskii's account of the meeting offers different and

more staggering numbers: Weizmann proposed the transfer of one million Arabs from Palestine

and the resettlement of four millions Jews in their stead. As Weizmann put to Maiskii, Jews

would succeed far better in cultivating Palestine – thus the same territory that previously

sustained a million Arabs could in the future sustain millions of Jews. Maiskii observed in the

meeting that after the war there will be large-scale population transfers in Eastern Europe, and

Weizmann noted that the transfer of Arabs from Palestine would be easier because the distances

are short – the Arabs will go to Transjordan or Iraq.[396] Weizmann's conversation with Maiskii

highlights the link between planned postwar population transfers in Eastern Europe and

Palestine. From early 1940 Maiskii repeatedly met with exiled Czechoslovak leaders in London

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[395] Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, p. 86. The protocol of Weizmann's October 1939 meeting with Phillby was published in Barnet Litvinoff, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann,* Vol. 2 series B., December 1931-April 1952 (Transaction Books: Rutgers, NJ 1984), 371-371.

[396] For the two reports see Short Minutes of Meeting Held on Thursday, January 30th, 1941, at 77 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.L, Ben-Gurion papers, item 228038. For Maiiski's account see *Documents on Israeli-Soviet Relations, 1941-1953* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. -3-5.

and expressed Soviet support for the expulsion of Germans from a reconstituted Czechoslovakia as well as for the expulsion of Germans from postwar Poland.[397]

In a subsequent meeting in London with Jewish leaders Weizmann offered different numbers to those he presented to Maiskii. Weizmann had reported in that meeting that he had told Moyne that he was willing to accept the 1937 Peel Commission report without "the line" – that is, accepting the transfer component of the plan while scrapping its territorial partition aspect. That meant that the boundary of the future Jewish state would be Jordan. The transfer of Arabs from Palestine, Weizmann noted, "might, of course, be voluntary." Weizmann suggested that if they were able to transfer out of Palestine around 120,000 Arab tenants who own no land, they would be able to settle in their stead about half a million Jews.[398]

In his January 1942 article in *Foreign Affairs* Weizmann for the first time publicly articulated a call for the transfer of Arabs from Palestine that he had previously only privately discussed with Allied and Jewish leaders. While promising full equality and autonomy for the Arab minority in the future majority Jewish state, Weizmann nonetheless argued that "if any Arabs do not wish to remain in a Jewish state, any facility will be given to them to transfer to one of the many and vast Arab countries."[399]

Much like Weizmann, Ben-Gurion too regarded the transfer of the Arab population from Palestine as a potentially positive development that would facilitate the resettlement of Eastern European Jewry. As Ben-Gurion put it in his 1941 *Notes on Zionist Policy*, the problem of Arab

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[397] On these meeting see A.F Noskova, "Migration of the Germans After the Second World War: Political and Psychological Aspects," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 16, 1-2, 98.

[398] "Note of Meeting Held at the Court,"

[399] Weizmann, "Palestine's Role," p. 337-338. See also the following news report on this aspect the article, "Weizmann Outlines Jewish Postwar Demands for Palestine, Proposes Jewish State" See also report on this article, January 7, 1942 JTA, http://www.jta.org/1942/01/07/archive/weizmann-outlines-jewish-post-war-demands-for-palestine-proposes-jewish-state

states is that "they are too sparsely populated" and thus "will be rather helped than hindered if they were willing to absorb the whole or part of the Palestinian Arab population."[400] In a March 1941 meeting with the Organization of German and Austrian Jewish Immigrants in Palestine, Ben-Gurion laid out four visions for the future of Arab-Jewish relations in Palestine, the first being large-scale Arab transfer. "Next to Eretz Yisrael there is a purely Arab state [Transjordan] … you can settle there at least six million Arabs, history tells us it was once inhabited by a population of twenty million." Transjodran, Ben-Gurion argued, "has room for the Arabs of Eretz Yisrael, especially if we and the English extend any necessary help for their resettlement: economic, financial political and knowledge."[401]

Still, unlike Weizmann, Ben-Gurion repeatedly insisted that Zionist leaders should remain mute on the issue of population transfer and avoid turning the idea of Arab transfer into an official part of their postwar vision. This position stemmed in part from Ben-Gurion's sincere doubts over the feasibility of large-scale Arab transfer. Though "some people, in England as well as in America, advocate the transfer of the Palestinian Arabs to Iraq and Syria as the best solution of the so-called 'Arab question'," Ben-Gurion observed in *Notes on Zionist Policy*, "… complete transfer without compulsion – and ruthless compulsion at that – is hardly imaginable."[402] Indeed, this was a main reason why, though Ben-Gurion supported Phillby's plan in principle, he remained deeply reluctant about its prospects – large-scale Arab transfer as Phillby envisioned seemed to him unfeasible.[403] Moreover, Ben-Gurion argued that the advocates of Arab transfer who compare their vision to the planned removal of Germans from

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[400] Ben-Gurion, "Notes on Zionist Policy,"

[401] Meeting with the Organization of the Union of Immigrants from Germany and Austria, Protocol, March 20 1941, Ben-Gurion papers, item 234625.

[402] Ben-Gurion, "*Notes on Zionist Policy,*"

[403] See Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 87.

Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union after the war overlook a major difference between the cases. Unlike the Germans "… the Arabs … are practically not belligerents, and formally rather 'friends' of the Allies ...," it thus "could hardly be expected that victorious England will undertake the compulsory transfer of Arabs from Palestine merely for the benefit of the Jewish people."[404] Still, Ben-Gurion believed that while "the bulk of the Arab population (which is largely agricultural) could hardly be expected to voluntarily remove itself en masse, whatever the economic inducements offered" Zionist leaders could expect, and should lay out specific plans, for the removal of a small section of the Arab population in Palestine such as the Druze, Bedouin and landless agricultural workers.[405]

Ben-Gurion also opposed Zionist advocacy for transfer because of the political ramification he believed would follow the endorsement of such a program. From the early 1920s the Zionist movement had claimed, Ben-Gurion argued, that Jewish settlement in Palestine need not come at the expense of the local Arab population. "We are proud of the fact – admitted by all impartial observers … that our colonization has not only not displaced Arabs, but had resulted in an increase of Arab populations in the area of Jewish settlement." Moreover, Ben-Gurion insisted, a postwar Jewish administration in Palestine could succeed in successfully resettling millions of Jewish refugees without needing to displace the Arab population. By advocating for the transfer of Arabs, he argued, Zionists create the false impression that the success of their movement depends on Arab displacement, a claim that "will undermine our moral position" and strengthen opposition to Zionism.[406]

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[404] Ben-Gurion, "Notes on Zionist Policy,"

[405] Ibid.

[406] Ibid.

In a May 1941 meeting of the Zionist executive convened to discuss Ben-Gurion's proposals, Mencham Usishkin, a prominent Zionist leader and a member of the executive of the Jewish Agency, criticized Ben-Gurion's position as full of contradictions. Ben-Gurion proposes, Usishkin argued, that Zionists declare Palestine a Jewish state after the war and grant complete equality to the Arabs without forcibly expelling them. That is, Ussishkin argued, a "round square" – an implausible political conception. To settle such a large number of Jews, he argued, Palestine would have to be based on a Jewish government immediately after the war. But Palestine is a state with 80% Arabs and only 20% Jews. The only other such state in which a minority rules over a vast majority, Usishkin remarked, is South Africa, where a 20% white minority rules over a black majority without rights. Most Zionists, let alone the non-Jewish world, Usishskin insisted, will oppose the creation of such a state. The alternative would be the program Ben-Gurion opposes – creating a Jewish majority by transferring the Arabs. Indeed, in a subsequent meeting of the Zionist executive one of the delegates had reminded Ben-Gurion that Greece – Ben Gurion's repeated example for the future of Palestine - had only succeeded in settling so many Greek refugees after the Great War because "they of course took the homes of the Turkish farmers."[407] Ben-Gurion, Ussishkin concluded, is proposing the impossible – a state based on minority rule that nonetheless upholds democratic principles.[408]

Zionism and the Arab Federation

While Ben-Gurion and Weizmann advocated for the establishment of a Jewish state, the future state they envisioned was not to be a completely sovereign nation-state but legally and politically

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[407] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 20.6.1944, CZA.

[408] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 15.6.1941, CZA.

tied to the British Empire or to some other form of postwar federal arrangement. Indeed, the term

state does not appear once in the Biltmore program. Instead, both Ben-Gurion and Weizmann

employed the term "a Jewish Commonwealth," a concept that was first used in the 1919 Paris

Peace Conference to express Zionist designs for Jewish statehood in Palestine but which was

employed in the Biltmore program in order to keep the question of the sovereign status of the

state deliberately ambiguous.[409]

Ben-Gurion and Weizmann's call for the establishment of a 'Jewish commonwealth' was

designed in part to accommodate the political vocabulary of Zionism to a wartime atmosphere of

growing support among Allied policy-makers and intellectuals for visions of federalism in

postwar Europe and around the globe. As we have seen in chapter I, the war years saw an

explosion of support for federal ideas. Policy-maker and intellectual in the United States and

Britain, leaders of European Governments-in-Exile and resistance movements across the

continent embraced the cause of federalism and laid out numerous programs for the

establishment of postwar federations such a Polish-Czech federation, a Balkan Union, a United

States of Europe, a postwar Anglo-American Union and a reformed and more inclusive British

Commonwealth of Nations.[410] Both Weizmann and Ben-Gurion were deeply aware of this

wartime debate and more generally of the widespread critique among such policy-makers and

intellectuals of the small state as a root causes of interwar instability in Europe. In a December

1942 meeting of the Emergency Committee of Zionist Affairs, Weizmann explained the choice

of the term 'commonwealth' as a means of accommodating the growing support for federalism in

Allied quarters. "We are speaking of a Jewish Commonwealth in the declaration. I welcome this

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[409] The concept of a "Jewish Commonwealth" was in fact used by US President Woodrow Willson in the 1919 Paris Peace Conference to describe Zionist aspirations in Palestine. On the history of this concept see Natan Feinberg, 'The Concept of a Commonwealth', A306/100, Papers of Natan Feinberg, CZA [in Hebrew].

[410] See chapter I for the detailed on the plans.

term because I believe it is more flexible than Jewish state … the sovereignty in the old

conception will undergo a very radical change" after the war.[411] In a January 1943 letter to

political confidante and friend Blanche Dugdale, Weizmann explained the choice of the term

commonwealth much along these lines:

> The word 'commonwealth' was introduced because (a) it is more popular in America
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> than the word 'state', and (b) it is considered more flexible. Whether it should be a
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> commonwealth attached to the British Empire or under the trusteeship of the United
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> Nations is, I think, immaterial to people here, and either opinion would largely depend
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> upon the form which the whole political structure in the Middle East will take."[412]

Ben-Gurion too explained the choice of the term commonwealth along these lines. With regard

to the status and external relations of the future Jewish state, Ben-Gurion wrote in ″Notes on

Zionist Policy″, "we should for the present avoid any commitment…" "[I]t is impossible to

foresee the political circumstances which will prevail at the end of the war, or the main outlines –

if any – of the new world order." "While we should not be too much affected by the prevalent

tendency to deprecate small states," he argued, "we should also not loose sight of the real need

and hope of the world for greater political unity … which implies the abolition of separate

sovereignty."[413] In his May 1942 speech in the Biltmore conference, Ben-Gurion expanded on

the topic. "Whether Palestine should remain a separate unit or be associated with a larger and

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[411] Chaim Weizmann "Remarks at the Meeting of American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs," December 2, 1942. Listed as H-188. I lost record of original archive this document was found at but likely Weizmann archive (their old cataloging system).

[412] Chaim Weizmann to Blanche Dugdale, 8 Jan. 1943, in Cohen, *Chaim Weizmann, Vol XX*, 386.

[413] Ben-Gurion, "Notes on Zionist Policy,".

more comprehensive political entity - A Near Eastern Federation, British Commonwealth of Nations, Anglo-American Union or some other larger association - will depend on circumstances and developments" which cannot at the present be foreseen. Yet "we will be part of the new world and new pattern which, we believe, will come out of this war."[414]

Ben-Gurion and Weizmann's embrace of the term Jewish commonwealth however was not merely lip service to the popular vocabulary of federalism, but reflected their genuine political desire to remain part of the British Empire or some other larger international unit after the war. This vision stemmed from their recognition that Jews constituted a minority both in Palestine and within the broader Arab Middle East and needed Great Power protection for the *Yishuv*'s survival. This attitude toward Great Power protection and association shaped Zionist thinking between the wars. Practically the entire leadership of the Zionist movement saw the Jewish national home in Palestine as developing under British tutelage for decades to come. This British orientation was most famously represented by Weizmann – who insisted that the success of Zionism depended on cooperation with the British at all costs. Ben-Gurion too shared this view. After the 1929 riots Ben-Gurion argued that the British authorities must remain in Palestine at all costs until Jews establish demographic and military superiority over the Arabs.[415] At the same time, prominent Zionist leaders such as Arlozoroff and Jabotinsky advocated throughout the 1920s and early 1930s for turning Palestine into dominion within the British Commonwealth of Nations.[416] The Biltmore program did not deviate from this commitment to remain part of the Empire. As Ben-Gurion stated in an October 1942 meeting of the Zionist

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[414] David Ben-Gurion, "Speech at Extraordinary Zionist Conference,".

[415] On this see Michael Ben-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion, vol. 1* (Tel-Aviv: Zmora Bitan, 1987), p. 311.

[416] For support among Zionist leaders in the 1920s for incorporating Palestine into the British Empire as a dominion see Arie Dubnov, "Jewish Nationalism in World War I: A 'State in the Making' or The Empire Strikes Back?" *Israel: Studies in Zionism and the State of Israel,* 24 (2016), 5-35 [in Hebrew].

executive, "I see a period in which Palestine is still under British control".[417] Zionist executive

member Yitzhak Grunbaum observed that the term Jewish Commonwealth has "a specific

meaning within the British Empire" and insisted that Zionist leaders "should unequivocally

emphasize that our desire is to remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations."[418] This

interpretation was also shared by international lawyer Nathan Feinberg who noted that the term

Commonwealth in the Biltmore program was a deliberate reference to the inclusion of Palestine

in "the unique structure of the nations and states untied in the British Empire."[419] Eliezer Yapo,

Haaretz correspondent in London, carefully analyzed the Biltmore program and argued that it

was in fact consistent with the continuation of the British mandate over Palestine after the war.[420]

Yet inasmuch as the Biltmore program was designed to accommodate the wartime

federalist discourse and envisioned Palestine as part of the British Empire, it was also aimed to

reject a specific vision of wartime federalism – the idea of an Arab federation in the Middle East.

While the idea of an Arab federation originated in attempts to redesign the Middle East political

order following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, it had become a

widely discussed political vision and a major political trend in the early years of the Second

World War. As Britain had become increasingly reliant on Arab support for its war effort in the

Middle East, Arab leaders believed they could extract far-reaching concessions for the cause of

Arab independence and advanced visions for pan-Arab political unity. In the summer of 1941

Britain had publically announced its support for the cause of Arab unity in a speech delivered by

Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. By July that year Arab leaders were already convening a

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[417] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 6.10.1942, CZA.

[418] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 5.01.1941, CZA.

[419] Natan Feinberg, "The Concept of a Commonwealth,"

[420] Eliezer Yapo, "The Biltmore Program," *Metsuda,* May 1944, 97-101 [in Hebrew].

summit in Cairo to discuss plans for an Arab federation. And while British support for an Arab federation was intended primarily as a way to galvanize Arab public opinion in favor of the Allied invasion of Syria, discussions over an Arab federation proliferated in Arab political circles and in the press in Britain and the United States.[421]

Weizmann and Ben-Gurion were deeply alarmed by British support for an Arab federation – fearing that Britain was laying out its postwar plan for the Middle East without regard to the Zionist position. Some two months after Eden's speech, Weizmann sent a heartfelt letter to South African prime minister Jan Smuts protesting Eden's position, in which he laid out, likely for the first time outside Zionist circles, the demand for the establishment of a Jewish state after the war.[422] Ben-Gurion, too, was prompted to publicly express his support for a Jewish state only in the summer of 1941, as he sensed British postwar designs for the Middle East were taking shape. As he put it in *Notes on Zionist Policy* "Our task for the present, so far as the future of Palestine is concerned, is rather the negative one of preventing, by all means in our power, the British Government from committing itself to the Arabs and from bringing Palestine within the orbit of the contemplated Arab federation."[423] Weizmann and Ben-Gurion, it is important to note, did not categorically oppose an Arab federation. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, in the mid-1930s Ben-Gurion had hoped to reach an agreement with Arab leaders over the inclusion of Palestine as an autonomous unit within an Arab federation. And Weizmann vigorously advocated for the Phillby plan in the first years of the war that envisaged the incorporation of

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[421] For more on the wartime discussions on an Arab federation, see Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity,* 106–48 and 257–66, as well as Ron Zweig, *Britain and Palestine during the Second World War* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1986), 89–115 and Michael Thornhill, 'Britain and the Politics of the Arab League, 1943–1950', in Michael J. Cohen and Marin Kolinsky, eds., *Demise of the British Empire in the Middle East: Britain's Responses to Nationalist Movements 1943–55* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 41–63.

[422] Chaim Weizmann to Jan Smuts, 15 Aug. 1941, Cohen, *Chaim Weizmann, Vol XX*, 181–7.

[423] Ben-Gurion, "Notes on Zionist Policy,"

Palestine as a Jewish unit in an Arab federation. Yet the plan outlined by Eden in 1941 made no mention of a Jewish Palestine – rather, Zionist feared it reflected the continuation of the 1939 White Paper Policy that saw Palestine developing as an Arab majority state, which in turn would be part of a postwar Arab federation. By advocating for a Jewish Commonwealth Ben-Gurion and Weizmann sought to publicly lay out an alternative to the vision of an Arab federation without entirely disavowing of the progressive language of federalism.

At the heart of the concept of the Jewish commonwealth thus lay a series of contradictions. The concept of the Jewish commonwealth embraced the vocabulary of wartime federalism and the critique of small-state nationalism but envisioned the immigration of millions of Jews to Palestine and the creation of a small, new Jewish ethnic nation-state. The Jewish commonwealth idea envisioned Palestine as integrated into a postwar federal structure in the region, but at the same time was designed to reject the actual federal plan the Allies were contemplating for the future of the Middle East.

These series of contradictions were not lost on the numerous critics of the Biltmore program. One of these most poignant critics was the German-Jewish refugee and intellectual Hannah Arendt, who arrived in New York in May 1941 and made herself a name as a prolific commentator on Jewish affairs and in particular on Zionism. As Arendt put it in a 1943 essay "The Crisis of Zionism", the Biltmore program laid out an anachronistic political vision for it called for the establishment of a Jewish state at a time in which nation-state nationalism had become intellectually discredited and politically irrelevant in the West. "If among Zionists leaders many progressives know and talk about the end of small nations and the end of nationalism in the old narrow European sense," she observed, "no official document or program expresses these ideas". This was because, Arendt argued, "The foundations of Zionism were laid

during a time when nobody could imagine any other solution of minority or nationality problems than the autonomous national state with homogenous population." "Zionists are afraid," she argued, "that the whole building might crack if they abandon their old ideas."[424] As she put it in another 1943 essay, the Biltmore program offered a particularly extreme version of the outdated small state nationalism model for what it proposed was the establishment of a state "based on the idea that tomorrow's majority will concede minority rights to today's majority, which indeed would be something brand new in the history of national-states."[425]

Judah Leon Magnes, president of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a supporter of Brit Shalom between the wars, emerged as the staunchest critic of the Biltmore program. In late 1942, in response to the Biltmore conference, Manges founded *Ihud*, a political movement that rejected the Biltmore vision of a Jewish nation-state and advocated for the establishment of a bi-national Arab-Jewish state in Palestine.[426] Magnes' program, much like the vision of the Jewish Commonwealth, ought to be understood in the context of wartime federalism. When Magnes publically articulated the *Ihud* program in a January 1943 article in *Foreign Affairs*, he called not simply for the establishment of a bi-national state in Palestine but for the incorporation of Palestine into the envisaged British sponsored Arab federation, as well as for the inclusion of this Arab federation within a broader post-war Anglo-American union.[427] In other words, if the

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[424] Arendt, 'The Crisis of Zionism', in Jerome Kohn and Ron Feldman, eds., *The Jewish Writings* (New York: Schoken, 2007), 335–6.

[425] Arendt, 'Can the Jewish Arab Question be Solved?', ibid. 193. Arendt opposed the inclusion of Palestine in the proposed postwar Arab federation – she feared it would leave Jews in a position of an unprotected minority. Both the proposals for a Jewish nation-state and an Arab federation, Arendt argued, "cling to the idea of a sovereign state or empire whose majority people is identical with the state." The only way to solve the Jewish-Arab conflict, she argued, was by incorporating Palestine into a broader federation in which Jews and Arabs will not be the only national groups and thus the majority-minority dynamic will disappear.

[426] For a comprehensive study of Magnes' engagement with binationalism, see Joseph Heller, *From Brit Shalom to Ihud: Judah Leon Magnes and the Struggle for a Jewish State* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2003) [in Hebrew].

[427] Judah Leon Magnes, 'Toward Peace in Palestine', *Foreign Affairs*, 21, 2 (1943), 239–49.

Biltmore program was designed to reject the vision of an Arab federation, the *Ihud* program was envisioned as an endorsement of it. Indeed, Magnes first publicly laid out some of the main tenets of the *Ihud* program in a pamphlet published just three weeks after Eden's speech on Arab political unity. Entitled "Palestine and the Arab Union," Magnes' pamphlet welcomed the British support for an Arab federation and called for the inclusion of Palestine as a bi-national state within it.[428]

Magnes' program overall sought to revive the ideas of Jewish-Arab parity that dominated Zionist circles in the 1930s. His plan called for a bi-national state based the principle of political parity and for continued Jewish immigration so long as Jews do not come to constitute more than 40% of the population – a program he already sought to negotiate with Arab leaders in the midst of the 1936 Arab revolt.[429] As we have seen in the previous chapter, in 1936 Weizmann too supported a similar program. Still, a major fact separated between the bi-national and parity visions of the 1930s and that promoted by Magnes early in the war. After the outbreak of war the bi-nationalism and parity were no longer a consensus view among Zionist leaders as they had been before the war. Bi-nationalism became a minority vision that for the first time emerged in opposition to the new vision of a Jewish ethnic nation-state.

Biltmore as Political Utopia

As we have seen in this chapter, after the outbreak of war Ben-Gurion and Weizmann abandoned the various visions of Jewish-Arab power sharing in Palestine that dominated their thinking in the 1930s and embraced a Jewish nation-state program. Yet is important to emphasize that the

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[428] Judah Leon Magnes, 'Palestine and the Arab Union', Herbert H. Lehman Papers, Special Correspondence Files, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library, http://lehman.cul.columbia.edu/ldpd_leh_0577_0010.

[429] Ibid, p. 240-242. See Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion*, p. 341.

Jewish state they envisioned in the Biltmore program was an utopian and rather short-lived wartime vision.

Indeed, neither Weizmann nor Ben-Gurion had explained during the war why they believed Britain, whose victory in the war was a precondition for any Jewish future at all, would radically reverse its policy in favor of Arab statehood in Palestine and begin to support the transfer of millions of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe to Palestine. The Biltmore vision was thus not based on a reasonable assessment of the direction of British policy in the region. Arendt powerfully articulated this point. The idea of a Jewish nation-state had become politically irrelevant, she argued, because the solution it proposed for the post-war Jewish question - the large-scale immigration of millions of Jewish refugees from Europe to Palestine, was completely out of line with British policy in the Middle East. As a careful observer of the British Empire, Arendt argued that the British espousal of an Arab federation was part of its general attempt to form a British-Muslim alliance across the Middle East and Asia in order to secure the route to its most coveted colonial possession – India, a position she became increasingly convinced of after the British crushed the Indian rebellion in late 1942 and worked closely with Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Muslim League to restore order in India.[430] Ussishkin offered a similar assessment in a Zionist executive meeting convened to discuss Ben-Gurion's postwar proposals. "The majority of you are convinced that after the war we will find a solution … that not only would we be able to continue with our Zionist activity but in fact make it far larger and more expansive than ever before." "I wish I could share this belief," Ussishkin argued, "but I have a different feeling." "…After the war Britain will be the world superpower … and this England … has a negative attitude toward the development of the *Yishuv*." This attitude was firmly reflected in Eden's

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[430] Arendt, 'The Crisis of Zionism', mainly p. 335-6.

declaration on an Arab federation. The future of the Middle East was laid out by the British government, Ussishkin observed, "without us receiving any message ... as if there was no Zionist movement in the world …." Chiding the executive for its overt optimism, Ussishkin warned that the postwar Jewish question would more likely be solved not through the transfer of Jews to Palestine but through a new form of territorialism.[431] While British policy continued to develop in opposition to Zionist aspirations, Zionist leaders also recognized that their vision had little support in government quarters in the United States. Though Weizmann met with Roosevelt in 1941, he failed to receive any assurance of support for the Zionist postwar vision. As Weizmann put it in December 1942, "the enemies of Jewish Palestine are people … who fill the various commissions in the State Department which have to do with the Middle East. They know Palestine, they know our aspirations. They are fully opposed to them."[432] "… This makes me feel that we have to hope," he remarked in a moment of candor, "but we have to be very careful in the aspect of what we are likely to achieve."[433]

More centrally, the Biltmore program was an utopian vision because after the summer of 1941 the underlying premise of the program – that millions of Jewish refugees will survive the war, no longer reflected the demographic reality in Eastern Europe. The Biltmore conference took place shortly after the first reports on large-scale massacres of Jews in the Soviet Union and in Nazi occupied Poland had reached the Allied capitols.[434] In his Biltmore conference speech, Nahum Goldman, president of the World Jewish Congress, observed that some reports claim that as many as 800 Jews are killed in the Warsaw ghetto every day, and added that such numbers

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[431] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 15.06.1941, CZA.

[433] Chaim Weizmann "Remarks at the Meeting of American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs,"

[434] For an examination of the Biltmore conference in the context of early reports on massacres of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe see Monty Noam Penkower, "American Jewry and the Holocaust," as well as Yoav Gelber, "Zionist Policy and the Fate,."

must be exaggerated for they would mean that "in the course of two years the total of a half a million Jews may be wiped out." Still, Goldman estimated that some several millions Jews will likely perish throughout Europe during the war.[435] In his subsequent speech at the conference Weizmann offered a far more bleak assessment, suggesting that as many as 25% of the Jewish population of Europe may be liquated in the war, which will leave only some 2-4 million Jewish refugee in postwar Europe.[436] Despite these assessments, the overall mood in the Biltmore conference was that of optimism about the future. For inasmuch as the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union brought millions of Jews under Nazi rule, it also ended the stalemate in Europe following the occupation of France. And within a few months, particularly after the entry of the United States into the war, the complete defeat of Nazism by the Allies increasingly appeared as a viable prospect. Over the course of 1943 and 1944 this optimism waned as Zionist leaders would come to terms with the scale of Jewish destruction in Europe. As we shall see in the next chapter, after 1943 Zionist leaders had repeatedly contemplated – will enough Jews survivor the war to establish a Jewish majority in Palestine? Is there a future for Zionism without the major Jewish population center in Eastern Europe – a Zionism without Jews? During 1945 and 1946, as the scope of Jewish extermination became fully clear, Zionist leaders would come to abandon the Biltmore dream of transferring millions of Jews to Palestine and conclude that the only way to establish a Jewish majority in Palestine is by partitioning the land.

Though the dream of the transfer of millions of Jews to Palestine was short-lived, the Biltmore program nonetheless marked a significant shift in Zionist political thought. In his commentary on the Biltmore program Yapo observed with surprise that the program made no

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[435] Nahum Goldman, "Speech at Extraordinary Zionist Conference of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs", May 9, 1942, Stenographic Protocol, CZA.

[436] Weizmann, "Speech at Extraordinary Zionist Conference,"

mention of a key Zionist moral and legal principle – the historic connection of the Jews to the land of Israel. This principle, he noted, was a mainstay of Zionist politics for the past 50 years, repeated in every Zionist congress and reaffirmed by the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations mandate over Palestine. Indeed, during the 1920s and 1930s both Ben-Gurion and Weizmann repeatedly invoked this concept as a justification for Jewish settlement in Palestine and as a principle that explained subverting the democratic will of the majority Palestinian Arab population. The absence of this principle from the Biltmore program, Yapo suggested, could be explained by two reasons – either because it had become so widely accepted it need not be repeated again, or because the Zionist movement had begun to base its political struggle "on a set of new principles."[437] This new set of new principles was encapsulated by the wartime idea that the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was to be justified by the fact that Palestine offered the only solution to the postwar Jewish refugee problem in Europe. It marked a shift from viewing the *Yishuv* as a political center of Jewish pioneers that will gradually develop alongside the vast Jewish population centers in Eastern Europe to a future Jewish state that will offer a humanitarian solution to the uprooted Jewish millions after the war. As Ben-Gurion put it in 1941, "the goal of Zionism" in the war "is to prevent the emergence of separate solutions to the question of Palestine and to the question of Jews in Europe, the solution ought to be one and the same."[438] Ben-Gurion recognized the novelty of this concept. When he first presented his postwar vision to the leadership of *Mapai* in June 1941 he anticipated the response of his critics. "There are ideologues among us," Ben-Gurion observed, "who say there is nothing in Zionist ideology about Jewish refugees. Zionism was not created for refugees. Zionism is about our

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[437] Yapo, "The Biltmore Program," 101.

[438] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 15.06.1941, CZA.

heritage and our love for the land, it is about our desire to lead a fulfilling life … with a

university of our own, and speak Hebrew … but nothing about Zionism is about refugees."

"[But] why do we need such a thing as ideology or 'schmideology'?" Ben-Gurion argued, "there

is a Jewish people, and it is fast disappearing…"[439] Indeed, it was the prospects of millions of

Jewish refugees after the war, and, as Senator put it in a 1942 Zionist executive meeting, "the

emergence of new political categories … of mass population transfers, which until 3-4 years ago

were for us, for most of the world, unacceptable" that brought about a shift in Zionist thinking,

from conceiving of Jewish settlement in Palestine through the 19th century category of historic

right to an embrace of a new mid-20th century political vocabulary of population shifts and

ethnically homogenous nation-states.[440]

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[439] "Protocols of the Fifth Convention of *Mapai* in Kfar Vitkin," October 27 1942, Ben-Gurion Papers, item 5827.

[440] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 10.11.1942, CZA.

Chapter Five

'If there are no more Jews, there is no need for a Jewish State': Zionism, The Holocaust and the Geopolitics of Jewish Death

In September 1942 Richard Lichtheim, representative of the Zionist executive in Europe, sent a riveting letter to Nahum Goldman, president of the World Jewish Congress and a member of the Zionist executive. After the outbreak of war Lichtheim had set up the Jewish Agency office in Geneva where he collected information on the fate of Jews in Nazi occupied Europe and reported on it to the Zionist leadership in Jerusalem, London and New-York. Lichtheim was one of the first observers to argue that the Nazis were carrying out a systematic plan aimed at the extermination of European Jewry. In communications to Zionist leaders from early 1942 Lichtheim argued that the Nazis plan to murder millions of Jews through forced labor and starvation. In August that year – at about the same time as Gerhart Riegner, head of the office of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva, drafted his famous telegram – Lichtheim concluded that the large-scale deportation of Jews to camps were a stage in a deliberate Nazi mass killing operation. In Lichtheim's view the mass extermination of Jews had grave implications for the future of Zionism. Lichtheim rejected the calculations of Goldman and other Zionist leaders at the time according to which some two to three millions Jews outside the Soviet Union will survive the war, be in need of immigration and in turn create a demographic majority in a future Jewish state in Palestine. The most optimistic forecast today, Lichtheim argued in his letter, is that one and a half million Jews would survive the war and even this scenario depended on the situation in Hungary, Romania and Italy to remain unchanged, "a most doubtful supposition." A more realistic estimate, he proposed, was that no more than half a million to a million Jews would survive the calamity. The vast extent of the Jewish catastrophe, he declared, meant that

the "basis of Zionism as it was understood and preached during the last 50 years has gone."

"Whatever number of Jews will be after this war … there will be no need for [a] mass

emigration" of Jews to Palestine. After an Allied victory the small number of surviving Jews

could be successfully resettled in various European countries where they would enjoy equal

rights. "[C]an there be a Zionist movement after this destruction of European Jewry and this

radical change in their position?" "500,000 Jews are not enough and even 800,000 Jews will be a

minority in Palestine. How can we ask for that State if we cannot show that several million need

it or want it?" "I feel that Zionism …" Lichtheim concluded, "is finished." "… Let us stop

talking of Palestine as 'the solution of the Jewish problem'. … It is now too late.'"[441]

Lichteim letter is startling document in part because it tells us a story about his personal

political transformation. A prominent leader of the Zionist movement in Germany, in 1925

Lichtheim joined the ranks of Jabotinsky's Zionist Revisionist party and in 1933 was one the

founders of the Revisionist breakaway group, 'The Jewish State Party'. During the 1930s

Lichtheim vigorously opposed the position of prominent Zionist leaders such as Ben-Gurion and

Weizmann who refused to declare that the establishment of a Jewish state was the goal of the

Zionist movement.[442] Embracing Jabotinsky's views, Lichtheim advocated for a more militant

line against the British mandatory authorities, immediate large-scale Jewish immigration from

Eastern Europe to Palestine and for the swift establishment of a Jewish majority and a state. In

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[441] Richard Lichtheim to Nahum Goldman, September 9 1942, Ben-Gurion Papers item 204842. For a study of Lichtheim's knowledge and perception of the extermination of Jews in Europe see Raya Cohen, "Confronting the Reality of the Holocaust: Richard Lichtheim, 1939-1942," *Yad Vashem Studies* Vol. XXIII (Jerusalem, 1993), pp. 335-68. Lichtheim's role as representative of the Jewish Agency in Geneva has been the subject of Cohen's work, but interest in Lichtheim as an original Zionist thinker is only beginning to attract attention in recent years. See, for example, Andrea Kirchner's study of Lichtheim's Zionist activities in Istanbul during World War I, Kirchner "Ein vergessenes Kapitel jüdischer Diplomatie: Richard Lichtheim in den Botschaften Konstantinopels (1913–1917)", *Naharaim* 2015, 9 (1-2), 128–150. This chapter seeks to contribute to the renewed interest in Lichtheim by placing his wartime writings in the context of a larger wartime Zionist debate over the future of Zionism in light of the extermination of Jews in Europe.

[442] See chapters 3 and 4 for an examination of the evolution of Ben-Gurion and Weizmann's positions on the idea of a Jewish state.

his letter to Goldman Lichtheim had in fact noted the morbid irony that "the same Zionist leaders who were always opposed to the idea of a Jewish state are now loudly shouting for it" at the very moment in which the possibility of realizing such a state had passed. "Do they ask for a state," Lichtheim observed, "because they have a feeling that the [Zionist] movement has come to an end and because they want it to look at least like a happy end?" Lichtheim's transformation from an early advocate for a Jewish state in the interwar period to a self-declared prophet of this vision's demise is a mirror image of Robinson's transformation explored in chapter I – from one of the chief proponents of Jewish diaspora nationalism between the wars to an advocate of centering the Jewish national agenda exclusively on state-building in Palestine and abandoning the struggle for minority rights for Jews in postwar Europe.[443]

More centrally, Lichtheim's letter is a startling document for it highlights a largely overlooked aspect of the response of Zionist leaders to the Holocaust. Scholarship on the Zionist response to the extermination of European Jewry has primarily focused on the morally contentious question of whether Zionist leaders had done enough to try to rescue and save Jews from Nazi Europe.[444] Yet an equally important aspect of the response of Zionist leaders to the

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[443] See chapter I. Lichtheim to Goldman, Ibid. In a 1946 essay Lichtheim reflected on his earlier career as a supporter of Revisionist Zionism and argued that it was based on his assumption from the late 1920s and through the 1930s that the establishment of a Jewish state was a viable political goal. See Lichtheim, "Prognosen," *Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 32, August 9 1946. I wish to thank Andrea Kirchner for sharing this document with me. An Interesting anecdote: in 1935 the Zionist executive debated between hiring Lichtheim and Robinson to serve as the Jewish Agency representative in Geneva. Goldman rejected Robinson's candidacy arguing that Robinson had become a "careerist" who doesn't believe that Zionism could do much to advance his career. Instead, Goldman proposed that the executive hire Lichtheim. See report on meeting of the executive on January 28, 1935, the Lichtheim file (collected by Shabtai Teveth), Ben-Gurion Papers, item 251869.

[444] The debate over the question of whether the Zionist leadership in *Yishuv* acted vigorously enough to try to save Jews in Europe has dominated the scholarly research on the Zionist movement during the Holocaust. This debate had its origins during the war – prominent leaders and the press in the *Yishuv* accused the Jewish Agency leadership, in particular Yitzhak Gruenbaum, head of the Rescue Committee of the Jewish Agency, of a timid response to the extermination of Jews and of not diverting enough funds and dedicating enough action to rescue efforts. Revisionist leaders advocated at the time for an open revolt against the British to let Jewish refugees into Palestine against the official line of the *Yishuv* leadership that feared the implications of such an open defiance of the British for the future of Zionist aspirations in Palestine. This debate was revived in the late 1970s following the publication of S. B. Beit-Zvi's indictment of Zionist policy during the war, *Post-Ugandian Zionism in the Crucible of the Holocaust.*

Holocaust has to do with the way in which they interpreted the extermination of Jews as a

geopolitical question. As news of the extermination of European Jewry had reached the Allied

capitols and the *Yishuv* from late 1942, Zionist leaders grappled with the question at the center of

Lichtheim's letter - will enough Jews survive the war to enable the establishment of a Jewish

majority in Palestine? Lichtheim's position reflected an early and radical response to this

question. But after 1943 other Zionist leaders grappled with this question not by dismissing the

vision of a Jewish state by developing new strategies to ensure a future Jewish majority in

Palestine. As Zionist leaders recognized that the Jewish centers in Eastern Europe – the

demographic reservoir of Zionism - had been destroyed, they searched for new Jewish candidates

for mass immigration. Weizmann insisted that the future of Zionism lay in the development of a

Beit-Zvi, a devout Revisionist Zionist, analyzed the "causes of the failure of the Zionist movement between 1938-1945" to save European Jews and concluded that its roots lay in an intellectual shift that followed the Zionist movement's rejection of the 1905 'Uganda program,' a proposal for the establishment of a Jewish colony in British East Africa. The rejection of the Uganda program, Beit-Zvi argued, reflected a shift from a vision of Zionism as a movement aimed at rescuing European Jewry from a sense of an impending catastrophe in Europe into a movement focused on Jewish national and cultural revival. This attitude was reflected, Beit-Zvi argued, in Zionist leaders' rejection of various territoiralists proposals for the solution of the 'Jewish question' in Europe during the 1930s and in a wartime attitude among the Zionist leadership that prioritized protecting the political future of the *Yishuv* over saving individual Jews. Beit-Zvi's bold thesis spurred a number of scholarly responses aimed at carefully documenting the Yishuv's vast efforts to save Jews – particularly with regard to efforts to save the Jews of Hungary - and at clearing the *Yishuv* leadership of these charges. Prominent examples are works by Poart, Frilling and Ofer. While this chapter seeks to move away from the deeply ideological debates over this issue, it is nonetheless deeply influenced by an important insight of Beit-Zvi's work that has been clouded by the subsequent debate: that Zionist leaders interpreted the extermination of European Jews as a political question with grave implication for the future of Zionism. Yet rather than morally evaluating this position, this chapter is the first to try to offer an in-depth study of precisely how did this knowledge shape the Zionist vision for the future. I wish to thank Dan Diner for suggesting I read Beit-Zvi's work and for conversations on the topic. See S. B. Beit Zvi, *Post-Ugandan Zionism on Trial*, 2 vol. (Tel-Aviv: Zahala, 1991). The book was originally published in Hebrew in 1977. See also Dina Porat, *The Blue and Yellow Stars of David: The Zionist leadership in Palestine and the Holocaust, 1939-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Tuvia Frilling *Arrow in the Dark: David Ben-Gurion, the Yishuv Leadership and Rescue Attempts during the Holocaust*, 2. Vols. (Madison: Univeristy of Wisconsin Press, 2005) and Dalia Ofer. *Escaping the Holocaust: Illegal Immigration to the Land of Israel, 1939-1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). For an influential but less scholarly intervention in this debate see Tom Segev. *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993). For a return to the thesis according to which the Zionist leadership was focused mainly on saving the *Yishuv* see Idith Zertal, *From Catastrophe to Power: The Holocaust Survivors and the Emergence of Israel* (Berkeley: Berkeley University Press, 1998). For a recent and novel reconsideration of Gruenbaum's activities during the war see chapter 7 of Yosef Gorny, *The Jewish Press and the Holocaust, 1939–1945: Palestine, Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Gorny asks whether, and to what extent, has Gruenbaum's earlier career as a leader of *Gegenwartsarbeit* Zionism in Poland, his work for the promotion of the rights of Jews as a national minority in Poland, had influenced his policies and actions during the war.

new American Jewish *Chalutz* movement and in the large-scale immigration of American Jews to Palestine. Ben-Gurion looked eastwards and for the first time envisioned the mass immigration to Palestine of Jewish communities from across the Middle East and North Africa. At the same time, Zionist leaders recognized that the only way to establish a majority in the territory of mandatory Palestine is by partitioning the land – thus reducing the number of Arabs in the future territory of the Jewish state and the number of Jewish immigrants required to 'offset' the Arab demographic majority.

This chapter reconstructs how growing knowledge and differing interpretations of the extermination of Jews in Europe reshaped the visions Zionist leaders advocated for the future of Jews after the war. This chapter is the last segment in part II of this dissertation that explores the transformation of Zionist political thought during the war from the interwar vision of Jewish-Arab parity to the postwar vision of a Jewish ethnic nation-state. This chapter should also be read as a corollary to chapter I that examined how growing knowledge of the Holocaust alongside mass population transfers in wartime and postwar Europe prompted diaspora nationalist leaders to conclude there was no future for Jewish minority rights in Eastern Europe after the war. Overall, these two chapters seek to tell the story of how Jewish national leaders interpreted the Holocaust not only as a Jewish collective catastrophe, or as a question of rescue, but also as a political question with wide ramifications for the future of Jewish politics.

This chapter also seeks to intervene in a broader historiographical debate on the relationship between the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. In the past few years scholars have criticized the "moral legitimacy thesis" – the idea that the international community, in particular the United States and the United Nations, supported Jewish statehood in 1947 out of a moral conviction that Jews were entitled to a nation-state in the wake of the

catastrophe in Europe.[445] Scholars have shown that US president Harry S. Truman in fact

initially opposed a Jewish state after the war and supported a bi-national solution for Palestine.[446]

Moreover, scholars have emphasized how the crucial Soviet support for Jewish statehood during

the UN vote on partition was motivated primarily out of a desire to hasten the disintegration of

the British Empire in the Middle East in the context of the early Cold War and decolonization.[447]

In fact, as Evyatar Friesel and Dan Michman observed, as an objective factor (rather than in

terms of how it was subjectively interpreted by the international community after the war) the

Holocaust almost destroyed the possibility of establishing a Jewish state, for the millions of Jews

who were needed for the establishment of such a state were exterminated during the war.[448] This

chapter joins this new historiographical approach but seeks to make several significant

contributions. This chapter shows how during the war and in its immediate aftermath Zionist

leaders were deeply aware of the fact that the Holocaust was detrimental to Zionism, and

examines how this interpretation of the events in Europe prompted them to revise their vision of

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[445] Dan Michman has recently surveyed the rich historiography of this thesis and examined how it had been politicized from 1948 to this day by both supporters and opponents of Zionism in popular historical accounts on establishment of Israel. Yehuda Bauer and Idith Zertal have offered a more nuanced articulation of this thesis by emphasizing the role of the postwar plight of Jewish Displaced Persons in shaping international support for Jewish statehood rather than perceptions of the Holocaust as a unique historical event, which, as other scholars have shown, was not a prominent mode of interpretation outside Jewish circles in the immediate postwar years. Zertal differs from Bauer in that she emphasizes how the Jewish DP issue was instrumentalized by Zionist leaders to promote Jewish collective aspirations at the expense of the postwar rehabilitation of individual Jews. See Dan Michman, "The Causal Connection Between the Holocaust and the Birth of Israel: Historiography Between Myth and Reality," *Iyunim Bitkumat Israel* 10 (2000): 234–259 [in Hebrew]; Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), primarily chapter eleven 'From the Holocaust to the State of Israel," and Zertal, *From Catastrophe to Power*.

[446] On Truman see Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers, 1945-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014) also John B. Judis, *Genesis: Truman, American Jews, and the Origins of the Arab/Israeli Conflict* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014).

[447] See Cohen, *Palestine and The Great Powers* as well as Gabriel Gorodetsky, 'The Soviet Union's Role in the Creation of the State of Israel', The Journal of Israeli History, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 4–20. For a recent overview of the scholarship on the Soviet role in the creation of the state of Israel see Evyatar Friesel, "On the Myth of the Connection between the Holocaust and the Creation of Israel," *Israel Affairs*, 14, 3 (2008), 449–50.

[448] Michman, "The Causal Connection," and Friesel, "On the Myth,".

Jewish statehood. As Zionist leaders grappled with the extent of Jewish extermination they concluded there would not remain enough Jews after the war either for the vision of Jewish-Arab parity they promoted in the 1930s nor for the realization of Biltmore vision of transferring millions of Jewish refugee to Palestine and establishing a Jewish ethnic-nation state in the whole of the mandate. Instead, Zionist leaders embraced a new, post-Holocaust vision of Jewish statehood: a small state in a partitioned Palestine that was to be established through the transfer of several hundreds of thousands of refugees from the small Jewish remnant in Europe. Just enough Jews, Zionist leaders hoped, to establish a majority. In this sense the debate on the relationship between the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel is missing a crucial distinction: the very vision of the Jewish state that ultimately came into being in 1948 was itself a product of the Holocaust.

When the facts become known, they will speak for themselves

As we have seen in the previous chapter, during the first years of the war Zionist leaders were convinced that the war would end with a Jewish refugee problem in Eastern Europe in the scale of some three to five million. This demographic analysis emerged from contacts between Weizmann as well as other prominent Zionist leaders and the leaders of the Polish and Czech Governments in Exile in London. These governments informed Zionist leaders that they would actively hinder the postwar reintegration of Jews the Nazis had removed from their homes and professions during the war. Weizmann and other Zionist leaders concluded that this would be the case for Jews throughout Eastern Europe after the war. This expectation for a postwar Jewish refugee problem in the millions lay at the center of the vision Zionist leaders articulated in the May 1942 Biltmore conference. The future 'Jewish commonwealth' in Palestine Zionist leaders

advocated for was to come into being through the transfer of several million Jewish refugees

from postwar Eastern Europe to Palestine which would in turn radically transform the Arab-

Jewish demographic balance and lead to the creation of a Jewish majority state.[449]

The Biltmore conference took place however in a twilight zone – just as knowledge of

large-scale extermination of Jews by the Nazis in Europe had begun to creep into the

consciousness of observers in the Allied capitols, and as expectation by Zionist leaders for

millions of Jewish refugees after the war was being replaced by a new assumption on millions of

Jewish victims. Indeed, the Biltmore conference took place amidst the publication of growing

news in the Allied capitols on large-scale massacres of Jews across Nazi occupied Europe.

Gruesome reports on massacres of Jews throughout Nazi Europe were published from the

beginning of 1942 in the press in London, New-York and the *Yishuv* – yet the accuracy of many

of these reports were openly questioned at the time in part because they emerged predominately

from Soviet sources and were explained away as a form of propaganda.[450] From June that year,

just several weeks after the Biltmore conference took place, reports on a Jewish death toll in the

scale of millions were corroborated by more trustworthy sources. The Polish Government in

Exile published the Black Paper on the Nazi occupation of Poland that reported on the activities

of the *Einsatzgruppen* and gas vans and estimated that some 700,000 Jews had been

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[449] See chapters 1 and 4.

[450] For some of the main scholarly works on knowledge of the extermination of European Jewry in the Allied capitols and the *Yishuv* see Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986); Walter Laquer, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth About Hitler's "Final Solution."* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2012); Michael Fleming. *Auschwitz, the Allies and Censorship of the Holocaust* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Richard Breitman and Allan J. Lichtman. *FDR and the Jews* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Gorny, *The Jewish Press and the Holocaust*; Porat, *The Blue and the Yellow Stars of David*; David Engel, *Facing a Holocaust: The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews, 1943-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1993).

exterminated in Poland alone.[451] In August Lichtheim and Riegner sent to the leadership of the

Jewish Agency and the World Jewish Congress memos detailing a Nazi plan to exterminate

millions of Jews.[452]

Many of the speeches in the Biltmore conference reflected this in-between moment. Even

before Zionist leaders had any official reports and estimates on which to base their assumptions

on the Jewish death toll in the war, they laid out estimates according to which millions of Jews

would ultimately perish in Europe. Weizmann, for example, suggested in his speech that as many

as 25% of European Jewry might perish in the war.[453] Goldman openly doubted the accuracy of

some of the reports emanating from Europe – reports on the murder of 800 Jews a day in the

Warsaw Ghetto, he observed, "must be exaggerated because, if true, then in the course of two

years the total of half a million Jews in the Warsaw ghettos may be wiped out" – but at the same

time acknowledged that "none of us were shocked" when Weizmann proposed that "25% may be

'written off'".[454] The figure of 25% that was floated at the conference needs to be understood not

as an attempt to accurately asses the number of Jewish victims in Europe but rather as a heuristic

concept aimed at demonstrating that even in what Zionist leaders believed at the time was the

extreme, worst-case scenario that a quarter of all European Jews would perish in the war, the

demographic argument of the Biltmore program – that millions of Jews would be in need of

immigration to Palestine after the war – still stands. For the purpose of formulating the Biltmore

program the significant number was thus not exactly how many Jews would perish but rather

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[451] Yoav Gelber, "Zionist Policy and the Fate of European Jewry, 1939-1942" *Yad Vashem Studies* vol. 13 (1979), p. 188-190

[452] Cohen, "Confronting the Reality of the Holocaust," 359-363.

[453] Chaim Weizmann, "Speech at Extraordinary Zionist Conference of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs," May 9, 1942, Stenographic Protocol, the Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem.

[454] Nahum Goldman, "Speech at Extraordinary Zionist Conference of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs," Ibid.

whether enough would survive to enable the establishment of a Jewish majority in Palestine. After he laid out the figure of 25% Weizmann thus noted that "there will still be left enough force to continue the great tradition of European Jewry" and that "those who will be physically destroyed will be destroyed, but those who will survive will carry the torch proudly". Goldman did not discuss the specific number of those he believed would perish in the war but rather the number of those who would survive - outside Soviet Russia, Goldman concluded, there may be left after the war "three or three and a half million Jews."[455] Ben-Gurion too did not discuss the number of expected Jewish victims in Europe in his speech at all but only spoke about his expectations for a large-scale postwar Jewish refugee problem in the millions.[456] The fact that Zionist leaders offered a rough and unsubstantiated estimate of the number of expected Jewish victims, and focused mainly on properly estimating the number of survives, does not mean that they did not care deeply about the fate of Jews in Europe or were not committed to saving them. Rather it shows that while Zionist leaders expected a massive death toll of Jews in Europe they did not imagine that the toll would be so large as to influence the demographic tenets of the Biltmore vision. The question of Jewish death in Europe and the future of Zionism remained in their view two separate questions.

From late 1942, however, Zionist leaders had begun to realize that the Biltmore conference figure of 25% was not a worst-case scenario but rather a conservative estimate of the number of Jewish victims in Europe. As noted above, in August 1942 the first official reports from Lichtheim and Reigner indicating a plan to exterminate all Jews under Nazi rule had

[455] In a speech he delivered several weeks later Goldman offered specific numbers. After surveying the position of Jews throughout Europe he noted that "the ten millions Jews of Europe before the war will be something like seven million". See Address Delivered by Nahum Goldman, Chairman, Administrative Committee of the World Jewish Congress, June 6, 1942, World Jewish Congress Records, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio C11 3 (accessed as copies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archive.)

[456] Ben-Gurion, "Speech at Extraordinary Zionist Conference of the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs," May 10, 1942, Stenographic Protocol, the Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem.

reached Jewish leaders. In November, 82 Jewish refugee from Poland arrived in Palestine and corroborated the reports on the extermination in Europe in a series of powerful personal testimonies – a week of mourning was declared in the *Yishuv*.[457] In December 1942 the United States, Great Britain and ten other Allied states issued an official statement denouncing the implementation of a Nazi plan to exterminate European Jewry. Over the course of 1943 reports on Jewish extermination appeared with ever-greater frequency in the press in the Allied capitols and in the *Yishuv*. In August 1943, a year after Lichtheim and Riegner sent their reports on extermination, the Institute of Jewish Affairs of the World Jewish Congress surveyed the situation of Jews in Europe based on all available data and published an official estimate that 3,000,000 Jews had been murdered in Nazi-occupied Europe.[458] By the end of 1943 Zionist leaders had thus realized that about half a million more Jews had *already* been murdered than what just a year earlier appeared to them as the extreme estimate of 25% - and the end of the war was nowhere in sight.

Lichtheim's letter to Goldman discussed in the introduction was the first indication of a shift from viewing Jewish death in the war and the political goals of Zionism as separate to deeply connected questions. Lichtheim's letter was in fact written as a response to Goldman's speech at the Biltmore conference and to his estimate that 25% of European Jews may be 'written off'. Lichtheim seems to have received Goldman's speech with significant delay – likely at the beginning of September - and thus read the speech that was delivered in May through his new post-August consciousness based on direct knowledge of a Nazi extermination plan. Lichtheim summarily rejected Goldman's "too optimistic" figure of 25%. Lichtheim proposed that the current "optimistic" estimate would put the number of dead Jews at 50% after the war

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[457] Porat, *The Blue and Yellow Stars of David*, p. 82 [Hebrew edition].

[458] See Chapter I.

and if the Nazi extermination plan expands to Hungary, Romania and Italy that figure would be 60%-65%, that is, a surviving Jewish population in postwar Europe outside the Soviet Union of some 500,000 to a million.[459] Such a small Jewish population, Lichtheim argued, would preclude the possibility of large-scale transfer of Jews to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish majority. In a January 1943 speech in Geneva, Lichtheim made his views public. Lichtheim argued that the Jewish survivors in Europe will likely assimilate into their prewar countries after the war rather than seek immigration to Palestine and thus that the Jewish community in Palestine – like Jews in Europe – will remain a minority:

> "I am not one of those who believe that Palestine … will attract the remnant once the war is over … The destruction of the great centers of European Judaism will favor their assimilation in the countries to which they are attached. Relived from the threat of anti-semitism, for the moment at least, they will NOT be inclined to emigrate. Palestine as a refuge for masses of hunted Jews will therefore no longer make sense: there will be no masses and the survivors will not be hunted. As a consequence the Jews may be relegated to a status of a minority in Palestine.[460]

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[459] These percentages are my calculations based on the numbers Lichtheim provided in the letter to Goldman and the population figures Goldman used in his speech. A few caveats regarding the numbers: Goldman over-estimated the size of the Jewish population in Europe by about half a million compared to those provided by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. It is also not fully clear how Goldman and Lichtheim's estimates accounted for Jews in Polish territory annexed by the Soviet Union as part of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact.

[460] A transcript from this speech was published in the Zurich based paper *Israelitsches Wochenblatt* on January 8, 1943 and was reprinted in a secret memo of the British Foreign office from June 22, 1943 ("David Ben-Gurion. His Aims and Activities," FO 921 59 M.G 24/6 6/43/82, P.I.C Paper No. 5, Most Secret). The Foreign Office memo surveyed the opinion of Zionist leaders regarding the likelihood of establishing a Jewish state in light of the extermination of Jews in Europe. A copy of the Foreign Office paper was found in the Lichtheim file (collected by Shabtai Teveth), Ben-Gurion Papers, item 251869.

From late 1942 other Zionist leaders had begun to openly contemplate the question of how the scale of Jewish extermination in Europe will influence the Zionist vision of establishing a Jewish majority in Palestine. Just one month after Lichtheim sent his letter to Goldman, Ben-Gurion raised this concern in a revealing comment in a speech delivered at the Fifth Convention of the *Mapai* party in which he for the first time laid out the Biltmore vision to his party base. "No one knows if any Jews will remain in Nazi Europe after this war," Ben-Gurion observed, "perhaps every single one of them will be exterminated before the end of the war?" If all Jews would be exterminated, Ben-Gurion acknowledged, "there will be no *aliyah* [Jewish immigration to Palestine], and our future here will be like the future of Yemenite Jews or the Assyrians of Iraq or that of Jews in Germany before the rise of Hitler: we will face either physical destruction or spiritual destruction and degeneration." "… But let us hope that there will be a remnant, that not all Jews would be exterminated. … there may be millions of survivors, let us hope there will be millions!"[461]

Ben-Gurion's comment reflects how drastically the estimate of the number of Jewish victims changed in Zionist thinking between May and October – from 25% to raising the possibility that *all* Jews in Nazi Europe may be exterminated. Still, it is remarkable that in both the Biltmore program speeches and in this October speech Zionist leaders used rough assessments of the number of victims rather than specific estimates based on actual information provided by the Jewish Agency and World Jewish Congress offices in Geneva. In May, as noted, the rough estimate was used to demonstrate that even an extreme death rate of 25% of European Jews would not endanger the Biltmore vision. In October the rough estimate reflected a different strategy – avoiding the need to grapple publicly – and perhaps even personally – with the implications of the genocide of the Jews on the political program Zionist leaders had officially

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[461] Protocols of the Fifth Convention of *Mapai* in Kfar Vitkin," October 27 1942, Ben-Gurion Papers, item 5827.

endorsed just several months earlier. Ben-Gurion could not avoid mentioning Jewish extermination in his October speech given the widespread discussions on the topic in the *Yishuv* at the time, and by mentioning the extermination of Jews he could not avoid raising the possibility that it would endanger the Biltmore vision of transferring millions of Jews to Palestine for which he sought to win the support of his party in this very speech. Ben-Gurion solved this conundrum by presenting such an egregious estimate of the number of Jewish victims so as to remove the question of extermination from the realm of actual political calculations and by connecting this estimate to a straw-man argument. Ben-Gurion argued that if *all* Jews perished, then there would be no immigration of Jews to Palestine and Zionism will be over. Yet what Ben-Gurion deliberately avoided from mentioning was that even a radically smaller death rate – that is, even if only half of European Jews were to be murdered in the war as Lichtheim argued was already the case – then the Biltmore vision, as Lichtheim insisted, would still face grave dangers.

Ben-Gurion's comments reveal an important aspect of the way Zionist leaders grappled with growing knowledge of the extermination of Jews – they realized early on that knowing too much, and spreading specific and detailed information on the extent of Jewish extermination in Europe, will put the wartime Zionist political program at the risk of becoming irrelevant. Bernard Joseph, director of the political department of the Jewish Agency, articulated this point when he inveighed against the publication of data "exaggerating the number of Jewish victims, for if we announce that millions of Jews have been slaughtered by the Nazis, we will justifiably be asked where the millions of Jews are, for whom we can claim that we shall provide a home in *Eretz Yisrael* after the war ends."[462] Joseph Schechtman, a New-York based Zionist Revisionist activist

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[462] Cited from Joseph's diary in Gelber, "Zionist Policy," p. 195.

and former close-aide of Jabotinsky, laid out a similar argument in a February 1943 article in the Revisionist paper *Zionnews*.

> "These gigantic figures on the already exterminated Jews and the prophecies that further millions are going to be exterminated shortly lead also to another fatal political result: to make pointless all Jewish postwar demands with regard to Palestine. These demands are based first of all upon the necessity of providing resettlement possibilities for millions of uprooted European Jews. In proclaiming systematically that millions of Jews have been already exterminated and millions more are to follow, we simply undermine the very ground for our national demands. If there are no more Jews, there is no need for a Jewish state. And it is regrettable that the Zionist or the pro-Zionist press so willingly provides non-Jewish circles with this kind of material."[463]

Schechtman ultimately accused the Jewish press of creating a psychological atmosphere in which Jews and outside observers "become accustomed to the idea that the bulk of European Jewry will be wiped out before the end of the war" and thus that "no provisions will be needed for [Jewish] resettlement and rehabilitation after the war." "… [W]e should not wonder if in this psychological atmosphere," Schechtman argued, "various influential circles are prepared to overlook Jewish needs and Jewish national aspirations while elaborating blue-prints for a new and better post-war world." While Schechtman noted that "these remarks are certainly not made in order to urge Jewish organizations to conceal the true scope of the Jewish tragedy in Europe or to minimize the number of its victims" he nonetheless added that "responsible Jewish leaders and

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[463] Joseph Schechtman, "More Circumspection!," *Zionews*, Vol. IV 23-24, February 28 1943,. p. 18.

the Jewish press have to be extremely circumspect and conservative in operating with gigantic figures of massacred Jews."[464]

The concluding sentence of Schechtmann's article was contradictory – Schechtman urged Jewish leader to both limit the publication of knowledge on the extent of Jewish extermination in Europe and at the same time not to conceal the facts about the extermination. This contradiction reflected the way in which Schechtman grappled with a major moral dilemma at the center of Zionist leaders' engagement with news on the extermination of Jews in Europe. Drawing greater attention in the Allied capitols to the horrific scale of Jewish extermination would help make the case for the urgency of acting to save Europe's remaining Jews. But the clearer it becomes that Hitler had already murdered millions of Jews, as noted above, the less there would appear to be a need for Zionism as a solution for the fast disappearing postwar Jewish refugee problem in Europe. Yizhak Grunbaum, head of the Rescue Committee of the Jewish Agency, gave voice to this dilemma when he observed in a January 1943 meeting of the executive of the Jewish Agency – to the opprobrium of many of his colleagues - that "there are two things that may be the same in theory but in practice are very different – saving the Jews and saving the *Yishuv*."[465] A May 1943 editorial of the Tel-Aviv based *Haboker* expressed a similar idea, if much more subtly so as almost to hide the radicalism of its statement. "It is a fact that the holocaust of European Jewry, that great horror, that should have revealed to the enlightened world the necessity of the Zionist idea – has become an obstacle to Zionism."[466]

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[464] Ibid.

[465] Grunbaum's role as the head of the Rescue Committee of the Jewish Agency has been the subject of much historical writing and controversy. For a recent examination of Grunbaum's wartime activities and the historical controversy surrounding him see Gorny, *The Jewish Press and the Holocaust,* chapter 7.

[466] "On Shertok's Lecture," *Haboker*, May 4 1943, p. 2.

While Schechtman and Joseph urged Zionist leaders to remain circumspect about their publication of knowledge on the extermination of Jews in Europe in order to protect Zionist political demands from becoming irrelevant, in reality Zionist leaders – at least outside the *Yishuv* - had no influence on what information would reach daylight. More importantly, regardless of which perceptions of the fate of Jews in Europe took root in the Allied capitols during the war, there was an objective reality that was to be revealed sooner or later that no one could ultimately hide. In a February 1944 letter to British historian and Zionism advocate Louis Namier, Lichtheim expressed his consternation at the fact that Zionist leaders continue to officially adhere to the Biltmore program and believe that they could somehow hide "the fact" that the Jews needed to build the Jewish state have already been murdered with Zionist "propaganda." Lichtheim's letter to Namier is a particularly significant document for understanding how Zionist leaders made sense of the Holocaust as a geopolitical question because of the pivotal role both played in shaping demographic thinking among the Zionist leadership during the war. As discussed in chapters I and III, Namier, a close Weizmann-aide, met Edward Beneš, president of the Czechoslovak Government in Exile, in December 1941 and learned from him about Czech plans for the expulsion of Jews after the war. Namier later drafted a detailed memo for Weizmann that estimated there will be some two to three millions stateless Jewish refugees in postwar Eastern Europe. This memo was published in March 1942 under the title "Exodus and Numbers" in the journal *New Judea.* Namier's memo shaped Weizmann's thinking on the topic and ultimately became the only "scientific" assessment that backed the claims of the speakers at the Biltmore conference for a Jewish refugees problem in the millions after the war.[467] Lichtheim was startled by the fact that well into 1944 Zionist leaders kept officially adhering to Namier's completely outdated demographic predictions. He wrote Namier:

[467] Namier's memo, "Numbers and Exodus" was published in the journal *The New Judea* in February-March 1942

It is not true, that two or three million Jews would need to emigrate or be evacuated from Europe. These false assumptions, on which the Biltmore program was based, still seem to be the basis on which our official politics is based. I regard that as unfortunate. We can't change the facts through blatant propaganda, and a politics that is based on such a false calculation will end with destruction and defeat. I'm deeply afraid, that our official politics, that pushes aside the truth of Zionism and is based on a false assumption of a postwar refugee problem, will end in confusion, consternation, disappointment, and ultimately in a political breakdown, from which our movement will not be able to recover, at least not in our generation."[468]

In an April 1944 'strictly confidential' letter to his close friend and aide and prominent American Zionist leader Meyer Weisgal, Weizmann – in a rare moment of candor on the fate of European Jewry - acknowledged too the predominance of the postwar "fact" of Jewish extermination over wartime perceptions of the events in Europe. In this letter Weizmann argued that the 'enemies' of Zionism already know that the "fact" of Jewish extermination works in their favor but remain mute on the topic and do not use it as an argument against Zionism as not to appear to politicize the Jewish tragedy. "Incidentally, the whole political position [i.e., the demand for a Jewish state] may be vitiated by the disappearance of European Jewry. The main argument based on pressure due to anti-Semitism," Weizmann argued, "loses it force if only a very small number of Jews remain alive in Europe after this war." "I am quite sure that our enemies are already reckoning on this in their own minds though they do not speak about it yet

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and republished in Louis B. Namier, *Conflicts. Studies in Contemporary History* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1942), 163-173.

[468] Lichtheim provided a transcript of this letter in his 1946 essay "Prognosen," see Lichtheim, "Prognosen,".

because it would be very ungracious to make political capital out of such a catastrophe. But when everything is over, and the facts become known, they will speak for themselves. And any demand of ours based on the imperative necessity of transferring large number of Jews speedily to Palestine will then fall off the ground."[469]

Indeed, over the course of 1943 and 1944 those who Weizmann dubbed "the enemies of Zionism" – or at least representatives of the Allied powers who were reluctant about Zionist political aspirations – had begun to doubt the feasibility of the postwar Zionist vision in light of the extermination of Jews in Europe. A secret June 1943 paper of the British Foreign Office discussed Lichtheim's views and the discord among Zionist leaders over the feasibility of achieving the Biltmore program. The paper observed: "The Jewish Agency in Palestine is well informed on conditions in Central Europe and presumably base their views upon knowledge. It is hard to believe that they could be so unreasonable as to discuss openly and devote much time to a scheme which they know in their hearts to be impossible of achievement."[470] Soviet leaders expressed similar doubts. In late 1944 Goldman met Konstantin Umansky, Soviet ambassador to Mexico (former Soviet ambassador to the United States). Umansky told Goldman that the Soviet and British Governments have already discussed the future of Palestine after the war and then approached Goldman with a question. "Let's assume there will be a Jewish state," Umansky asked, "where will you bring the Jews from? You know what is happening in Europe, if we say anything about it the response is that it is Soviet propaganda, but you know what is left in Europe." Goldman replied by insisting that a million Jews would still remain alive in Europe after the war, that half a million of them will immigrate to Palestine and establish a majority and

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[469] Weizmann to Meyer, W. Weisgall, 13 April, 1944, *Weizmann's Letters*, Vol. 21, 165-171.

[470] "David Ben-Gurion His Aims and Activities," a copy of the Foreign Office paper was found in the Lichtheim file (collected by Shabtai Teveth), Ben-Gurion Papers, item 251869.

that this majority "will be the beginning of the Jewish state." Umansky dismissed these numbers as too general and begun to survey the number of surviving Jews and potential for Jewish immigration in each European country. Goldman noted that there are also Jews in the United States, in Yemen and in Iraq, and that if there will be a Jewish state these communities would immigrate to Palestine too. Umansky, a Russian Jew who presented himself to Goldman as sympathetic to the Zionist cause, argued that Goldman and Zionist leaders should start thinking seriously about Jewish communities in Latin America as future candidates for immigration to Palestine if they wish to establish a majority in Palestine.[471]

"There are no more Jews – there has never been such an anti-Zionist weapon"

The exchange between Goldman and Umansky was an example of a broader conversation that took place among Zionist leaders beginning in 1944. As Zionist leaders had registered the vast extent of Jewish destruction in Europe, and particularly following the German occupation of Hungary in March 1944 and the beginning of the extermination of the largest remaining Jewish community in Europe, they had recognized that they would have to radically revise the Biltmore vision to fit the new demographic realities of the postwar Jewish world. Rather than dismissing the vision of the Jewish state as Lichtheim proposed, Zionist leaders searched for new candidates for immigration to Palestine to replace the fast disappearing Jewish communities in Europe, revised their estimates regarding the number of postwar Jewish immigrants from around two million to one million and proposed extending the time-frame required for the establishment of a Jewish majority in Palestine from immediately after the war to several years after its conclusion.

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[471] Goldman reported on this meeting in detail in a meeting of the Zionist executive. See Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 28.9.1944 (morning session), CZA.

Indeed, after the Nazi occupation of Hungary Weizmann for the first time confessed about the need to radically revise the Biltmore program – without Hungarian Jewry there was no scenario in which European Jews outside the Soviet Union alone could constitute a majority in Palestine. Weizmann's letter to Weisgal discussed above was written three weeks after German forces occupied Budapest. As Weizmann put at the beginning of the letter:

"The paramount question today, to my mind – what governs and will increasingly govern the situation – is the disappearance of the Jews of Europe. Now that Roumania[472] and Hungary have fallen into the clutches of the Germans, and that preparations are already being made for the extermination of these last groups of European Jews, we shall be left in Europe with one huge cemetery of everything Jewish that has been built over the last thousand year. ….   With this [the European] community gone I see grave dangers looming ahead of us…." [473]

Weizmann acknowledged in the letter that the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine through the transfer of the remnant of European Jews is no longer feasible and dedicated his letter to a new vision – the creation of a *Chalutz* (pioneer) movement among American Jews to bring about a significant number of Jewish immigrants from the United States to Palestine. "I have been wondering what measures we can take by way of at least partial remedy," Weizmann observed, "of course, it is not within the power of one man, or any group of men, to counteract the effects

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[472] In invoking Romania Weizmann was referring to North Transylvania – which was transferred from Romania to Hungary under the Nazi arbitrated 1940 Second Vienna Award. North Transylvania was home to 166,000 Jews according to a 1941 Hungarian census. Between May and June 1944 146,000 Jews from North Transylvania were murdered in Auschwitz.

[473] Weizmann to Meyer, W. Weisgall, 13 April, 1944, *Weizmann's Letters*, Vol. 21, 165-171.

of an apocalyptic catastrophe, but there are one or two things which it seems to me we might do, and do now." Weizmann elaborated:

> "First of all, a group of young men – able men – from Palestine should go to the United States and draw the attention of the community to these problems. Even more important, in my opinion, is that steps should be taken to induce young American men to go to settle in Palestine as soon as ever possible – in other words, the rapid organization of a regular *chalutz* movement of sizeable dimensions, *now*, without waiting for the end of the war. … we ought to begin with children of fifteen or sixteen, like the *Habonim* here, and prepare them to go to Palestine in a year or two."[474]

The disappearance of European Jews, Weizmann argued, "emphasizes the importance of a movement in American Jewry, particularly among the young people, in favor of emigration to Palestine." Weizmann noted that he has already taken steps to promote this vision and discussed it with Moshe Shertok, head of the political department of the Jewish Agency, who said he would gather a group of men to go on this a mission and that the *Yishuv* will finance this operation. Weizmann concluded by dramatically emphasizing that the creation of a postwar pioneer and immigration movement among American Jews "is a matter of paramount importance which over-rides almost everything else."[475] Weizmann emphasized this point again in a December 1944 letter to American Supreme Court judge Felix Frankfuter. "[T]he influx of

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[474] Ibid., Ibid.

[475] Ibid., Ibid.

young American blood is very essential [for Zionism] …" Weizmann argued, "it is perhaps the central problem which we will face in the postwar period."[476]

In his address before the November 1944 World Jewish Congress War Emergency Conference in Atlantic city, Weizmann made a moving plea to American Jews to augment their historic focus on philanthropy and advocacy on behalf of Zionism with the establishment of an American Jewish immigrant movement. American Jewry, Weizmann declared, will bear the burden of reconstructing the postwar Jewish world but "money alone will not suffice." Now, given that European Jewry is "decimated, improvised, physically and spiritually broken" the Zionist movement "shall also need the manpower of the American Jewish community." Weizmann declared:

"We shall need a new form of *Chalutizuit* from the Western shores of the Atlantic. A *Chalutziut* of sturdy young men and women who by their experience and their skill and by the example of their patriotism and devotion will be able to cooperate in the building of the Jewish Commonwealth, and thus guide and comfort the destitute remnants of European Jewry, who will press against the gates of Palestine to build a new life from themselves. It is a *Chalutziut* called for not, heaven forbid, by personal need or interest, but by a higher and greater urge – the urge to participate in the Redemption and Emancipation of Jewish life."[477]

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[476] Weizmann to Felix Frankfurter, 20 December 1944, *Weizmann's Letters*, Vol. 21, p. 254-257.

[477] In an October 1944 Weizmann sent to Israel Goldstein, head the Zionist Organization of America, a speech to be delivered in his absence in the Atlantic City Conference. See Weizmann to Israel Goldstein, 1 October 1944, Weizmann's Letters, Vol. 21 216-218.

Weizmann emphasized that if American Jews do not live up to this task – the Zionist movement may be over:

> "In this grave hour of national responsibility I appeal to my fellow-Zionists of America and American Jewry at large, to think of the providential circumstances that has given them this great opportunity, perhaps the last to rescue and restore out of the wreckage, the lives of hundreds of thousands of our people whose only hope today is Palestine, not only by organizing … large national funds … but also by their personal participation. If the Jewish Commonwealth is to built in our day, it will come to pass only through the toil and sacrifice of Jews of America joined in sacred partnership with the remnants of Jewry who are about to regain their freedom."[478]

Weizmann was not alone in viewing the future of Zionism as dependent on what he termed the influx of 'young American blood'. In his letter to Namier, Lichtheim too noted that "without a strong Zionist movement in the English speaking countries, there will be no Zionist movement after the war."[479] And as noted above, Shertok too sought to organize an advocacy group from the *Yishuv* that would lay the ground for future American Jewish immigration to Palestine after the war.

It is not clear whether Weizmann and Shertok genuinely believed they could organize an American Jewish immigration movement large enough to compensate for the masses of Jews that had been exterminated in Europe – even if their writings do indicate they hoped they could bring thousands or tens of thousands of Jews from the United States. Shertok openly recognized

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[478] Ibid..Ibid.

[479] Lichtheim, "Prognosen,"

that the number of American Jewish immigrants to Palestine has been so far "almost nil"

compared to the need of the *Yishuv* for them but at the same time observed that "we must prepare

this [American Jewish] reservoir … for immigration".[480] Lichtheim too remarked that a large-

scale Jewish immigration movement form English speaking countries to Palestine is unlikely.[481]

But the question of American Jewish immigration to Palestine nonetheless became central to

Weizmann's and Shertok's postwar vision after 1944. There are two main reasons why they

insisted a *Chalutz* movement in the United States was vital for the future of Zionism. First, both

believed that the future of Zionism depended not only on 'quantity' – establishing a Jewish

majority, but also on "quality" – brining to Palestine socialist pioneers and middle class

professionals that will economically develop the land, and American Jews seemed to them as

ideal candidates to replace the Polish Jewish youth and German Jewish middle class immigration

of the 1930s. Indeed, in his letter to Frankfurter Weizmann observed that American Jews are

needed not only because of the "devastated conditions of European Jewry, but primarily because

of the positive and stabilizing effect American Jewish manpower can play in the expanding

economy as well as the political equilibrium of a Jewish Palestine".[482] This emphasis on

American Jews as "quality" immigrants was also proposed to counter, as we shall see, the vision

of large-scale Jewish immigration from Islamic countries, which Shertok openly argued was

"quantitatively" valuable but lacking in pioneer qualities.[483] Moreover, both understood that the

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[480] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 20.6.1944, CZA.

[481] Lichtheim, "Prognosen,". These estimates were correct – between 1948 – the year the state of Israel was established – and 1951, only 3,800 immigrants arrive from the United States and Australia. See the demographic analysis of post-1948 immigration to Israel Euziel Schmaltz, "Mass Immigration from Asia and North Africa: Demographic Aspects," *Pa'amim,* 39 (1980), p. 21 [in Hebrew].

[482] Weizmann to Felix Frankfurter, 20 December 1944, *Weizmann's Letters*, Vol. 21, p. 254-257.

[483] Sharett expressed these views in a June meeting of the Zionist executive. See Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 20.6.1944, CZA.

destruction of European Jewry took away important political capital from Zionism – Zionism

was no longer needed as a solution for the non-existent "Jewish problem " in Europe. A demand

by American Jews to settle in Palestine themselves, Weizmann and Shertok argued, would infuse

Zionism with great political capital – American Jewry was to be the largest Jewish community in

the postwar world, based in the emerging world superpower, and thus would carry significance

in the international political arena unlike the destitute remnants of Eastern European Jews or the

Jews of Arab countries. As Weizmann observed in his letter to Weisgall, "I do not see how they

[the British] can possibly bar American citizens from settling in Palestine if they choose to do

so."[484] Shertok too noted that "if American Jews demand immigration for themselves – there

would be enormous significance for such a demand."[485]

Weizmann and Shertok's growing focus on American Jewry came together with the

formulation of a revised time frame for the realization of the Biltmore vision. During the

Biltmore conference Weizmann had in fact already argued – against Ben-Gurion's view – that

the future Jewish state should not be established immediately after the war but rather only after

several years of large-scale Jewish immigration to Palestine. The destruction of European Jewry

– and the realization that the establishment of a Jewish majority would require a longer process

of immigration - further convinced Weizmann of the necessity of this approach. Shertok also

articulated this view. In the December 1944 convention of the Assembly of Representatives, the

parliamentary body of the *Yishuv*, Shertok declared that the Biltmore program did not imply the

immediate establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine after the war but rather only a declaration

that the establishment of a Jewish state was the ultimate goal of the Zionist movement. Several

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[484] Weizmann to Meyer, W. Weisgall, 13 April, 1944, *Weizmann's Letters*, Vol. 21, 165-171.

[485] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 20.6.1944, CZA.

observers in the Jewish press quickly noted that Shertok statement amounted to a significant reformulation of the Biltmore program.[486] In an August 1946 article Lichtheim mocked the debate among Zionist leaders over the time frame for the realization of the Biltmore program as a meaningless theoretical discussion, an empty *pilpul*. At the same time as Hitler was murdering 10,000 Jews per day, Lichtheim observed, Zionist leaders were debating whether the Jewish state should be established before the millions of Jews (that no longer exists) immigrate to Palestine or several years after.[487]

Similarly to Weizmann, Ben-Gurion too was promoted to revise the Biltmore program after the German occupation of Hungary. As knowledge on the extermination of Jews in Europe became clearer over the course of 1944, and as the war continued into its fifth year and now encompassed the Jews of Hungary, Ben-Gurion realized that the Biltmore vision of the transfer of two million Jews to Palestine was no longer feasible.

Ben-Gurion brought up the need to reexamine the Biltmore program in a fateful June 1944 meeting of the Zionist executive. As he noted at the beginning of the meeting, the war's end is near and it is time to look carefully at "our political program" and "make it more concrete". The main reason for this reexamination, Ben-Gurion argued, is "the extermination of 6 million Jews" which "is not just a Jewish fact but a Zionist political fact." The extermination of European Jewry, Ben-Gurion argued, "could completely destroy Zionism."[488] As Ben-Gurion powerfully put it in a subsequent meeting of the exectutive, "there are no more Jews – there has

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[486] "The Center of Gravity has Shifted from the Immediate Establishment of a State to an Immediate Declaration on the Establishment of a State as the Ultimate Goal," *Al-Hamishmar*, 06.12.1944, p.4 and Elazar Prai, "'Biltmore' – 1942-1944," *Al –Hamishmar,* 05.01.1945, p.2.

[487] Lichtheim, "Prognosen,"

[488] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 20.6.1944, CZA.

never been such a powerful anti-Zionist weapon. Everyone asks himself the question – where will we bring Jews to Palestine from?"[489]

Though Ben-Gurion ostensibly remained committed to the Biltmore program in the meeting, he laid out several significant revisions to the program. The first major revision was radically revising his demographic estimate of the number of postwar Jewish immigrants to Palestine. Ben-Gurion expressed his hope at the meeting that the fate of the remaining million Jews in Hungary will be better than the six million Jews he believed had already been exterminated in Europe. It should be noted that in 1944 Ben-Gurion estimated that *more* Jews had been murdered than had actually perished in the war – the figure of six million he invoked did not yet include the full number of the over half a million Jews murdered in Hungary and the victims of the death marches. Werner Senator, a member of the executive, criticized Ben-Gurion in the meeting for his pessimistic predictions. "It is painful," Senator observed, "if those sitting around this table are willing to accept the number of six million Jews. We know that many had been murdered, but we should not rush and declare a definite number." Ben-Gurion replied: "I hope we will be proven wrong." "If Senator is right, we will all be happy … the more Jews in Europe the stronger Zionism will be … without Jews in Europe Zionism will face far greater challenges."[490] This overly pessimistic estimate of the number of Jewish victims that seems to have dominated the thinking of Zionist leaders in late 1944 – expecting about half a million *more* victims than had actually perished - could explain the shocking statement by Eliyahu Golomb, commander of the Jewish paramilitary group the *Hagganah,* in October 1944 that "more Jews

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[489] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 28.9.1944 (afternoon), CZA.

[490] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 20.6.1944, CZA.

survived in Europe than we expected."[491] Based on his prediction on the scale of the

extermination Ben-Gurion argued that the Biltmore program should now focus on brining one

million Jews to Palestine after the war. "At first I argued for a minimum of two million Jews,"

Ben-Gurion observed, "now that we have been exterminated I say one million."[492]

Given the scale of destruction in Europe, one million Jewish immigrants to Palestine was

still a very large number and Ben-Gurion sought to carefully lay out throughout 1944 and early

1945 a specific demographic argument for how to cull this number of Jewish immigrants.

The first component of the plan was the transfer to Palestine 500,000 Jews from Europe

out of the expected remnant of one to one and half million Jewish survivors outside the Soviet

Union. When Ben-Gurion laid out early in the war his vision of transferring two million Jewish

immigrants to Palestine he expected there would remain some three to five million Jews in

Europe after the war. Thus, even after a large-scale Jewish transfer form Europe to Palestine, a

considerable Jewish population would remain in Europe. By mid-1944 however Ben-Gurion

recognized that the postwar Jewish transfer to Palestine would effectively end Jewish communal

life in Eastern Europe. During the interwar period, and even at the beginning of the war, Ben-

Gurion supported in principle – though was never at the forefront of – the efforts of Zionist and

other Jewish diaspora nationalist leaders to fight for Jewish minority rights and equality in East

Central Europe.[493] Yet in 1944 Ben-Gurion began to portray the fight for Jewish minority rights

and equality as foe of Zionism - every single Jewish survivor mattered for the demographic

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[491] "More Jews survived in Europe than we expected," report on a press conference by Eliyahu Golomb, *Haboker*, October 19, 1944, p.4.

[492] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 20.6.1944, CZA.

[493] See chapters 3 and 4.

balance in Palestine, and the restoration of Jewish rights in Europe, Ben-Gurion concluded, might induce less Jews to immigrate.

Ben-Gurion powerfully expressed this view in a September 1944 meeting of the Zionist executive. Goldman attended the meeting and proposed that the Jewish Agency send a delegation to a conference on Jewish rights in the postwar period that will lay out demands both for the restoration of Jewish rights in Europe and for the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine (the conference took place in November 1944 as the World Jewish Congress War Emergency Conference also known as the Atlantic City Conference). Ben-Gurion vigorously opposed sending an official Zionist delegation from the *Yishuv* to participate in this conference. Joining such a conference, Ben-Gurion argued, would be a "disaster" for Zionism. The vision of 'Helsingfors Zionism' that this conference promoted – fighting for both Jewish rights in Europe and Palestine – can no longer be endorsed by Zionists leaders after the war as it had been at the end of the First World War. After the last war, Ben-Gurion remarked, "we had the Balfour Declaration, now – we have the White Paper, then there were Jews, now – they are gone … is the situation comparable?" Ben-Gurion also feared that Zionist participation in a united Jewish demand for Jewish rights in postwar Europe could be used by the British to give Jews 'concessions' in Europe and deflect Zionist demands regarding Palestine. Eliyahu Dobkin, head of the immigration department of the Jewish Agency, reiterated Ben-Gurion's view in the meeting. "When there were 18 million Jews in the world, and 9 million of them lived in Europe," he observed, "we [Zionists] could support the 'luxury' of Jewish rights in the diaspora" but now this was no longer the case.[494] This meeting protocol – which to the best of my knowledge has not been discussed in scholarship – is a rare document that reconstructs the moment in which Zionist leaders openly disavowed the interwar Jewish national consensus based on a dual fight

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[494] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 28.9.1944 (afternoon), CZA.

for Jewish minority rights in Europe and settlement in Palestine, as explored in the previous chapters. This document should be read together with Robinson's 1943 letter discussed at the beginning of chapter I – in which a prominent leader of diaspora nationalism argued that Jewish nationalism can no longer promote the twin goals of minority rights and state building in Palestine. These two documents are milestones in the central story of this dissertation – how Jewish nationalism became focused exclusively on the idea of a nation-state during the war and in its immediate aftermath.

Ben-Gurion's view that Zionism was now in a fierce competition with Jewish equality in Europe also emerged out of his fear over the rise of communist regimes across Eastern Europe from late 1944. In December 1944 Ben-Gurion embarked on a trip to Romania and Bulgaria to gain a first hand impression of the political desires of Jewish survivors in Europe (he was eventually granted admittance only to Bulgaria).[495] In September 1944 the Soviet Union occupied Bulgaria from the Nazis and set-up a communist regime. Ben-Gurion regarded the new communist regime in Bulgaria – as well as those established in Poland and Romania at around the same time - as dangerous for Zionism precisely because they were staunchly and vocally committed to complete legal equality for Jews. Ben-Gurion referred to a declaration the Bulgarian government issued on Jewish equality and argued that promoting Jewish rights will be used as a "shield" by the Soviet Union and the new communist regimes in the region to express their progressivism. Ben-Gurion was alarmed by reports that the Jewish youth in Bulgaria is excited about the new communist regime. The Soviet Union will be the ruler in Eastern Europe, Ben-Gurion observed, and when Zionists will try to win over Jewish hearts and minds and

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[495] Ben-Gurion's diaries and writing from his first trip to Europe in 1944 and subsequent trip in 1946 were collected and published in Tuvia Frilling (editor), *Visits in the Valley of Death: Ben-Gurion's Journeys to Bulgaria, Sweden and the Displaced Persons Camps in Germany* (Sede Boker: The Ben-Gurion Research Institute, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2014) two volumes.

promise security and equality, the Jews in the region might respond that the Soviet Union can do such a better job in protecting their rights and security.[496]

The second component of the plan Ben-Gurion outlined in the meeting was the transfer of hundreds of thousands of Jews from Islamic countries to Palestine after the war. Between the wars and in the first years of the war, the Jewish communities in the Islamic countries did not occupy a significant place in Zionist thinking on Jewish immigration. The Zionist leadership focused on the 'selective' immigration of young Jewish socialist pioneers and believed that the slow and steady immigration of the Jewish population from Eastern Europe will suffice for the future creation of a majority. Moreover, Zionist leaders considered the Jewish communities in Islamic countries as culturally 'backward' and 'degenerate' and as unfit for the creation of what they hoped would be a new, modern and socialist European society in Palestine. Only after news on the extermination of European Jewry began to register with Zionist leaders from late 1942, did they turn to consider the large-scale immigration of Jews from the Middle East and North Africa as a potential 'replacement' for the disappearing Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.[497] In June 1943 Dobkin gave voice to this new mindset in a meeting of *Mapai* central

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[496] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 28.9.1944 (afternoon), CZA.

[497] Ben-Gurion's vision of transferring Jews from Islamic countries to Palestine in response to the extermination of European Jewry – in other words, Ben-Gurion's vision of the Jews of the East as mere demographic fodder rather than desirable immigrants – has been carefully discussed in the scholarship. Yet the scholarship on the topic has highlighted this moment mainly as part of a larger scholarly and public debate over the birth of the "Mizrahi" question in Israeli society. The most prominent articulation of this reading is Yehuoda Shenhav's powerful argument that during the war Ben-Gurion invented the Jews of the "East" as a unified category for the purpose of immigration, overlooking the important differences between various Jewish communities in Islamic countries. This chapter seeks to place Ben-Gurion's and Zionist leaders wartime preoccupation with the Jews of Islamic countries in a different context of a broader intra-Zionist debate over how to preserve the vision of the Jewish state and the idea of a Jewish majority in light of the extermination in Europe. Once placed in this context Ben-Gurion's postwar immigration plan – which is described in scholarship as the 'one million plan' – no longer appears as the carefully laid out vision of the founding father of the Jewish state but rather as reflecting a moment of acute crisis in the history of Zionism. As we have seen above and in chapter 4, Ben-Gurion originally planned for two million Jews from Eastern Europe to immigrate to Palestine and establish a Jewish majority after the war. When he laid out the one million vision it was in response to his and other Zionist leader's growing doubts over the feasibly of the Jewish state program. While the existing scholarship acknowledges the link between the holocaust and the turn to explore the immigration of Jews from Islamic countries, it does not fully reflect the important context in which the distinction between the 'two

committee that decided on sending Zionist emissaries to Islamic countries. "We do not know how many Jews will be left in Europe after the extermination … thus the practical value of these three quarter to a million Jews [in the Middle East and North Africa] has risen to the level of an important political factor… "[498] Ben-Gurion expressed a similar idea in 1943, the fate of the Jews of the East has come to dominate the Zionist agenda, he observed, "because of the catastrophe that took place in Europe …." In the June 1944 meeting of the Zionist executive discussed above, Ben-Gurion thus argued that Jewish communities in Islamic countries should be brought over to Palestine almost in their entirety – or at least in large enough numbers to reach the coveted figure of one million Jewish immigrants to Palestine after the war.[499] Ben-Gurion argued that the large-scale immigration of Jews from the East will be aided by pogroms and massacres he predicated would take place against them after the war – which will be carried out in response to Zionist settlement activities in Palestine. With the memory of reports on the Farhud pogrom in Iraq that saw a death toll of 180 Jews fresh in mind, Ben-Gurion argued that Iraqi Jewry will be "slaughtered" after the war and insisted that it was now the role of the Zionist movement to take responsibility for their security by preparing for their immigration.[500]

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million' and 'one million' plans were born. The first and still standard study of Ben-Gurion's postwar immigration vision is titled 'The One Million Plan' – rather than the 'Two Million Plan' - and suggests that this plan had its origins in the late 1930s. This view is also reflected in Esther Meir Glitzenstein's recent examination of the plan where she notes that the 'One Million Plan' was "expressed in the mid 1930s and fleshed out in late 1942, after the adoption of the Biltmore program." See Yehouda Shenhav, *The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion and Ethnicity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 19-48; Dvora Hacohen, The One Million Plan: *Ben-Gurion's Plan for Mass Immigration, 1942-1945* (Ministry of Defense, Israel, 1994); Esther Meir Glitzenstein, *Zionism in an Arab Country: Jews in Iraq in the 1940s* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 47.

[498] Minutes of *Mapai* Central Committee, July 12, 1943. Ben-Gurion Papers, item 229318. See also Meir Glitzenstein, *Zionism in an Arab Country,* p. 47.

[499] Zionist Executive Meeting, Protocol, 20.6.1944, CZA.

[500] Ibid.

Missing form Zionist leaders' immigration calculations was the country with the second

largest Jewish population – the Soviet Union, home to some two million Jews in 1945.[501] Zionist

leaders all assumed that Soviet Jewry was out of the question as far as postwar immigration was

concerned. The Soviet Union, they believed, will not allow for a mass Jewish immigration

movement and the issue of postwar immigration from the Soviet Union was thus rarely broached

in either public discussions of the Biltmore program or in the meetings of the Zionist executive.

And Zionist leaders also repeatedly noted that their demographic calculations concerning

postwar Europe refer to Jews outside the Soviet Union. Indeed, it will not be until the 1970s and

onward that the topic of Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union will come to the fore of

Zionist politics.[502]

The vision of large-scale immigration Ben-Gurion and Weizmann articulated during the

war did not materialize in the first years after the war. Indeed, Jewish immigration to Palestine in

the first postwar years was rather insignificant – mainly, as we shall see, as a result of two

factors: the British government's decision to continue the 1939 White Paper policy after the war

and oppose large-scale Jewish immigration to Palestine; and the unexpectedly small size of the

Jewish statelessness problem. Most of the remaining Jews in postwar Eastern Europe outside the

Soviet Union – around 600,000 in Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary combined – were granted

complete civic equality in those states in the Soviet sphere of influence. Ben-Gurion's fears over

the dangers of communist regime's commitment to Jewish equality for the prospects of future

Jewish immigration to Palestine were thus based on a correct assessment. It was implausible for

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[501] See the entry on Jewish population in 1945 in the Holocaust Encyclopedia of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, based on data published in the 1945 *American Jewish Yearbook*. https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005687

[502] For a recent study on Soviet Jewish immigration movement that takes account of all of the scholarship see Nathan Kurz, "A Sphere above the Nations?": The Rise and Fall of International Jewish Human Rights Politics, 1945-1975 (Doctoral dissertation, Department of History, Yale University, 2015), chapter 5.

Zionist leaders to make the case that those Jewish communities needed to immigrate imminently when their states promised to protect their equality and rights. The problem of Jewish statelessness in postwar Europe was ultimately in the scale of hundreds of thousands rather than millions as Ben-Gurion and Weizmann initially imagined would be the case. The question of Jewish stateless became tantamount to the fate of Jews in displaced persons camps in Germany, Austria and Italy which numbered around 250,000 and included Jews liberated from the camps, those who survived in hiding and Jews who fled pogroms in Poland, among them a large number of the 100,000 Jews who were repatriated to Poland from the Soviet Union after the war. The vision of large-scale Jewish immigration to Palestine only materialized after the state of Israel was established in 1948 – some 670,00 Jews arrived in Palestine between 1948 and 1951, about half of them from Europe (mainly from displaced persons camps and Romania) and half from Muslim and North African countries (the majority of which immigrated form Iraq). The state of Israel was thus established not through the transfer of million of Jews as Ben-Gurion envisioned but rather with a Jewish population roughly identical to that of the *Yishuv* 1939. And rather than two millions Jewish immigrants from Europe as the Biltmore vision called for, only around 350,000 Jews eventually immigrated from Europe to Palestine in the first decade after the war.[503]

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[503] On the mass immigration of Jews to Israel and the so-called "demographic revolution", mainly between 1948 and 1952 see Schmaltz, "Mass Immigration from Asia and North Africa," as well as Dvora Hacohen, "Mass immigration and the demographic revolution in Israel," *Israel Affairs* vol. 8 no. 1-2, 177-190; Hacohen, "Mass immigration and the Israeli political system, 1948–1953," *Studies in Zionism* 8 1987, 99-113; Aviva Halamish, "Zionist Immigration Policy put to the Test: Historical Analysis of Israel's Immigration Policy, 1948-1951," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies,* vol. 7 (2008), 119-134. The subject of the absorption of Jewish immigrants – particularly Mizrahi Jews – and how it intersected with ethnic and racial divisions among Jews as social inequalities has been the topic of a vast literature that this chapter does not deal with.

"The Biltmore program, if it will not be realized as a partition plan, will not be realized at all"

As we have seen above, Zionist leaders adopted various strategies to adjust the Biltmore program to the scale of Jewish extermination in Europe: They proposed new candidates for immigration, called to extend the time-frame of the process of creating a Jewish majority in Palestine, and revised the estimate of the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine. Yet another significant strategy to establish a Jewish majority Zionist leaders considered as they grappled with the Jewish catastrophe was to create a state in a partitioned Palestine – thereby reducing the number of Jews required to 'offset' the country's Arab majority.

The idea of partition first entered Zionist discussion in 1937, in response to the Peel Commission recommendations to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. Ben-Gurion and Weizmann, alongside several other prominent Zionist leaders, enthusiastically endorsed the idea of partition at the time. Yet as we have seen in chapter 3, the Peel Commission's recommendations were a rather short lived affair – officially tabled by the British government just several months after they were first proposed.[504]

When Ben-Gurion and Weizmann laid out the Biltmore program in May 1942, they rejected idea of partition. The Biltmore program called for the resettlement of at least two millions Jewish refugees in Palestine after the war – a feat that would be unfeasible, they argued, in just a small part of Palestine. In his October 1941 *Notes of Zionist Policy*, a treatise in which he first laid out his postwar program, Ben-Gurion thus insisted that the boundaries of the future Jewish state should include "at least the whole of Western Palestine"– that is, the boundaries of the pre-1923 Palestine mandate excluding Transjordan (without explicitly relinquishing the claim

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[504] See chapter 3.

to Transjordan). And though Ben-Gurion observed that "we were right in our attitude toward the Peel Commission report" at its time, it would now be "an irreparable mistake to suggest partition as a way of establishing a Jewish state" given "… the magnitude of the Jewish problem, the size of the imminent Jewish immigration …".[505] Weizmann too rejected the vision of partition and articulated a new dismissive attitude toward the Peel Commission report. In a 1941 meeting with Lord Moyn, British minister for the Middle East, Weizmann argued that he would now agree to accept the Peel Commission report only if it did not include its 'territorial aspect' – that is, he would accept only those recommendations pertaining to the establishment of a Jewish state and the transfer of Arabs from it with the exception of the call to partition the mandate.[506]

Despite Ben-Gurion's and Weizmann's vigorous rejection of partition in both their private writings and public statements, it is hard to believe they did not recognize that the Biltmore program may very well lead to the establishment of a Jewish state in a partitioned Palestine. As we have seen in chapter 3, Ussishkin criticized Ben-Gurion's Biltmore vision as an implausible political conception: transferring millions of Jews to a country in which Arabs constitute a majority and establishing a Jewish state could only take place either by a period of Jewish minority rule or by expelling the local Arab population from Palestine.[507] Yet another option to establish a majority under such conditions Ussishkin did not raise was to partition the land, thereby reducing the number of Jews required to create a majority. As large-scale Arab transfer and Jewish minority rule were not likely to win over Allied support, partition appeared as the most plausible way to establish a Jewish majority.

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[505] David Ben-Gurion, "Notes on Zionist Policy," 15 October 1941, CZA Z4\31083-72. See chapter three for a contextualization of this document.

[506] "Note of Meeting Held at the Court, St. Swithin's Lane, E.C.," Protocol, September 9, 1941, Ben-Gurion Papers, Item 1751. See also chapter 3 and 4.

[507] See chapter 4.

From late 1942 a growing movement on the Zionist left had begun to vigorously oppose the Biltmore program precisely on these grounds – the Biltmore vision, they argued, would inevitably lead to partition and should thus be rejected (At the time an ideological commitment to Jewish settlement across the entire land of 'historic' Palestine was a consensus view that united the Zionist left and right, mainly in opposition to Ben-Gurion and Weizmann's willingness in 1937 to accede to the British partition proposal.) Since Palestine was in reality a bi-national Arab-Jewish state with an Arab majority, opponents of the Biltmore program on the left argued, any attempt to bring in masses of Jews and establish a Jewish state would result in partition – there was no other way to offset the Arab demographic superiority in Palestine without instilling Jewish minority rule or expelling the Arab population. This line of reasoning was powerfully articulated in a January 1944 editorial in the left-wing paper *Al-Hamishmar:*

"The inevitable outcome of the Biltmore program is partition. Why? Because the Biltmore program says 'the entirety of Palestine is mine.' But any Zionist leader who has any sense of reality knows that any program that is based on the notion of "all of Palestine is mine" will never come into being, could not come into being. The proponent of Biltmore - as opposed to the idea of Palestine as a common homeland for two nations - must recognize that he endorses the outcome - divide the land!"

The same editorial in fact argued that some of the proponents of the Biltmore program – seemingly hinting at Ben-Gurion himself – "unknowingly" support partition, because they refuse

to recognize that partition would be the outcome of establishing a Jewish state in a bi-national Arab-Jewish country.[508]

Despite these criticisms, Ben-Gurion and Weizmann continued to both publicly and privately reject partition throughout the war. It is particularly striking that while the extermination of European Jewry prompted Ben-Gurion and Weizmann to publicly reassess many aspects of the Biltmore vision, it did not lead them to consider partition, even as they must have recognized that scale of Jewish death in the war strengthened the argument of left-wing opponents of the Biltmore program. It was one thing to except to gain Allied support for a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine when the Zionist movement proposed to solve an expected Jewish refugee problem in the millions in postwar Europe, but very different after those Jews had been exterminated and the Zionist movement was surveying the globe in the search of enough Jewish candidates for immigration in the hope of establishing a majority. Ya'akov Hazan, one of the leaders of the left-wing opposition to the Biltmore program, gave voice to this new calculation in a December 1945 editorial in *Al-Hamishmar.* "We are feeling in every fiber of our bones," Hazan observed, "how terrible is the fate of the European Jewish diaspora." "Now only few can deny," he argued, "… that the Biltmore program, if it will not be realized as a partition plan, will not be realized at all."[509]

As the war reached its end however Ben-Gurion, Weizmann and other Zionist leaders increasingly gravitated toward the idea of partition. This change was motivated by two main factors. The first was the dire international situation in which the Zionist moment found itself at the war's end. Indeed, the political prospects for Zionism after the war could not be further away

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[508] "In Plain Sight," *Al-Hamishmar*, 07.01.1944, p.8. See also "We Must Stay Vigilant," *Al-Hamishmar* 15.12.1943, p. 4 and Ben-Gurion's response to these accusations "A Binational State Implies Partition," *Davar*, 07.01.1944, p.6.

[509] Ya'akov Hazan , "In Search of our Direction," *Al-Hamishmar*, 10.12.1945, p. 2.

from the dreams Ben-Gurion and Weizmann laid out in the Biltmore conference. Ben-Gurion

and Weizmann hoped to find millions of Jewish refugees in postwar Europe and the British and

American governments committed to supporting their mass immigration to Palestine. In practice

the Jewish refugee problem was miniscule compared to Ben-Gurion and Weizmann's original

predictions – the postwar 'Jewish question' in Europe became tantamount in international

discussions to the fate of hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees, most of whom fled from

Eastern Europe to Displaced Persons camps in Germany. At the same time, the British

government declared its continued commitment to the 1939 White Paper policy and to turning

Palestine into a Palestinian state based on Arab majority rule, and was only willing to concede to

Zionist leaders a form of provincial autonomy or Jewish ruled-cantons. And the American

government, far from endorsing the establishment of a Jewish state, was only committed,

following the publication of the Harrison report, to supporting the immigration of 100,000 Jews

from DP Camps to Palestine as a humanitarian gesture. An armed insurrection by Jewish

paramilitary groups and terrorist organizations in the *Yishuv* aimed at pressuring the British

government to revise its policy ended in failure and was quashed by the British government

during Operation Agatha in August 1946, also known in Zionist historiography as "Black

Saturday," with the arrests of thousands of Jewish members of these organization and mass

confiscation of weapons.[510]

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[510] Scholars have convincingly argued that Zionist leaders' postwar embrace of partition was a form of political compromise in the face of the diminishing prospects for Zionism in the postwar international arena. This chapter seeks to significantly add to our understanding of the topic by placing the discussion on partition in the broader context of Zionist wartime and early postwar demographic calculations – partition also emerged, I argue, because Zionist leaders recognized there were not enough Jews left to establish a majority in the whole of mandatory Palestine and partition thus offered the only viable political program for the establishment a Jewish majority. The idea of partition was thus not just a political concession that emerged out of lack of British and American support for the Biltmore program but also reflected the way Zionist grappled from 1942 onwards with the challenges of creating a Jewish majority in Palestine and in particular as the scale of Jewish destruction became evident toward the end of the war and in its immediate aftermath. The discussion of the international context for the Zionist movement's embrace of partition in this chapter draws significantly on the pioneering works of Joseph Heller and Michael J.

The sense of crisis shared by Zionist leaders at the face of fierce British opposition to Zionist demands was compounded by the fact Zionist leaders believed that "time was running out" – that unless they managed to facilitate the immigration of Jewish DP's to Palestine immediately, these Jewish refugees will seek other solutions for themselves and the Great Powers will find new ways to alleviate the small remaining 'Jewish problem' in Europe either by reintegrating Jews into their formers countries or finding new avenues for immigration. Ben-Gurion powerfully articulated this position in a December 1944 speech. Expecting imminent Allied victory in the war, Ben-Gurion argued that there was a factor of "fateful significance for the future of Zionism. It is the factor of time." If the small remnant of European Jewry will not be transferred to Palestine immediately, he declared, they might begin to find avenues for immigration and resettlement elsewhere, and if that would be the case "who has any certainty that we will be able in the future to facilitate the immigration of the Jewish remnant in Europe?"[511]

In August 1946, in response to this sense of crisis, the executive of the Jewish Agency officially endorsed partition as its proposal to the British and American governments. The immediate context for this decision was the question of the attitude of the Zionist movement toward the Morrison Grady scheme. After the British government rejected the recommendations of the 1946 Anglo-American Committee for the immediate admittance of 100,000 Jewish DP's

Cohen on the topic. See Joseph Heller, "From 'The Black Saturday' to the Partition Proposal: The Summer of 1946 as a Turning Point in Zionist Policy," *Zion*, 3 4 (1977), 314-361 as well as Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers,* primarily chapter 7. See also Judis, *Genesis.*

[511] David Ben-Gurion, "The Time Factor in Zionism," speech before the Fourth Annual Wartime Zionist Conference in Tel-Aviv December 28 1944, reprinted in *Davar*, 01.01.1945, p.2. While this chapter shares the position of existing scholarship on the importance of the Jewish DP problem to the postwar Zionist vision of Jewish immigration, it avoids engaging with the separate discussion on the personal desires of the DP's – were many of them self-avowed Zionists or did they prefer to immigrate elsewhere? As well as with the scholarship on the way the plight of the DP's was instrumentalized by Zionist leaders to promote Zionist political aspirations in Palestine. On this see Zertal, *From Catastrophe to Power* as well as Daniel Gerard Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

to Palestine, for the cancellation of the White Paper policy and the establishment of a trusteeship over Palestine, it summoned a committee of British and American experts to lay out a new plan. The committee proposed the Morrison Grady scheme that called for the creation in Palestine of a British led federation with separate Jewish and Arab provincial autonomies and two autonomous regions under British control. In late 1946 Zionist leaders became fearful that Truman would throw his support behind the provincial autonomy scheme. Zionist leaders concluded that the only way to counter American support for this plan was by laying out a compromise alternative that could seem reasonable to the US government – and endorsed a partition plan that drew on the Morrison Grady scheme as a basis for further negotiations.

In August 1946 the Zionist executive met in Paris to officially formulate its position on the matter. This meeting took place in atmosphere of great despair regarding the future of Zionism and Jews after the war. Zionist leaders met just days after the British military crackdown on the *Yishuv* in Palestine that effectively quashed the Jewish armed opposition. August 1946 was also the peak of the flight of Jews from Poland to DP camps in Germany, prompted by a series of pogroms and outbreak of anti-Jewish violence. At the same time, Jewish organization took part in the Paris Conference, in an effort to secure new collective rights for Jews in postwar Europe.[512] Zionist leaders understood that unless they managed to bring these Jews to Palestine others solutions will be found for them, potentially through the restoration of Jewish rights and property and compensations – matters that were discussed at the same time at the Paris Conference. In a series of meetings of the Zionist executive Goldman led the effort to convince Zionist leaders of the urgency of endorsing a partition proposal right away. The American government and the liberal public in the United States, he argued, is growing tired of

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[512] See chapter I.

Zionist aspiration, and the Zionist movement should thus come up with a plan the American government could support, otherwise "we are to come out of this period of Zionist history as a defeated movement." [513] Moreover, Goldman insisted, unless the Jews in the DP camps will be transferred to Palestine immediately, the Zionist movement may never find the necessary man-power for the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine. "I am not optimistic about the reserves of man-power in the Jewish world. We have lost over six million Jews in Europe, the main source of our man-power resources for Palestine." "Unless there is Fascism and pogroms in America," Goldman observed, "large masses of Jews will not go from there to Palestine. From the million and a half Jews left in Europe, at least half will be able to settle down in their countries. They will not leave, they will not lead a very dignified and prosperous life, but they will manage to exist." Goldman elaborated on this demographic assessment and laid out a dire scenario for the future of Zionism if it does not manage to immediately gain political concessions in Palestine:

> "If the half or three-quarters of European Jews who want passionately to go today to Palestine, who cannot exist in Europe, have to wait years and years, they will find other territories and will be lost to Palestine. The pressure of the Jewish problem has been greatly lessend since this war because of Hitler's annihilation of the Jews. If Palestine remains closed for a number of years, the Zionist morale of the D.Ps 's must sink. It has already begun to sink in the last few months, and other countries will be found for them. President Truman wants honestly to get 100,000 visas for Jewish D.Ps for America. … Brazil is ready to take in a number of Jews. The British Dominions will have to do

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[513] Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive of the Jewish Agency, In Paris, Friday, 2nd August, 1946, 10:30 Am, Ben-Gurion Papers, item 228880 as well as Address August 3, 1946. Dr. Nahum Goldman before the Executive of the Jewish Agency, Paris-France, Ben-Papers, Item 228883.

something. With the doors to Palestine closed, the United Nations will have to solve the problem of the DPs by finding other territories. Therefore, we need fast large-scale immigration …"

This analysis prompted Goldman to conclude that the Zionist movement ought to embrace a partition proposal – in other words, drop the Biltmore vocabulary and lay out to the Allies the minimum political program to which they will accede. "For years we have postponed discussion of this issue…. I have always warned that the time will come when we will have to decide without notice, and this is the moment." "I felt for years that partition of Palestine is the only way out," he added, "Biltmore is no realistic policy, because we have no Jewish majority, and we cannot wait until we have the majority to get the state." Overall, Goldman proposed that the Zionist executive accept the Morrison Grady proposal as a basis for negotiations so long as several amendments to the plan are accepted – the immediate granting of 100,000 certificates for Jewish immigration to Palestine, Jewish control over immigration to the Jewish province, an improvement in the area of the allotted Jewish province – to roughly correspond to the 1937 Peel Commission proposal with the addition of the Negev, and a statement by the British government that the cantonization plan is the first step toward a future Jewish state. The executive voted to approve Goldman's proposal (Ben-Gurion abstained and remained overall silent in the meeting, knowing full well that the Goldman's proposal would win a comfortable majority but not willing to be officially affiliated with support for partition).[514] Goldman promptly left on a mission to Washington, DC, in which he presented to Truman the new position of the Zionist executive.

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[514] Ibid, Goldman before the Executive of the Jewish Agency.

Conclusion

The endorsement of partition by the Zionist executive in August 1946 did not lead directly to the eventual partition of Palestine in 1948. The British government ultimately tabled the Morrison Grady plan and transferred the question of Palestine to the United Nations, which appointed a special committee (UNSCOP), that in turn devised a new partition proposal, far more favorable to Zionist aspiration than the Morrison Grady plan. In this sense partition as a solution to the Palestine question was imposed by the international community on the Jewish and Arab communities from above - and the history of partition in Palestine must be seen as part of a broader postwar embrace of partition as a solution to inter-ethnic conflict in decolonizing territories, exemplified most prominently in the case 1947 partition of India.[515] Still, the endorsement of partition by the Zionist executive in 1946 remains a significant moment for understanding how radically the Biltmore vision and Zionist political thought transformed during the war and in its immediate aftermath as Zionist leaders grappled with the geopolitical implications of the extermination of European Jewry. Rather than a postwar Jewish state in the whole of Palestine with a Jewish majority established through the transfer of millions of Eastern European Jewish refugees, in 1946 Zionist leaders articulated for the first time a new, post-Holocaust vision of Jewish statehood – a small state in a partitioned Palestine that was to be established through the transfer of several hundreds of thousands of refugees from the small

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[515] Scholars are increasingly examining the political and intellectual links between partition in India and Palestine in the 1940s. See Faisal Devji, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Arie Dubnov, "The Return to India, or: The Analogical Imaginations and Its Limits," *Theory and Criticism,* 44 (Summer 2015), 41-76; Allon Gal and Isaac Lubelsky, "The Disintegration of the British Empire and the Nationalist Cases of India and Israel: A Comparative Analysis," *Israel Affairs* 14 2 (2008), 165-183, Rafi Stern, "Uncertain Comparisons: Zionist and Israeli Perceptions of India and Pakistan during Decolonization," unpublished paper. For an examination of partition as a key concept in international history and the history the establishment of ethnic nation-state see Dirk Moses, "Partitions, Population "Transfers" and the Question of Human Rights and Genocide in the 1930s and the 1940s", paper presented at the University of Chicago, November 3 2013; Laura Robson, *States of Separation: Transfer, Partition and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017); Eric Weitz, "From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations and Civilizing Missions," *American Historical Review* Vol. 113 5 (2008), pp. 1313-1343.

Jewish remnant in Europe. This new vision not only spelled the end of the dream of the Biltmore program, but also of the various visions of binationalism, Jewish-Arab parity and extensive Arab autonomy which, as we have seen in previous chapters, Zionist leaders from Brit Shalom through Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky vigorously promoted between the wars.[516] These Jewish-Arab power-sharing visions by and large rested on the assumption that Jews would ultimately demographically match, preferably greatly outnumber, the Arab population in Palestine through gradual immigration. By 1946 however, facing the radically transformed demographic realities of the postwar Jewish world, Zionist leaders recognized that they faced only two alternatives – a Jewish majority in a small partitioned state or a permanent minority in an Arab majority state in Palestine.

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[516] See chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Conclusion

This dissertation examined the transformation of Jewish nationalism during the Second World War and in its immediate aftermath alongside the ethnic revolution in Europe. The five chapters in this dissertation all explored the ways in which Jewish leaders and thinkers re-imagined the future of Jewish nationalism as they observed the violent process of ethnic cleansing and the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Europe, and the growth of support among the Allies for population transfers of minorities in postwar Europe. As this dissertation has shown, recovering the rich reaction of Jewish leaders to these developments is essential for explaining a key transformation in the history of Jewish nationalism - the decline of visions of Jewish autonomy and minority rights in Eastern Europe, and the emergence of the Jewish ethnic nation-state as the dominant form of Jewish national expression. The disappearance of minorities from the multiethnic landscape of East Central Europe between 1939-1946 convinced Jewish leaders there was no future for Jewish nationalism in the region. And the consolidation of the ethnic nation-state as the political norm across the region prompted Zionist leaders to imagine Palestine as a Jewish ethnic nation-state, a vision that, as we have seen, Zionist leaders considered as politically unrealizable between the wars.

One of the main goals of this dissertation is to restore contingency to the history of Jewish nationalism. Scholars have already shown in detail that the vision of the Jewish nation-state was only one path, and by no means the main one, among a variety of Jewish diaspora nationalist, autonomist and minority rights visions promoted from the late 19th century and throughout the interwar years. This dissertation explored why these various diaspora nationalist paths were abandoned, and why the Jewish nation-state emerged as the road eventually taken

during the war and in its immediate aftermath. But this dissertation also sought to highlight how the idea of a Jewish nation-state itself was not a fixed vision but constantly transformed from the 1920s and through the early postwar years. In the 1920s Zionist leaders expected it would take several decades of a favorable Jewish immigration rate for Jews to only equal the numbers Arabs in Palestine. They thus envisioned a state based on extensive Jewish and Arab autonomies, a dream version of the state of nationalities Jews were clamoring for in Eastern Europe. During the 1930s, prominent Zionist leaders feared that the British would prevent Jews from becoming a majority in Palestine and advocated for various visions of a Jewish-Arab state in Palestine based on political equality – 'parity'- between both national groups. After the outbreak of war, expecting millions of stateless Jews in postwar Europe, Zionist leaders for the first time embraced the vision of a Jewish ethnic nation-state – they believed an opportunity emerged to establish a Jewish majority in Palestine larger than they had ever before anticipated was possible. Yet from late 1942, as Zionist leaders increasingly learned about the extent of Jewish extermination in Europe, they were forced to re-imagine the future state once again. By 1946 Zionist leaders concluded that if a Jewish state is to emerge at all, it would have to be a small state with a Jewish majority created not by 'offsetting' the Arab demographic superiority but by partitioning Palestine. The Jewish state vision that triumphed after the war was thus not simply a fixed political path that took center stage as Jewish diaspora nationalism faded, but itself a product of the radically changed demographic reality of the postwar Jewish world and the new ethnic landscape that emerged in Eastern Europe after the war.

While this dissertation has shown why the vision of the Jewish nation-state ultimately triumphed during the war, it is important to conclude with a few comments that qualify the narrative of the victory of Zionism after the war. For one, it should be emphasized that Zionism

did not succeed because it if found a 'solution' to the Jewish question in Eastern Europe as it

purported to do during the interwar period and the early years of the war. Indeed, Zionism

triumphed at the moment in which the 'Jewish question' in Eastern Europe largely disappeared.

While from the 1920s and until the early 1940s Zionist leaders envisioned a Jewish problem of

millions in need of future immigration from Europe to Palestine, by the end of the war the

'Jewish problem' became tantamount in the international imagination to the fate only some

250,000 Jews who lingered in displaced persons camp. The main reason for the disappearance of

the Jewish question was the extermination of European Jewry. But the establishment of

communist and pro-Soviet regime across Eastern Europe after the war also significantly reduced

the scale of the 'Jewish problem' in Eastern Europe. Zionist demographic predications from the

1920s onward were based on the assumption that Eastern European Jews were undesirable

citizens in their home states who enjoy only tentative equality and thus that a significant number,

particularly among the young, will seek immigration avenues in the future. The new regimes

established after the war across the region however promised complete legal equality for the

Jews. During the war Zionist leaders looked to Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria as sites for

future Jewish immigration to Palestine – but after the war those states promised the 600,000

Jewish survivors who remained in them full equality. Moreover, while Poland was the site of

massive Jewish flight to the DP camps in face of the eruption of anti-Jewish local violence after

the war, the postwar Polish regime also vouched for Jewish equality and was in fact the only

country in postwar Eastern Europe in which a short-lived experiment in Jewish national

autonomy took place in the Silesian border region.[517] From 1944 Ben-Gurion expressed his

repeated alarm at the prospects of a new era of Jewish of legal equality in postwar Eastern

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[517] Françoise S. Ouzan and Manfred Gerstenfeld (eds.), *Postwar Jewish Displacement and Rebirth, 1945-1967*
(London: Brill, 2014), 63-75 and Hugo Service, *Germans to Poles: Communism, Nationalism and Ethnic Cleansing after the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), mainly chapter 8.

Europe – only few Jews remained alive after the war, he argued, and Zionism would now have to compete with regimes who at least ostensibly, and for a variety of ideological and public relations reasons, are committed to keeping the Jews in their states rather than promoting their 'evacuation' as had been the case before the war. Salo Baron was also deeply impressed by the new era of Jewish equality across Eastern Europe. In his essay on the 1946 Paris Conference, Baron in fact noted that while Jewish observers were disappointed by the lack of guarantees for Jewish collective rights in the new states in the region, they overlooked a major historical development – for the first time the Great Powers did not need to force Eastern European states to grant Jews equality, such as had been the case in the 1878 Congress of Berlin or the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. Jewish legal equality, Baron declared, was now beyond dispute, a political fact across Eastern Europe and the rest of the world, and historians of the future, he insisted, thus may very well describe 1946 as the beginning of a new era of Jewish equality and emancipation.[518]

The story of the triumph of Zionism after the war needs to be qualified also in terms of demographics. When the state of Israel was established in 1948, the Jewish population in Palestine numbered 600,000 – not significantly different from the size of the Jewish population in the *Yishuv* on the eve of the Second World War. This number was still smaller than the number of Jews in Western Europe after the war – there were slightly over 650,000 Jews in Great Britain and France combined. And smaller than the number of Jews in North African and Islamic countries, which numbered around one million after the war. The Jewish population in Palestine amounted to just over a quarter of the Jewish population in the Soviet Union after the war, which numbered around two million. And Jewish Palestine was a small community

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[518] Salo. W. Baron, "Final Stages of Jewish Emancipation," Unpublished essay written in late 1946/early 1947, Salo W. Baron Papers, Stanford University Libraries, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, M0580, Box 386.

compared to the major demographic center of postwar Jewish life – the United States, home to some 4.5-5 million Jews during the 1940s. Indeed, any account of the triumph of Zionism after the war should note the demographic fact that Palestine was the third largest country in terms of the size of the Jewish population after the war, and the fifth or sixth largest center of Jewish life based on common concepts used to regionally divide Jews at the time.[519]

The final way in which the story of the triumph of Zionism after the war needs to be qualified is by noting that Zionism did not actually triumph immediately after the war. In 1945 the British government reaffirmed its commitment to the 1939 White Paper Policy that envisioned Palestine as a future independent state with an Arab majority and a Jewish minority. The British government opposed large-scale Jewish immigration schemes to Palestine after the war and even sought to hinder plans aimed at the 'humanitarian' immigration of 100,000 Jewish refugees, as advocated for by the United States government. The British government was only willing to support various forms of cantonization in Palestine that would effectively imply Jewish autonomy in a limited area but exclude the possibility of Jews ever establishing a majority. Truman's administration also opposed the vision of a Jewish state and large-scale Jewish immigration, and endorsed limited immigration of Jewish refugees and a bi-national Jewish-Arab state in Palestine. The postwar political opposition of Britain to Zionist aspirations in Palestine was a continuation of a policy the British government invariably developed during the 1930s. As we have seen, during the 1930s prominent Zionist leaders became convinced that the British were reneging on the promise of the Balfour declaration and increasingly embracing the vision of the establishment of a majority Arab state in Palestine, a policy course that had been officially adopted in the 1939 White Paper Policy. This history of the political weakness of the

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[519] See the entry on Jewish population in 1945 in the Holocaust Encyclopedia of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, based on data published in the 1945 *American Jewish Yearbook*.
https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005687

Zionist movement should force historians of Zionism not to write its history as that of a state-in-the-making, or of a carefully planned settler colonial project, but rather as that of a movement that in all likelihood was to become a 'road not taken'. The eventual emergence of a Jewish state was thus not primarily a product of a long history of Zionist colonization and settlement spanning from the 1920s to 1948, but rather the product of the radically changed international situation of late 1940s – the disintegration of the British Empire and the newfound Soviet support for Jewish statehood, exemplified in the Soviet Union's support for the partition plan in the November 1947 United Nations vote and, far more significantly, by providing weapons through Czechoslovakia and facilitating Israel's military victory in the war of 1948.

Though, as we have seen in this study, the idea of a Jewish nation-state in Palestine came to replace the vision of Jewish autonomy in Eastern Europe, the ideals of minority rights and autonomy remain an integral part of Israeli public discourse to this day. One of the main examples of the persistence of these visions is to be found in the growing public fascination in Israel with the memory and legacy of Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Though Jabotinsky had been marginalized in the first decades of the state by Israel's successive *Labor* party leaders, in the past few decades, primarily following the establishment of Mencahem Begin's first *Likud* government and subsequent *Likud* administrations, Jabotinsky had been increasingly canonized in Israel as one of Zionism's founding fathers. [520] In 2005 the *Likud* government passed the

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[520] Jabotinsky's path to the center of the Israeli political consensus has been a tortuous one. After the establishment of the State of Israel and throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Ben-Gurion and the *Mapai* ruling party refused to transfer Jabotinsky's remains for burial in Israel. The efforts of *Mapai* to exclude Jabotinsky from the Zionist pantheon reflected their hostility to the *Herut* party, the self-declared heir of the Revisionist Movement. In the 1930s Ben-Gurion referred to Jabotinsky as "Vladimir Hitler" and after the establishment of the state refused to call *Herut* premier Menachem Begin by name. Only in 1964, when Levi Eshkol replaced Ben-Gurion as prime minister, did the government agree to reinter Jabotinsky in mount Herzl alongside Theodor Herzl and other prominent Zionist leaders. After the *Likud* party rose to power in 1977, Begin promoted an image of Jabotinsky as one of Zionism's founding fathers – even though Jabotinsky had arguably played only a marginal role in the process of establishing the state. The Jabotinsky Begin envisioned however was not the liberal he is portrayed as these days, "Jabotinsky's legacy is not that of a political doctrine" Begin declared, but primarily a spiritual leader who instilled in Jews self-

"Jabotinsky Law," modeled after the Herzl Law, that designated an official national day dedicated to the memory of Jabotinsky in which a national ceremony will take place and schools and the military will discuss his legacy.[521] What is remarkable about the legacy of Jabotinsky in Israel is that Jabotinsky is remembered not so much for his right-wing politics – his staunch militarism and rejection of territorial compromise, but rather for his commitment in the interwar period to a future state in Palestine based on extensive Jewish and Arab autonomy and equality. After his reelection in 2009, Benjamin Netanyahu greatly promoted the memory of Jabotinsky and cultivated an image of Jabotinsky as a proponent of "liberal nationalism" – *le'umiut liberalit* - committed to democracy, the rule of law and equality for minorities. Jabotinsky's most committed disciple is Israel's president Reuven Rivlin. Rivlin advocates for the resurrection of a political vision remarkably similar to the one Jabotinsky had advocated for in the 1930s – the establishment of a single state, spanning present-day Israel and the West Bank, with a Jewish majority and extensive autonomy and equality for the Arab minority. Shortly after taking office, Rivlin paid the first official visit by an Israeli president to the Kfar Qasim memorial ceremony, an event commemorating the massacre of 43 Arab citizens by the Israeli military in 1956.

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pride, a national consciousness and who inspired the *Etzel* to revolt against the British. For an institutional account of the canonization of Jabotinsky as the founding father of *Herut* party from the establishment of the state until his burial in Israel see Ofira Gruweis Kvalsky, *'The Vindicated and the Persecuted: the Mythology and Symbols of the Herut Movement, 1948-1965* (Sedeh Boker: Ben-Gurion University Press, 2015), 183-242 [in Hebrew]. The debates over Jabotinsky's reinterment in Israel reflected a larger obsession in Zionist history with transferring the remains of prominent Zionist leaders from the "galut" to Palestine. Mirroring this tradition, Jabotinsky insisted in his will that only a sovereign Jewish state would be allowed to decide if to transfer his remains for burial in Palestine. For a study of the cultural fixation in Zionist history with reinterment in a sovereign Jewish state see Doron Bar, *Ideology and Landscape: Reinterment of Renowned Jews in the Land of Israel, 1904-1967* (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2016), particularly pages 121-156 on Jabotinsky.

[521] Ze'ev Jabotinsky Law (2005), The Knesset (Israeli parliament), http://main.knesset.gov.il/About/Occasion/Documents/JabotLaw.pdf. After the passage of this law Jabotinsky became the first Zionist leader who did not serve as a prime minister or president of Israel to be granted an official national memorial day. The situation changed several months later when the *Knesset* passed the Rehavam Ze'evi Law to commemorate the legacy of Ze'evi, a radical right-wing leader and a vocal supporter of Arab transfer. The two laws were discussed simultaneously and the opposition of several right wing leaders to the Rehavam Ze'evi Law reflected the growing rift on the Israeli right. See, for example, the discussion on the proposed Rehavam Ze'evi Law during the vote on the Jabotinsky Law Knesset Protocols, March 23, 2005.

Responding to claims that the massacre was part of a government plot to expel Arab citizens, Rivlin invoked his ideological mentor to assure Arab citizens that "as Jabotinsky said, I swear we will never try to orce anyone out of our country."[522] In the most unlikely turn of events, even prominent *Labor* leader Isaac Herzog – a party whose most famous leader Ben-Gurion once referred to Jabotinsky as 'Vladimir Hitler' – had begun championing Jabotinsky's legacy. In the 2016 Jabotinsky Day ceremony in the *Knesset*, Herzog lambasted Netanyahu for deviating from Jabotinsky's legacy by impugning the legitimacy of the vote of the Arab minority in the recent elections. As Herzog declared, "we need many more Jabotinskys who understand that in the Land of Israel there will always remain two nations ... we need more Jabotinskys in his own political camp, who will not incite against the Arab minority, who will not violate their equality of rights and who will not try to expel or oppress them."[523] The growing centrality of Jabotinsky's views on minority rights in Israel's public discourse is a reminder that even as the

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[522] "President Rivlin addresses Kfar Qasim memorial ceremony," Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 26, 2014, accessed on February 19 at http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2014/Pages/President-Rivlin-addresses-Kafr-Qasim-memorial-ceremony-26-Oct-2014.aspx. See also Haaretz editorial on Rivlin's statements *Haaretz* Editorial, "President Rivlin's courageous Statements are Worthy of Praise," *Haaretz*, October 28, 2014 http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/1.623112. On Rivlin's admiration for Jabotinsky see also Lahav Harkov, "President-elect Rivlin loves Jerusalem and Jabotinsky, opposes Palestinian state," *The Jerusalem Post* October 6 2014 http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/President-elect-Rivlin-loves-Jerusalem-and-Jabotinsky-opposes-Palestinian-state-355902.

[523] See Knesset (Israeli parliament) protocol (video), 08/03/2016, http://online.knesset.gov.il/eprotocol/PLAYER/ProtocolEPlayer.aspx?ProtocolID=55151&DateTor=03/08/2016. The appropriation of Jabotinsky by the Zionist left is also apparent in Hillel Halkin's recent biography of Jabotinsky. Jabotinsky, who adamantly opposed any proposal to partition Palestine and rejected the possibility of political compromise with the Arabs, is described by Halkin as a supporter of the peace process and the two state solution. Halkin's biography concludes with an imaginary conversation between Halkin and Jabotinsky that takes place in 2014, in which Jabotinsky urges Israelis to reach an agreement with the Palestinians. "Reach the best deal that you can," the resurrected Jabotinsky tells Halkin when asked if Israel should withdraw to the 1967 borders, "I had the reputation of a zealot, but I was the least ideological of all Zionists." Hillel Halkin, *Jabotinsky: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 229. Similarly, A.B Yehoshua – a novelist who is one of the cultural symbols of the historic Israeli left – has also sought to re-imagine Jabotinsky as part of the concept of Israeli statism, mamlachtiyut. Yehoshua published a recent play based on a real series of meetings between Jabotinsky's and Ben-Gurion in London in 1934. The main theme of the play is that despite the hostility and differences between them, Ben-Gurion and Jabotinsky ultimately shared a very similar worldview. This play could be read as aimed at expanding the traditionally left-wing Zionist cultural pantheon by including in it the hero of the Israeli right, though at the price of obscuring and assimilating the differences between the Israeli left and right. See A.B Yeshoshua, *The Two Walked Together* (Tel-Aviv: Hakibutz Ha-Meuchad, 2012).

ethnic nation-state displaced the vision of Jewish autonomy during and after the Second World War, the multiethnic Eastern European legacy of minority rights continues to shape the debates over the meaning and future of Jewish nationalism.

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