

A Jewish State with Cannons, Flags and Military Decorations

Strengthening and Defeat of the Bi-Nationalist Movement in Palestine 1939-1942

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*I do know nothing about a 'Jewish state with cannons, flags and
military decorations', not even as a dream.*

Martin Buber, 1918

PREFACE

As the Israeli-Arab conflict is a contemporary issue, writing on a related subject, even though definitely historical, tends to reflect people's views on the contemporary conflict. Historical research also impact's one's view of today. I have experienced that continuous dialogue between past and present while researching and writing this thesis.

From the outset, I like to put my cards on the table. I greatly respect people like Martin Buber and Judah L. Magnes, some of the foremost Bi-nationalists in the 1930s and 1940s in Palestine, and I am not impressed by the *realpolitik* that the Zionist movement and Israel have opted for since the 1940s.

The essential difference of opinion as regards Arab-Jewish relations between these political groups amongst the Jews in Palestine, was expressed succinctly by David Ben Gurion in a discussion he had with Magnes. Ben Gurion told Magnes:

The real difference between us is that you think peace between Arab and Jew will bring a state (Bi-national perhaps) where as I believe that a (Jewish) state will lead to Arab-Jewish peace.¹

Before 1948, Magnes always warned not to enter Zion in the way of Joshua, *not by might, not by power, but by the Spirit*. The attitude of Ben Gurion and most Israeli politicians since the 1940s seems to be driven by the conviction that peace will come when Arabs, because of the military power of Israel, have no option but to accept the *fait accompli* of Israel's existence. Since the founding of the State of Israel, this political divide in approach has been visible in Jewish society.

This MA thesis was written for the Institute of History at Utrecht University in The Netherlands, and was prepared under the supervision of J.G. Hegeman, MA, and Professor Dr. Jacques Waardenburg, who was instrumental in instilling in me a love for studies of the Middle East, the Arabs and Islam.

Thank you, Susan Guthman, for helping me to write this thesis in English. Thank you, Cojan Prins, for donating a computer to me, thereby making my work much easier.

¹ Ernst Simon, 'There is Another Way!', in *New Outlook Vol. 4, No. 6* (Tel Aviv 1961), pp. 3-4.

A special word of thanks and love is due to my wife Adrienne, who in my years of study, and especially during the writing of this thesis was often a sounding board for my opinions and who created such circumstances as to enable me to finish my studies in short time.

Jos Strengolt
Soest, Netherlands, July 1986

CONTENTS

Preface, 2
Contents, 4
Introduction, 5

PARTING OF THE WAYS - 1939

1. The London Conference and its Proceedings, 11
2. The MacDonald White Paper of 17 May 1939, 18
3. Policy of the Zionist Organization after the White Paper, 22
4. Reaction of Bi-nationalists, 27
5. League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation, 37

WIDENING OF THE SPLIT - 1940-1942

6. Appeasement of the Palestinian Arabs, 42
7. Fighting the White Paper as if there is no War, 48
8. Fighting with Britain as if there is no White Paper, 53
9. Awakening America to the Zionist Cause, 57
10. Towards a Jewish State, 60
11. Working for Rapprochement and Cooperation, 66
12. Writing for a Bi-national Palestine, 72

STRENGTHENING AND DEFEAT OF BI-NATIONALISM - 1942

13. Strengthening of the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation, 83
14. Foundation of Ichud, 88
15. Bi-nationalism Ostracized from the Zionist Organization, 95

Summary and Conclusions, 101
Bibliography, 107

INTRODUCTION

From the very beginning of the Zionist movement it was being understood that Arab opposition would be the greatest single obstacle to the creation of a National Home for the Jews in Palestine. Theodor Herzl, in the nineteenth century, already envisaged the problems that would result from immigration into Palestine, and wrote in 1896 in *The Jewish State* that immigration would only be possible

[...] till the inevitable moment when the native population feels itself threatened, and forces the Government to stop a further influx of Jews. Immigration is consequently futile unless based on an assured supremacy.²

Even though in the nineteenth century the number of Jewish immigrants was not as high as it would be later, already in 1891 a telegram was sent by Arabs in Jerusalem to Istanbul, asking the Grand Vizier to prohibit Jews to immigrate into Palestine and to purchase land.³ From then on the Palestinian Arabs would continue to express this demand.⁴ This demand grew louder and gradually more violent after Great Britain had defeated the Ottomans and taken over the government of Palestine in 1917.

Great Britain became Mandatory of Palestine under the League of Nations, after the San Remo Conference had decided so on April 24, 1920, and after the League of Nations had approved this on July 24, 1922.⁵ The native population of Palestine was not asked for its opinion. The Mandate enabled Great Britain to implement its Balfour Declaration of November 1917, in which Arthur James Balfour, the British Prime Minister, wrote to Lord Rothschild that his government had ‘sympathy with the Jewish Zionist aspirations which [had] been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet’. Balfour also wrote:

² Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (London 1972), p. 29. Herzl first published his booklet in Vienna in 1896.

³ The Jewish population of Palestine rose from about 24,000 in 1882 to approximately 85,000 in 1914, mainly as a result of immigration. This means that the net immigration was not more than 1,900 Jews annually.

⁴ Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I* (London 1976), pp. 39-40.

⁵ Relevant decisions of the League of Nations (24 July 1922): ‘The British Mandate’, in Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin (eds.), *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict* (Harmondsworth 1984), pp. 34-42.

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.' Balfour requested Rothschild to let this be known to the Zionist Federation.⁶

The Zionist thus gained the 'assured supremacy' Herzl considered necessary. The Palestinian Arabs never accepted the British Mandate, neither the Balfour Declaration nor the Zionist idea. The Jews who entered into Palestine were seen as invaders, usurpers and tools of British imperialism. The Zionist movement, recognizing this Arab resistance against building a Jewish national home in Palestine, was divided about the question of how to overcome this obstacle. Three lines of thought dominated the Zionist movement's discussions about Jewish-Arab relations. The adherents of these lines of thought were Revisionists, Bi-nationalists, and Zionists. This does not imply that the first two groups were not real Zionists, but for the sake of convenience, the majority group that did not adhere to the Revisionist or Bi-nationalist ideas will also be called 'Zionists' in this thesis. This means the word Zionist can signify either someone who favored the return of the Jews to Palestine as a National Home, irrespective of the political shape of that National Home, or in the more restricted sense, someone who held certain specific convictions regarding the desired political shape of that National Home and about the Jewish-Arab relationship.⁷

The Zionists, the word now being used in its narrow sense, based their thinking about and their policy towards the Arabs on three assumptions. First, Arab opposition to the Jewish National Home was not based on genuine nationalism, but on the fear of the feudal Arab class to lose privileges and authority over the masses, as new masters entered the country and strongly influenced its social structure. Secondly, opposition would decrease when the Arabs saw the economic and other benefits of the Zionist enterprise. Thirdly, opposition

⁶ The Balfour Declaration (1917), in Laqueur, *Reader*, pp. 17-18.

⁷ Yehoyada Haim, in his book *Abandonment of Illusions: Zionist Political Attitudes Toward Palestinian Arab Nationalism, 1936-1939* (Boulder 1983), speaks about Revisionists, Bi-nationalists and *Official* Zionists. For reasons of readability, this prefix *Official* will not be used.

would decrease because Jewish population growth and economic power would force the Arabs to accept the Jewish reality.⁸

The Revisionists rejected the first two assumptions the Zionists adhered to. They recognized the strength of the genuine Palestinian Arab nationalism, and did not believe this could be softened by economic benefits. They did adhere wholeheartedly to the third Zionist idea, however, believing that the only way to make the Arabs accept the Jewish National Home would be by force. They therefore never stopped calling for a Jewish Army, as they believed that only strength would overcome Arab opposition.⁹

The Bi-nationalists, like the Revisionists, rejected the first two Zionist assumptions. They did not accept the Revisionist solution of taking away Arab opposition by means of force, however, and also doubted the Zionist assumption that population growth and economic development would make the Arabs more willing to accept the Jewish National Home. Fearing that the conflict between the two nationalities would become violent, they wanted to come to an agreement about co-existence with the Arabs instead of forcing them to accept the Jewish presence in Palestine.¹⁰

The Revisionists were open concerning their final aim. They envisaged a Jewish state in Palestine, based on a Jewish majority attained by mass immigration. They did not hide this, like the Zionists did, because to them any talk about reaching Jewish-Arab agreement was only a waste of time, merely diverting the attention from gaining strength and building a military force. The sword would decide the fate of Palestine.¹¹ They demanded the Zionist Organization to officially define reaching a majority in Palestine and establishing a Jewish State as its goal. Both Bi-nationalists and Zionists rejected this demand. Therefore Ze'ev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky, the Revisionist leader, seceded from the Zionist Organization in 1935, organizing an alternative New Zionist Organization.¹²

Because the Zionists, unlike the Revisionists, hoped to weaken Palestinian Arab resistance, they did not publicly state their final aim, although there is no doubt that a Jewish majority in a Jewish

⁸ Haim, *Abandonment*, pp. 3,5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Esco Foundation for Palestine, *Palestine, A Study of Jewish, Arab and British Policies, Vol. II* (New Haven 1947), p. 802 footnote.

state in Palestine was what they worked for. They were prepared to negotiate, but always on the basis of the other party accepting free immigration of Jews and full freedom for Jews to acquire land in Palestine. As these were exactly the reasons for Arab resistance, these Zionist-Arab negotiations could never achieve anything.¹³

The Bi-nationalists, unlike the Revisionists and the Zionists, worked for a democratic state of Jews and Arabs, not based on proportional representation but with constitutional organs based on parity and on the idea of mutual non-domination. Both nations would have the same influence, without regard to numerical strength. They hoped to take away Arab fear of being dominated by the Jews, but most of them also wanted immigration and land sales to be absolutely free. Therefore their negotiations with the Arabs had hardly more chance of success than those of the Zionists had.¹⁴

Until 1948, when the State of Israel was being established, the Revisionists and the Bi-nationalists did not change their opinions as to the desired relations with the Arabs and the final aim of the Zionist movement they were proposing. The Zionists, however, no longer adhered to the assumption that the Arabs would be placated when they saw the economic benefits of a strong Jewish presence in Palestine. They had also come to accept that Palestinian Arab nationalism was genuine.

Between 1939 and 1942 the Zionists adopted the Revisionist premises of the implacability of the two nationalisms and the need to use force to submit the Arabs to acceptance of an ever-growing Jewish community in Palestine. The Zionists also openly adopted the idea of a Jewish state as their final aim.¹⁵ As late as 1937, Ben Gurion still dissociated himself publicly from the aims of Revisionism, saying that

[...] if Palestine were uninhabited we might have asked for a Jewish state, for then it would not harm anyone else. But there are other residents in Palestine, and just as we do not wish to be at the mercy of others, they too have the right not to be at the mercy of the Jews.¹⁶

In 1942, however, Ben Gurion was instrumental in having the Zionist Organization accept the Biltmore Program, openly demand-

¹³ Haim, *Abandonment*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁵ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World* (London 1970), p. 219.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

ing the establishment of a Jewish state. Thus the Revisionist ideas of the alternative New Zionist Organization were accepted as the only, official policy of the Zionist Organization. Bi-nationalism was banned from the Zionist Organization's platform.¹⁷

The present thesis endeavors to paint a clear picture of the aims and activities of the Bi-nationalists in Palestine between 1939 and 1942. What kind of parties, groups and people held Bi-nationalist convictions? How did they envisage the future of Palestine? What were their aims, and with what activities did they try to implement these aims? How did they try to change the trend amongst Palestinian Jewry to accept Revisionist premises? Why did they fail? These questions will be answered against the background of the situation in the world and of Jewry in particular, of British policy and of the attitude of the Arabs. Much attention will be given, of course, to the change of policies amongst the Zionists between 1939 and 1942, which meant the deathblow to the chances of the Bi-nationalists having their ideas implemented in Jewish political life.

¹⁷ This Biltmore Program is published in Laqueur, *Reader*, pp. 77-9; Sophie A. Udin (ed), *The Palestine Year Book: Review of Events July 1945 to September 25, 1946 Vol. II* (New York 1946), pp. 424-5.

PARTING OF THE WAYS – 1939

1. THE LONDON CONFERENCE AND ITS PROCEEDINGS

European Jews had trickled into Palestine since the beginning of Zionism in the 1880s. Since 1933 the number of German Jewish immigrants to Palestine was growing rapidly. A pre-war peak was reached in 1935, with a net immigration of 61,458 Jews.¹⁸ This enormous increase made Palestinian Arab fears of a Jewish majority in Palestine grow considerably, to such an extent that in 1936 the Arab population stood up in revolt. The aim of the revolt was to obtain from Great Britain the prohibition of Jewish immigration, the forbiddance of land transfers from Arabs to Jews, and the replacement of the Mandate by a national government responsible to a representative council.¹⁹

Great Britain, faced with the prospect of war in Europe, wanted to remain on good terms with the Arab countries to ascertain its military position in the Middle East. In order to avoid the Arab countries aligning with Germany and Italy, the Palestinian Arabs had to be appeased.²⁰ According to historian Christopher Sykes,

[...] the concern of the Arabic-speaking world was [...] a real fact and an extremely dangerous one. It tended to make the Arab world friendly disposed to Nazi-Germany, and a large part of the oil resources of Britain were situated in the Arab world. To have opened a major quarrel

¹⁸ Esco, *Palestine, Vol.II*, p. 674 recorded the net immigration of Jews into Palestine (1930-1939):

1930	3,265	1935	61,458
1931	3,409	1936	28,954
1932	9,553	1937	9,647
1933	30,327	1938	11,773
1934	42,359	1939	15,386

¹⁹ J.C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine* (New York 1976) p. 68.

²⁰ Haim, *Abandonment*, p. 132; Ben Gurion, David, *My Talks with Arab Leaders* (Jerusalem 1972), pp. 230-1; George Kirk, *Survey of International Affairs, 1939-1946, The Middle East in the War* (London 1952), p. 11. The defense of the British policy by Kirk is interesting. He writes that the British 'were convinced that this [...] was essential for the political stability of the Middle East theatre of war, the pivot-theatre through which alone the Western Allies could make it possible in 1942-3 for the Soviet armies to continue to resist the present arch-enemy both of Jewry and of world civilization, until the allied forces were jointly equipped for the final convergence on Berlin.' Arguing that London took a decision in 1938 because of the need to send supplies to the Soviet armies in 1942-3 is stretching it.

with Arab States when Europe was moving towards war would have been an act of folly without precedent.²¹

During the years before the war, the Arab Middle East had been very receptive to elements of the ideology of Nazism. This success of Nazi propaganda was not only a result of the strong desire to be freed from Britain and France, but also because of the National Socialist appeal to authoritarian and nationalist emotions alike. To many it seemed a model for the swift development of a society towards an economically developed, politically united and military strong state under a charismatic leader. Beside that, the anti-Semitic ideology and policy of Nazism seemed ideologically close to Arab resistance against Zionism and the growing Jewish presence in Palestine.²²

On 9 November 1938, The British government published an invitation for ‘representatives of the Palestinian Arabs and of the neighbouring States on the one hand and of the Jewish Agency on the other, to confer with them as soon as possible in London regarding future policy, including the question of immigration into Palestine.’²³ The same document stated that if the London discussions should not produce agreement within a reasonable period of time, the Government would take its own decisions.²⁴

Even before Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain opened the London Conference on 7 February 1939, most Zionists understood the aim of the conference. They expected it to restrict, if not to halt, immigration and land purchase.²⁵ After much discussion they decided to participate because Jewish attendance might succeed in softening the restrictions the British intended to propose. The urgency for European Jewry to be able to immigrate into Palestine was strongly felt. Moreover, non-participation would give the British even more justification for imposing their policy, since then there

²¹ Christopher Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel* (London 1965) pp. 238-9.

²² Stefan Wild, ‘National Socialism in the Arab Near East Between 1933 and 1939’, *Die Welt des Islams Band 25* (Leiden 1985), p. 170.

²³ This invitation was part of the *British Statement of Policy of 1938, November 9*, in which the British Government rejected the partition-proposal of the Royal Peel Commission of 1937, after the Woodhead Technical Commission had proved in 1938 that partitioning of Palestine would create an unworkable situation. Cited in Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin (eds.), *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict* (Harmondsworth 1984), pp. 62-3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Haim, *Abandonment*, p. 138.

would not be any chance for a voluntary agreement, for which they could blame the Jews.²⁶ To Chaim Weizmann was allotted the task of making the Zionist position clear to the British.²⁷ On 8 February he spoke on the right of the Jews to be in sole control of immigration and of being guaranteed against becoming a minority or leading a minority life in Palestine. The situation in Germany made this very urgent.²⁸ Weizmann expressed his concern for good relations between Jews and Arabs. The Jews had sought to find peace with them, but the fault lay with the Arabs. Weizmann argued that

[...] it is not that they are frightened of our domination; it is their desire to dominate which is the true root of the trouble. [...] A road to an understanding - perhaps a narrow path and not a royal road - may be found in the principle of mutual non-domination. We do not want to dominate the Arabs but we do not wish to be - we cannot be - dominated by them. [...] Once that fundamental principle has been inculcated into the Arab mind, as a result of a considerable educational process, I am not without hope that some day we shall find a way to each other.²⁹

Weizmann closed his address with recommending a far-sighted program for the economic development of Palestine. This program, serving Jews and Arabs equally, would be a bridge towards peace. Another task of Britain would be to solve the constitutional problems. In Weizmann's words, Britain had '... to create in and for Palestine a political structure guaranteeing political equality to both sides and removing Arab fears. [...] I believe then Palestine could be opened to large immigration.'³⁰

Weizmann expected of Britain assistance to facilitate large-scale Jewish immigration and its absorption. He asked for the placing at Jewish disposal of all substantial areas of land in Palestine that were classed by the Government as uncultivable. He also wanted a permanent and adequate Jewish Defense Force to be created in Pales-

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Weizmann (1874-1952) was the President of the Jewish Agency (until 1935) and of the World Zionist Organization. He had always been the most important negotiator with the British, on behalf of the Zionist movement, propagating gradualism and a close relation with Britain, as he assumed the Zionist ideal could only be reached with British help.

²⁸ Ben Gurion, *Talks*, pp. 203-6.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 212; Susan Lee Hattis, *The Bi-national Idea in Palestine During Mandatory Times* (Haifa 1970), p. 202.

³⁰ Ben Gurion, *Talks*, p. 213.

tine, for self-defense and for lightening the burden of the British Forces and for any possible emergency.³¹

The Arabs presented their case the following day, on 9 February.³² They did so in a separate meeting with the British, as they refused to recognize the Jewish Agency and to sit at one table with the Zionists.³³ The Arab demands were summarized by Jamal al-Husayni from Palestine.³⁴ It was obvious they had not come to London to compromise with the Jews. They wanted complete independence of Palestine as a sovereign Arab state and immediate cessation of all Jewish immigration and of land sales to Jews. They were prepared, however, to protect all legitimate rights of the Jews and other minorities in Palestine.³⁵

The following day, 10 February, Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald replied to Weizmann's statements, stressing that Britain had obligations both to Jews *and* Arabs. It was indeed true that the Jews had special rights in Palestine, but these rights were limited by the physical smallness of the country and by the political rights of the Arabs.³⁶ To this Ben Gurion replied that³⁷

Great Britain undertook obligations to the whole world by recognizing the prior rights of the Jews in Palestine. As against these rights those of the Arab population of Palestine were secondary.³⁸

MacDonald made very clear what kind of agreement he hoped to achieve. On 15 February he proposed that the Jews should appease the Palestinian Arabs by removing their fear of Jewish domination. This he wanted to attain by continuing Jewish immigration for a certain period of years, provided that within that period the yearly quo-

³¹ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 892.

³² These Arabs represented Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Transjordan.

³³ Some speak of two separate conferences, one of the British with the Jews, the other with the Arabs. Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 891.

³⁴ Jamal al-Husayni was the cousin of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, the main nationalist leader of the revolt of 1936-1939. The Mufti was not allowed to attend the Conference, but in order to placate the Palestinian Arabs with the Mufti being banned, his cousin who was imprisoned on The Seychelles, was released.

³⁵ Ben Gurion, *Talks*, pp. 216-7.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 220-3; a reference to the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

³⁷ Ben Gurion was President of the Jewish Agency Executive after 1935, and the foremost leader in the largest Jewish political party in Palestine, MAPAI. That was a left-of-the-center labor party.

³⁸ Ben Gurion, *Talks*, p. 221. Ben Gurion alludes here to the Balfour Declaration.

tas would not lead to a Jewish majority after that period. At the end of this period Jewish immigration would only be allowed with Arab consent, thereby removing the *genuine* Arab fear of Jewish domination.³⁹

Ben Gurion's comment at that moment was that the Jews were in fact asked to renounce their title to be in Palestine *as of right, and not on sufferance*, and to accept a permanent minority status in a foreign state.⁴⁰ MacDonald said he understood their fear of becoming a minority in a foreign state. This fear was not necessary either if the mandate system would remain in force or if the independent Palestinian state would have a constitution on the basis of parity, the Jews being equal partners in power, irrespective of their number in Palestine. He said he did not view parity as a possible way out of the deadlock, because the Arabs would not agree to it.⁴¹ He therefore suggested Palestine to remain a Mandate of Britain and to have constitutional organs created on the basis of parity as between Jews and Arabs. He also suggested the authorities to restrict land sales from Arabs to Jews.⁴²

The following day MacDonald was assured by Jamal al-Husayni that the Arabs of Palestine would never accept the humiliation of being placed on an equal basis with a Jewish minority. They did not accept the principle of constitutional parity. Jamal said that if the Palestinian Arab leaders could tell their people that their demands would be met, they could put an immediate end to their revolt. Otherwise they would not be able to pacify the people of Palestine after all their sacrifices.⁴³

On behalf of the Jewish delegation, on 17 February a minority position for Jews in Palestine and restrictions on land purchases by Jews were rejected. They did not believe that constitutional parity would be an effective safeguard. The day before, the Jewish Agency Executive had decided to be willing to make an agreement with the Arabs on the basis of give and take, provided that their basic rights were ensured and that no arrangement would be made to curtail im-

³⁹ Ben Gurion, *Talks*, p. 242.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 242-3; the words 'as of right and not on sufferance' are a quote from the Churchill White Paper of 1922. Cited in Laqueur, *Reader*, p. 47.

⁴¹ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 203.

⁴² Ben Gurion, *Talks*, pp. 244-6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 252-4.

migration.⁴⁴ If the Arabs refused to compromise and stuck to their demands, the Zionists would insist on the granting of their demands to the full.⁴⁵

The Zionists, understanding what kind of compromise Britain would propose, as it was clear they would do so unilaterally, took the initiative themselves and proposed their own solutions. In a letter of 10 March, Weizmann stressed again the obligations Great Britain as Mandatory had, in securing the continuation and growth of the Jewish national home. Britain was especially expected to facilitate immigration and land settlement. Only if these obligations were accepted, the Jewish delegation would be willing to accept as a basis for further discussions, the idea that self-governing institutions should be developed under the mandate on a basis of parity as between Jews and Arabs, to ensure the non-domination of either race by the other. No restriction on land settlement was acceptable. If the mandate would terminate, discussion would be possible on either establishing a Jewish state in a substantial part of Palestine or a federal unitary Palestinian state with full Jewish control over immigration and with federal institutions based on parity.⁴⁶

The British, however, believed the federal alternative to be workable only after a transitional period, after restrictions on immigration and land sale had been imposed. They did not take the Jewish proposal seriously.⁴⁷ As could be expected, no agreement could be reached between the Zionists and the Arabs. Therefore MacDonald presented the final British proposals to the Jewish delegation on 15 March. Palestine eventually had to become an independent state, possibly of a federal nature, but *not a Jewish or an Arab State*. This could only mean Palestine had to become a Bi-national state, in which Arabs and Jews should share in government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each nation were safeguarded.

The proposal of MacDonald also described the policy Britain had to follow during the transitional period in order to prepare Palestine for independence. During this period government would not be based on parity but on proportional representation. Hope was expressed that this period would last no longer than ten years, depending upon

⁴⁴ The Executive with its offices in Jerusalem had to implement the policy of the Jewish Agency. The Executive functioned as the government of the Jews in Palestine.

⁴⁵ Ben Gurion, *Talks*, pp. 247, 255-6.

⁴⁶ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, pp. 204-5.

⁴⁷ Haim, *Abandonment*, p. 142.

the situation in Palestine and upon the success of the constitutional changes during the transitional period, and the likelihood of effective cooperation in government by the people of Palestine.

In the next five years 75,000 Jewish immigrants were permitted entry, if the economy could absorb them. This would bring the Jewish population up to about one-third of the total population. After five years, further Jewish immigration would only be possible if the Arabs agreed. Finally, the High Commissioner of Palestine would be given general powers to regulate land transfers.⁴⁸ He would also have to allocate areas in which transfer of land was to be free, regulated, or prohibited.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The High Commissioner was the highest British official in Palestine.

⁴⁹ Ben Gurion, *Talks*, pp. 263-5.

2. THE MACDONALD WHITE PAPER OF 17 MAY 1939

For the Jewish delegation at the London Conference, the proposals of MacDonald were totally unacceptable, so it was decided to dissolve. The fears that were expressed before the Conference, about British intentions, had proved to be true. As the British did not immediately publish an official White Paper stating their future policy, the Zionists did all they could to prevent or delay its publication.⁵⁰ Weizmann asked Chamberlain in a letter to postpone the announcement of any decision:

In times so deeply disturbed, could we not avoid adding to the turmoil. For such would be the result of putting forward a policy which satisfies no one. If the announcement of the decision is postponed, I do not mean to leave the time unused. Every effort will be made [...] and contact used to explore the possibilities of Jewish-Arab agreement or rapprochement. [...] Lapse of time may open possibilities in this direction.⁵¹

Times were disturbed indeed. In Europe, prospects for peace had dwindled. Following the German annexation of parts of Czechoslovakia on 15 March, Italy invaded Albania on 7 April. The announcement of the formation of a Berlin-Rome political and military axis was shocking. The British Government faced a popular demand for an end to appeasement, so Hitler's move against Czechoslovakia was answered by making plain Britain's determination to resist any further aggression. Chamberlain reversed his European policy on 31 March, by giving a military guarantee to Poland, and shortly thereafter also to Rumania and Greece.⁵²

Britain could not give in to Zionist pressures not to go on with the proposed policies in Palestine. *In case of war, the Jews would have no choice to be on the British side, while the Arabs had to be kept out of the fascist fold.*⁵³ The Arab rejection of the proposals had been less extreme than the Zionists' rejection, as some of their demands had been at least partially met. For that reason the British Government could continue to confer with the governments of Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. These states formulated, with the consent of the

⁵⁰ Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel* (Jerusalem, n.d.) p. 221.

⁵¹ N.A. Rose, *The Gentile Zionists. A Study in Anglo-Zionist Diplomacy, 1929-1939* (London 1973), p. 195.

⁵² James Joll, *Europe Since 1870: An International History* (Harmondsworth 1982), pp. 373-4.

⁵³ Ben Gurion, *Talks*, pp. 212, 230-8.

Palestinian Arabs, some amendments on the proposals, after conversations in Cairo in April, and gave these to the British.⁵⁴

Finally, on 17 May 1939, the White Paper was published.⁵⁵ Although the discussion in Cairo resulted in the modification of detail, the White Paper was in most particulars virtually identical with the draft of 15 March. One of the differences was that the White Paper did not mention the possible federal nature of the future independent state. The Bi-national character of the future independent Palestine was, however, stressed again. The White Paper said that ‘...the independent state should be one in which Arabs and Jews share in government in such a way as to ensure that the essential interests of each community are safeguarded.’⁵⁶ Probably to give in to Arab demands the sentence that Palestine would not become either a Jewish nor an Arab state was left out of the declaration of intentions, although the idea was explicitly stated in the introductory paragraphs of the White Paper.⁵⁷

In Britain the White Paper met with serious criticism. The press was almost uniformly hostile. The Manchester Guardian for instance, spoke of a ‘disastrous’ policy.⁵⁸ In Parliament, a large minority attacked Chamberlain when he asked for a vote of confidence. On 22 May, numerous pro-Zionist spokesmen accused the Government of appeasing the aggressors, while some even went so far as to now advocate Jewish resistance and terrorism. Winston Churchill attacked his own Conservative Government, calling the White Paper a unilateral denunciation of a pledge made not only to the Jews of Palestine but to the whole Jewish people.⁵⁹

Herbert Morrison, the Labour Party leader, spoke of the Jews being sacrificed to the Government’s incompetence and declared that if Labour would replace the Conservative Government it would not automatically be bound by the White Paper. His Labour Party friends applauded loudly.⁶⁰ Only because of a reluctance to embar-

⁵⁴ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 900.

⁵⁵ For the full text of the White Paper (1939), see Laqueur, *Reader*, pp. 64-75.

⁵⁶ Laqueur, *Reader*, p. 69.

⁵⁷ ‘It is not part of [the British] policy that Palestine should become a Jewish state. [Britain] cannot agree [...] that Palestine should be converted into an Arab state.’ See Laqueur, *Reader*, pp. 66,68.

⁵⁸ Sachar, *History of Israel*, p. 224; Rose, *Gentile Zionists*, p. 206.

⁵⁹ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 919.

⁶⁰ Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine: Retreat from the Mandate. The Making of British Policy, 1936-45* (London 1978), p. 86.

arrass the Government at that time of great international tension, many Members of Parliament abstained from voting against Chamberlain. Because of these many abstentions the Cabinet was able to survive with fewer votes than half of the numbers of MPs.⁶¹

A few days later the British Labour Party at its annual conference supported its representatives in Parliament in their struggle against the White Paper. In a resolution they declared that

[...] the policy of the White Paper represents a further surrender to aggression, places a premium on violence and terror, and is a setback to the progressive forces among both Arabs and Jews. It also imposes new and intolerable restrictions on Jewish immigration at a moment when racial persecution increasingly divides the other countries of the world into those Jews are forbidden to enter and those in which they find it impossible to live.⁶²

Chamberlain not only needed approval of Parliament but also of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. The major function of this Commission was to report to the Council of the League whether the Mandatory Powers were acting within the terms of the mandate. For this reason MacDonald personally appeared at the three sessions devoted to Palestine and the White Paper in June 1939. The aim of MacDonald was to prove that the White Paper was not inconsistent with the obligations under the mandate. The change in policy was in his opinion no departure from the letter or the spirit of the mandate, but only an adaptation to changing circumstances. He argued: 'While in the early years it was right to have laid the emphasis on the obligation to the Jews, it was no right to lay the emphasis on the obligation to the non-Jews.'⁶³ MacDonald was not able to convince the Commission. In its report to the Council of the League the Commission declared that

[...] the policy set out in the White Paper is not in accordance with the interpretation which, in agreement with the Mandatory Power and the Council, the Commission had placed upon the Palestine Mandate.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 104-5; Escó, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 921; Chamberlain's Government received 268 votes, against were 179, while 110 abstained. Usually the Government could count on more than 400 votes.

⁶² Escó, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 920.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 924.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 927.

The British prepared to defend their position against the advice of the Permanent Mandates Commission. Next session of the League's Council was to be held in September. The outbreak of war in Europe led to the suspension of the activities of the League, so no decision was taken. From then on Britain based its policies on the White Paper without the legal ratification that was needed of the League of Nations.⁶⁵

Whether or not the White Paper was consistent with the Mandate, the London Conference and the resulting White Paper of 1939 were the culmination of a gradual change in Britain's policy. Until 1939 it had been relatively friendly and generous towards the further growth of the Jewish National Home. After 1939 British policy was essentially the reverse.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 106.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

3. THE POLITICS OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT AFTER THE WHITE PAPER

The day after the White Paper was issued Jews demonstrated throughout Palestine. A feeling began to develop in the Jewish community that this new British policy should be resisted with all means at its disposal. The White Paper was seen as an act of betrayal and treachery.⁶⁷ Though some hope was still left that the British might reverse their policy again, especially because of the strong support of Zionism by the British Labour Party and because of the negative attitude of the Permanent Mandates Commission towards the Paper, indignation and excitement were great in Palestine.⁶⁸ On behalf of the Jewish Agency, Ben Gurion declared to

[...] regard this policy as a breach of faith and surrender to Arab terrorism. [...] It is a policy in which the Jewish people will not acquiesce. The new regime now announced will be devoid of any moral basis and contrary to international law. Such a regime can only be established and maintained by force. [...] It seems only too probable that the Jews would fight rather than submit to Arab rule. And repressing a Jewish rebellion against British policy would be as unpleasant a task as the repression of the Arab rebellion has been. The Government has disregarded this warning.

The Jewish people have no quarrel with the Arab people. Jewish work in Palestine has not had an adverse effect upon the life and progress of the Arab people. The Arabs are not landless or homeless as are the Jews. They are not in need of emigration. Jewish colonization has benefited Palestine and all its inhabitants. [...]

The Jewish people has shown its will to peace even during the years of disturbances. It has not given way to temptation and had not retaliated to Arab violence. But neither have the Jews submitted to terror nor will they submit to it even after the Mandatory has decided to reward the terrorists by surrendering the Jewish National home.

It is in the darkest hour of Jewish history that the British Government proposes to deprive the Jews of their last hope and to close the road back to their homeland. It is a cruel blow. [...] This blow will not subdue the Jewish people. The historic bond between the people and the land of Israel cannot be broken. The Jews will never accept the closing to them of the gates of Palestine nor let their National Home be converted into a ghetto. The Jewish pioneers [...] will from now on display [...] strength

⁶⁷ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 910; Sykes, *Cross Roads*, p. 237.

⁶⁸ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 108; Rose, *Gentile Zionists*, p. 209.

in defending Jewish immigration, the Jewish Home and Jewish freedom.⁶⁹

Weizmann, writing on 31 May to the High Commissioner, concluded with the same warning as Ben Gurion's statement did:

Force has [...] been used to prevent Jews entering Palestine; it may have to be used on an even greater scale in the future if the policy outlined in the White Paper is to be carried out in full.⁷⁰

Particularly among the youth, many argued that only Jewish terrorism would coerce the Mandatory to abandon its policy. The White Paper itself was thought to prove that terrorism pays. Shortly after its publication, Jewish terrorists damaged Government buildings in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, followed by other acts of sabotage and murder. Responsible for this was the Revisionist *Irgun Zvai Le'umi* (National Military Organization), or *Irgun*, which was able to expand its ranks because of the growing tendency in the Jewish community to advocate the use of more forceful means to extend the National Home into an independent Jewish state.⁷¹

Ben Gurion was the main architect of the future Zionist policy that was publicized on the eve of the publication of the White Paper. It was decided not to participate in Government institutions that had to deal with the minority status of the Jews. Laws designated to decrease or halt immigration and settlement were considered to be illegal, so they were not binding for the Jews. Unjustly so-called 'illegal immigration' would be intensified. Laws against fundamental Jewish rights were invalid and unacceptable for any Zionist. Immigration would also lead to a stronger position in case open revolt against Britain in Palestine would be considered inevitable.⁷²

During the Twenty-first Zionist Congress, which met at Geneva from 16-24 August 1939, most delegates supported this policy of the Jewish Agency Executive against those who wanted a stronger anti-British stand and those who wanted to remain more firmly on British side. The Congress declared its uncompromising hostility to the White Paper, while at the same time proclaiming its unwavering

⁶⁹ Statement by the Jewish Agency for Palestine (1939) cited in Laqueur, *Reader*, pp. 76-7.

⁷⁰ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 914.

⁷¹ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 108; The Irgun was the military branch of the Revisionist movement.

⁷² Haim, *Abandonment*, pp. 144-5.

support of Great Britain in its defense of the Western democracies.⁷³ On the third day of the Congress, Weizmann wrote to Chamberlain from Geneva

[...] to confirm in the most explicit manner [...] that the Jews stand by Great Britain and will fight on the side of the democracies. [...] The Jewish Agency is ready to enter into immediate arrangements for utilizing Jewish manpower, technical abilities, resources, etc.⁷⁴

Although rejecting the White Paper and propagating illegal mass immigration, the Twenty-first Zionist Congress affirmed ‘the resolve of the Jewish people to establish relations of mutual goodwill and cooperation with the Arabs of Palestine and of the neighbouring countries.’⁷⁵ The Congress therefore instructed the Executive to appoint a special committee to study Jewish-Arab relations in the social and cultural fields and to explore the possibilities of cooperation in these different areas.⁷⁶

The concept of parity, still advocated during the London Conference by Weizmann on behalf of the Jewish delegation, was not mentioned anymore in any official statement of the Zionist movement. The London Conference was the last time Zionist spokesmen promoted parity, or Bi-nationalism, as the desirable policy. Not that they really opted for parity as a strategic choice, but the idea was proposed in negotiations because it appeared to be a lesser evil than minority status.⁷⁷ The Zionists only saw parity as a means to make the British accept an Arab minority position in Palestine. In 1936 Moshe Shertok,⁷⁸ head of the Jewish Agency Political Department, had said that ‘[the] connection between parity and immigration is that parity is at the moment one of our strongest weapons in the war for immigration.’⁷⁹ Another Zionist supporter said in that same year that ‘there are people who think that parity means stabilizing our numbers. I believe the exact opposite. Parity means the possibility for us to become a majority.’⁸⁰ When it was obvious that neither the

⁷³ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 930.

⁷⁴ Rose, *Gentile Zionists*, pp. 216-7.

⁷⁵ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 930.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 201.

⁷⁸ Moshe Shertok (1894-1965) later changed his name into Moshe Sharett and became Foreign Minister in the State of Israel.

⁷⁹ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 166.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

British nor the Arabs would allow the Jews to become a majority in Palestine, parity was rejected as an insufficient guarantee against an Arab majority rule.⁸¹

By openly sanctioning illegal immigration and accepting the possibility of a future revolt against Britain, the Zionist movement had come much closer to the Revisionist position than before 1939. Until 1938 only Revisionist dealt with illegal immigration, while the broad Zionist movement had always opposed it.⁸² This policy, adopted by the Zionist Congress, ended a phase of many years of lingering Anglo-Jewish cooperation in the peaceful establishment of the national home.⁸³ Historian Alan R. Taylor describes that phase as the 'gradual forwarding of Zionism's aims as a result of the continuing success of Zionist diplomacy with the British.'⁸⁴

After the White Paper, the Mandate no longer served to forward the aims of Zionism, but even threatened to thwart the fulfillment of one of Zionism's primary goals, that is the creation of a Jewish majority in Palestine through immigration.⁸⁵ The only possibility to continue the development of the National Home after 1939 was to shift Zionist policy from cooperation with to hostility against the British.⁸⁶

To change Britain's policy, another shift took place. Zionist leaders turned to the United States, seeking to bring American pressure to bear on British policy. Gradually, as the war seemed to spell out the end of the imperial power of Britain, Zionism saw its greater hope in the United States, not just to change British policy, but as a more important power in the world to help fulfill Zionism's goals.⁸⁷ America became the focal point of Zionist activity.⁸⁸

A third shift took place in the Zionist movement, effectuated by the looming war. When the Congress heard of the Russo-German

⁸¹ This was already stated at the London Conference, and on 10 March, Weizmann in his reaction during the London Conference, also showed that for the Zionists, parity was a tactical choice.

⁸² Haim, *Abandonment*, pp.145, 154 (note 158).

⁸³ Sykes, *Cross Roads*, p. 241; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 216-7.

⁸⁴ Alan R. Taylor, *Prelude to Israel: An Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897-1947* (London 1961), p. 53.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁸⁷ Kermit Roosevelt, 'The Partition of Palestine: A Lesson in Pressure Politics', in *The Middle East Journal Vol. 2 No. 1* (Washington DC 1948), pp. 3-4.

⁸⁸ Taylor, *Prelude*, p. 59.

non-aggression pact on 23 August, war seemed inevitable. In a hurry the Congress was finished and some emergency measures were taken. During the time of emergency an Inner General Council, consisting of members or deputy-members of the General Council residing in Palestine, would be in authority of the Zionist movement. The old Executive was re-elected. In the Jewish Agency something similar happened. The Agency Council that was originally scheduled to meet 30 August did not meet anymore. The Executive continued in office. The Agency passed into full control of the Zionists, as two of the four non-Zionist members withdrew in 1939 because of organizational differences. Added to these differences these two Americans resented the fact that their attitude toward the Mandatory and the Arabs was not sufficiently taken into account. Of the remaining two non-Zionists, Werner Senator,⁸⁹ a Bi-nationalist, had no portfolio.⁹⁰ This development served to add cohesion and integration to Zionism at a time that called for close organization and full freedom of action.⁹¹

⁸⁹ David Werner Senator (1896-1953) was administrator of Hebrew University and member of the Jewish Agency Executive.

⁹⁰ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 110-1.

⁹¹ Taylor, *Prelude*, p. 60.

4. THE REACTION OF BI-NATIONALISTS

Until 1939, Zionists had used Bi-nationalist ideas to convince the British that a minority position for the Arabs would not be ruinous for their position in Palestine. After 1939 the Zionists did not advocate Bi-nationalism or parity any longer, as it did not help in making a Jewish majority more acceptable.

Some Jews in Palestine, however, favored Bi-nationalism not so much for pragmatic reasons, but because of moral principles. For different reasons, they were convinced that parity and Bi-nationalism were the only right way to organize the future independent Palestinian state. Many of them were more positive about the possibilities at the London Conference than the Zionists were. They wanted the Jewish delegation to negotiate with a positive attitude, ready to make concessions for the sake of an agreement. Most of them called for an agreement on the rate and timing of immigration, and all wanted to give the Arabs in Palestine equal political rights. Eventually the future state would join an Arab federation. They differed among themselves however, on what the rate of immigration should be and on what would happen at the end of that immigration period.⁹² As these Bi-nationalists belonged to different parties, or to none at all, and as no Bi-nationalist society existed that might unite them, they were not able to present a common proposal to prepare the way for the Bi-national state they hoped for.

Senator, for example, a Bi-nationalist member of the Jewish Agency Executive, wanted to take away Arab fear of continued immigration by negotiating a fixed rate of immigration.⁹³ In a letter of 7 February 1939 to the Executive, he defended an immigration rate of 25,000 for each of the following ten or twelve years, political parity, an eventual Bi-national state and the participation of Palestine in a future Middle East Federation.⁹⁴

Chaim Margalit Kalvarisky, writing to the Executive on 5 March suggested an increase of the Jewish population to 50% within ten years, after which independence would be given to Palestine.⁹⁵ As

⁹² Haim, *Abandonment*, pp. 145-6.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-8.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 152 note 102.

⁹⁵ Kalvarisky (1868-1948) had come to Palestine in 1895, aiding the agricultural settlement of Lord Rothschild. He was one of the first Zionists to establish close links with Arabs. He founded *Brit Shalom* in 1925, and *Kedma Mizraha* in 1936, and he

soon as an Arab Federation would be formed, Palestine would join it as an autonomous part.⁹⁶

Judah Leib Magnes, the American-born president of Hebrew University and the foremost Bi-nationalist, wrote on 1 September 1938 that he thought in ten years time the Jews should make up 40% of the total population of Palestine.⁹⁷

I am convinced [...] that an agreement could be secured [...] with the Arab Palestine leadership, looking to a Jewish population in Palestine of 40 percent of the total population by the end of ten years. In round numbers this would mean about 800,000 Jews and 1,200,000 Arabs. It would not be easy to achieve this, but [...] it is possible. What would happen at the end of ten years is, of course, a very important matter. If the idea of an Arab Federation could be supported by the Jews, the question of what would happen at the end of ten years would be easier of solution.⁹⁸

Because these and other Bi-nationalists chose for Bi-nationalism principally, they did not change their opinion after the White Paper had seemed to make cooperation with the Arabs even harder. A Bi-national state with political parity remained the only solution they saw to the Palestine problem.

The danger of the war that was expected to overwhelm the world, made many Bi-nationalists optimistically believe that cooperation would be possible between Jews and Arabs against the common enemy of the Semitic race. Magnes hoped to be able to prove to the Arabs that

[...] the Nazi Nordic race theory is directed against the Arabs as well; and what is of much more importance, the Nazi religious paganism is directed against those religions and ethical ideas which Christianity and Islam have in common with Judaism. Therefore Jews and Arabs ought to have an equal interest in removing obstacles from the path of Great Britain at a time so critical for the world.⁹⁹

was President of the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation since 1939.

⁹⁶ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, pp. 1173-4; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 227.

⁹⁷ Magnes (1877-1948) was an ordained American reform rabbi. He had been of great importance in organizing the Jewish community in New York until he emigrated to Palestine in 1922. From 1925 he was President of Hebrew University.

⁹⁸ Letter of Magnes to Benjamin V. Cohen, written 1 September 1938 and published in Arthur A. Goren, *Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes* (Cambridge 1982), pp. 353-6.

⁹⁹ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 211.

The hope that the war would bring rapprochement and the general feeling that the Zionist leaders had completely failed in evolving an adequate policy towards the Arabs and had neglected to promote Arab-Jewish understanding, resulting in the Arab revolt and the anti-Zionist course of the Mandatory as expressed in the White Paper, were the immediate causes for the coming together, for the first time, of practically all the groups supporting Bi-nationalism.¹⁰⁰

A group of people got together for bringing out a collection of articles and essays on the Jewish-Arab problem to stimulate debate in the Jewish community on the urgency of Jewish-Arab understanding.¹⁰¹ This booklet was published in March 1939, in Hebrew, and was titled *Al Parashat Darkenu* (At the Parting of Our Ways).¹⁰² Having a look at the editorial board and the different contributors and their articles gives good insight in the Bi-nationalist movement.

Rabbi Binyamin based his Bi-nationalism on Pan-Semitic ideas, believing in the fundamental unity of Jews and Arabs as one race. He was a member of the editorial board and contributed an article.¹⁰³ Kalvarisky contributed an article on his many important negotiations with Arabs and his many speeches on the subject. He was also one of the editors.¹⁰⁴ Robert Weltsch, who until 1938 edited the German-Zionist magazine *Jüdische Rundschau* was in the editorial board too.¹⁰⁵ Martin Buber contributed an article.¹⁰⁶ He had written much on the Arab issue in the past, and urged immediate action against defeatism:

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 212; Hurewitz, *Struggle from Palestine*, p. 160.

¹⁰¹ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 212; Paul R. Mendes-Flohr (ed), *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs* (New York 1983), p.134.

¹⁰² *Al Parashat Darkenu, A Collection on the Problems of Zionist Policy and Jewish-Arab Cooperation* (Jerusalem 1939).

¹⁰³ Rabbi Binyamin (1880-1958) was the pen name of Yehoshua Redler-Feldman, who wrote a great deal on the subject of Jewish-Arab relations. He had been in Palestine since the first decade of the century.

¹⁰⁴ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 215; Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1160.

¹⁰⁵ Robert Weltsch (1891-1982) had been a long time advocate of Arab Jewish cooperation.

¹⁰⁶ Martin Buber (1879-1965), famous for his studies and publications in Hassidism, stressed the concept of the relationship between Israel and the gentiles as some of the Biblical prophets had done. The Jewish nation had a moral mission, and to fulfill this task, Judaism had to be transformed. A society of socialist communities would be the basis for this renewal. Since 1938 he was a teacher at Hebrew University.

To be sure, the situation has become much more difficult; conditions of activity have greatly worsened. We shall certainly have to choose a path along which there will be no shining successes. But it will be the right way.¹⁰⁷

Article upon article articulated that the Arab factor should not be neglected. Many articles contained strong criticism of the Zionist policy towards the Arabs and the attitude of the majority of the Jewish population.¹⁰⁸

Shlomo Kaplansky defended Bi-nationalism on pragmatic grounds.¹⁰⁹ 'Palestine cannot be exclusively Jewish. Agreement with Britain is not the only way. Even if we become a majority in Palestine, we shall always remain a drop in the Arab world.'¹¹⁰ Persitz, of General Zionists B, concluded that

Jewish return to Palestine can only be approached from one standpoint – to achieve this goal without harming the Arabs. The Arabs claim that] in exchange for the economic prosperity which the Zionists bring, [they] are liable to lose [their] country. [...] The first step is the creation of mutual trust. At first the Jews should agree to limit immigration to 45 percent of the population.¹¹¹

Senator stressed that negotiating means to give and take. He wanted the negotiations not only to include Palestinians but also Arab leaders of neighboring states, as the problem of Palestine had to be solved within the wider Middle East context.¹¹²

Ernst Simon, also one of the editors of the book, demanded a permanent Arab-Jewish Advisory Council to study the basis of government in Palestine, regulations concerning land purchases and a guarantee from Britain that any political strike or violence would be equal to breaking the agreement.¹¹³ He asked for defense of the Arab farmers and the organization of Arab labor, schools to spread knowl-

¹⁰⁷ Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, pp. 135-6.

¹⁰⁸ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, pp. 215-6.

¹⁰⁹ Kaplansky (1884-1950) was an engineer, and had been the Principal of the Technion in Haifa since 1932. In 1912 he had immigrated to Palestine. Though member of MAPAI, he held Bi-nationalist ideas.

¹¹⁰ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 216.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 216-7.

¹¹³ Ernst Simon (1899-1988) was a philosopher, educator and writer. He was deeply influenced by Buber's teaching. In 1935 he became professor of the philosophy of education.

edge and understanding, cooperation on a non-political plane, and the spread of these ideas by the press in Arabic. According to Simon

Zionism must work towards gaining Arab sympathy to the creation of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. Their agreement must be obtained for a Bi-national state to enter, under British protection, into a larger Arab confederation. The fear over the continued existence of the Jewish people must be overcome. Zionism must recognize the validity of Arab nationalism. [...] The Jewish-Arab conflict is basically national-political and only secondly economic. The problem should be tackled on the National plane and not the class plane.¹¹⁴

Simon ended his article with three basic principles. First, the Jewish side is with the democracies, while power politics is the motto of the enemies. Secondly, the Zionists themselves are partly responsible for the Arab leaders' movement. Thirdly, giving shelter to masses of Jewish refugees would only be possible with Jewish-Arab agreement.¹¹⁵

Yaakov Khazan, a leader of *Hashomer Hatzair* (The Young Guard), did not want a Jewish state, and wanted the Zionists to declare that their aim was a Bi-national state based on parity. He asked for political cooperation with the Arabs in the Middle East on the basis of economic activity, to develop the Arab states and to deepen cultural and social cooperation. He was convinced that the British were against a Jewish-Arab understanding, in order to be forced to stay in Palestine.¹¹⁶

Yaakov Peterzeil, leader of the *Poale Zion Smol* (Left Workers of Zion) party was an editor of the book, while his co-leader in the party, Moshe Erem, contributed an article¹¹⁷ Erem saw the problems in terms of the Arab worker. 'We have an historical alternative: either the Arab worker will be organized with us by us for us, or he will be organized against us by our enemies. There is no third possibility'.¹¹⁸

Of these writers of *The Parting of Our Ways*, Rabbi Binyamin, Kalvarisky, Weltsch, Buber, Senator and Simon had all been associ-

¹¹⁴ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 218.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 218-9.

¹¹⁷ Peterzeil (1889-1954) was the foremost leader of *Poale Zion Smol*, a Marxist labor party.

¹¹⁸ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 219.

ated with *Brit Shalom* (Covenant of Peace) since the 1920s.¹¹⁹ *Brit Shalom* was a Bi-nationalist association aiming to 'arrive at an understanding between Jews and Arabs as to the form of their mutual social relations in Palestine on the basis of absolute political equality of two culturally autonomous people.'¹²⁰

Brit Shalom was founded in 1925, by those responsible for Zionist colonization from the earliest days.¹²¹ At no time did their number of members pass 200.¹²² These were mainly intellectuals from Jerusalem, many with a German liberal background. The liberal, intellectual climate of *Brit Shalom* was probably an important reason for the organization never to reach a very wide public.¹²³ In 1933 it disappeared because of a lack of funds and the gradual desertion of many of its members. Probably the pre-occupation with the fate of the Jews in Europe made some members put more trust in the official Zionist policy than in the 'Zionist minimalism', as Simha Flapan calls the attitude of some members of *Brit Shalom* who were prepared to remain a minority in Palestine.¹²⁴ Another reason might be that gradually *Brit Shalom* became more involved in concrete politics. Some members resisted this involvement, as they wanted to remain a debating club. Others thought *Brit Shalom* was not enough involved in politics.¹²⁵ Those who agreed with the ideals of *Brit Shalom* in 1925 could easily disagree with the direction of the club in the early 1930s so many intellectuals left *Brit Shalom*.¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ Goren, *Dissenter*, pp. 533, 538-9; Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, pp. 73, 76; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 46.

¹²⁰ Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, p. 74.

¹²¹ Simha Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians* (London 1979), p. 163.

¹²² Hattis, *Bi-National Idea*, p. 38; Flapan, *Zionism*, p. 163 note 2.

¹²³ Esco, *Palestine Vol. I*, pp. 578-9; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 298.

¹²⁴ Flapan, *Zionism*, p. 183; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 57. Flapan was to become a well-known Israeli writer and peace activist. He was the National Secretary of Israel's MAPAM, and the director of its Arab Affairs department.

Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 298.

¹²⁵ 18 March 1936 Arthur Ruppin wrote to Robert Weltsch, saying he disagreed with the fact that Brit Shalom published suggestions for an understanding with the Arabs, as the Jews were in Ruppin's opinion not ready for it yet. This letter is published in Bein, Alex (ed), *Arthur Ruppin: Memoirs, Diaries, Letters* (London 1971), pp. 276-7. Magnes reacted to this letter, writing to Ruppin on 18 April 1936 that 'Brit Shalom remained a discussion circle and therefore was condemned to die.' This letter is published in Goren, *Dissenter*, pp. 312-4.

¹²⁶ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 57.

Kalvarisky as founder and Rabbi Benyamin as publicist were important in *Kedma Mizraha* (To the East), an association founded in 1936, shortly after the Arab revolt began. Many saw this group as a continuation of *Brit Shalom*. In their own words, it was 'a non-party association whose aims are knowledge of the East and the creation of cultural, social, and economic ties with Oriental peoples, and the proper presentation of the Jewish people's work in Palestine.'¹²⁷

In order to avoid the troubles into which *Brit Shalom* fell, *Kedma Mizraha* refrained from formulating a detailed policy about reaching peace with the Arabs. This extreme vagueness as to its goals made that beside most former members of *Brit Shalom*, people from almost all parties became member. The proposals of the British Peel-Commission for the partitioning of Palestine, published in 1937, caused many Jews to loose interest in striving for understanding between Arabs and Jews as political goal, as now a Jewish state seemed possible, even without having reached agreement with the Arabs.¹²⁸ The same vagueness as to its goals that in 1936 could lead to growth could in the totally changed circumstances of 1938 result in the dissolution of the organization. Lack of funds was another reason.¹²⁹ In the end, *Kedma Mizraha* was nothing but the activities of Kalvarisky. As he was a Bi-nationalist, his organization became Bi-nationalist too, but little was heard of it anymore.¹³⁰

Khazan was a member of *Hashomer Hatzair*, the only Bi-nationalist party at the end of the thirties. As a doctrinaire socialist party, *Hashomer Hatzair* esteemed the upbuilding of a socialist commonwealth in collaboration with the Arab workers as one of its primary aims. Therefore they rejected the ultimate aim of a Jewish state. Another aim was mass immigration of the Jews with the object of establishing a majority, but taking into consideration the fact that Palestine already had a large Arab population, the ultimate form of government was to be based on Bi-national structures with absolute parity as between Jews and Arabs.¹³¹ In 1930, Meir Yaari, leader of *Hashomer Hatzair* had said that

¹²⁷ Esco, *Palestine Vol. I*, p. 583.

¹²⁸ For the relevant parts of the findings of this Peel Commission, see 'From the Report of the Palestine Royal Commission (Peel Commission, 1937)' in Laqueur, *Reader*, pp. 62-63.

¹²⁹ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 298.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 298-300.

¹³¹ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, pp. 138-144.

[...] the final aim is the setting up of a Bi-national socialist society in Palestine and the neighbourhood. [...] Why does one not speak of a Jewish State? Because Marxism sees in the state only a transitory stage. [...] We want a national majority but we are in favour of complete equality between the two nations, which live in the country, in the future society.¹³²

Hashomer Hatzair thought the London Conference to be nothing but an imperialist British attempt to further its own ends. An agreement with the Palestine Arab leaders would be impossible, because they were under fascist influence and acted in their own class interests. This lack of agreement ascertained colonialist Britain a prolonged stay in Palestine. After the publication of the White Paper the party did not adjust its views. It still foresaw an Arab-Jewish socialist society in a Bi-national state, through the organization of the Arab-Jewish masses, in opposition against their rulers.¹³³

Hashomer Hatzair drew much of its support from the collective villages which were represented in *Hakibbutz Haartzi* (National Kibbutz), founded by *Hashomer Hatzair* in 1927, with a membership of about 4,500.¹³⁴ A smaller part of its support came from its urban branch, the *Socialist League*, which had about 1,000 members.¹³⁵

Peterzeil and Erem were both leaders of the *Poale Zion Smol* party. This party was only a little smaller but much less influential than *Hashomer Hatzair*, due to its extreme Marxist viewpoints. Their support came mainly from the urban proletariat.¹³⁶ In fact they were not Bi-nationalists, as for them nationality hardly meant anything. Their unmodified socialism did not allow for Zionism. They wanted narrow-minded nationalism to be replaced by a broad Internationalism, uniting all proletarians in Palestine for the final class struggle. Therefore they aimed at creating a single labor organization for both peoples without any national, or Bi-national, features.¹³⁷

Weltsch and Simon were both active in *Aliyah Hadasha* (New *Aliyah*, or New 'Immigration').¹³⁸ Although that party only came

¹³² Esco, *Palestine Vol. I*, pp. 575-6; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 45.

¹³³ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 72.

¹³⁴ Haim, *Abandonment*, pp. 137, 146.

¹³⁵ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 45.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*; Esco, *Palestine Vol. I*, p. 576 note 89.

¹³⁷ Esco, *Palestine Vol. I*, p. 577.

¹³⁸ Buber, M., J.L. Magnes, E. Simon (eds.), *Towards Union in Palestine. Essays on Zionism and Jewish-Arab Cooperation* (Jerusalem 1947). p. 123; Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1105 note 32.

into existence in 1942 under this name, it was preceded long before by a more or less similar group, the Association of German and Austrian Immigrants. Most members were recently immigrated Germans.¹³⁹ Most of the leaders had been active in *Brit Shalom* in the 1920s. This party called for complete dedication to the British war effort, although they rejected the White Paper. Unrestricted immigration and settlement were among their aims, while they ultimately wanted a Jewish state in Palestine.¹⁴⁰ This liberal, social-democratic party made a particular appeal to writers, scholars and teachers, and received a considerable vote, especially from the large German-Jewish population of Palestine.¹⁴¹

Kaplansky belonged to MAPAI (*Mifletet Poalei Eretz Israel*, or Land of Israel Worker's Party), the left-of-center labor party.¹⁴² In the early 1930s there was much talk in MAPAI about Bi-nationalism and parity, as a result of the disturbances of 1929 and the following Passfield White Paper that urged the restriction of immigration and of land sales to Jews.¹⁴³ According to Susan Lee Hattis, during the early 1930s MAPAI 'undoubtedly advocated a Bi-national state' in Palestine.¹⁴⁴ Aharon Cohen only speaks of a 'trend towards the idea' of Bi-national parity.¹⁴⁵ Although some addresses were indeed delivered in Bi-nationalist fashion, this was never fully worked out in a political program.¹⁴⁶ In 1939 MAPAI, the largest party in Palestine, had totally renounced any Bi-nationalist idea. According to Kaplansky, 'the Hitler catastrophe, the disturbances of 1936-1939, the Peel-commission and the partition plan, the growth of pro-Nazi ideas among the Arab leaders: All these put an end to the crystallization of positive and constructive Zionist thinking.'¹⁴⁷ Aharon Cohen, him-

¹³⁹ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1105; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 215; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 300 note; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 159.

¹⁴⁰ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 159.

¹⁴¹ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1105.

¹⁴² Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 75 note 94.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-5 Hattis writes that Ben Gurion, leader of MAPAI, was extremely disappointed with the way the British authorities handled the disturbances and feared that the British would desert the Jews and their National Home. He hoped to appease all communities with the idea of parity, as the Jews were not strong enough yet to withstand the Arabs. See also Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 259-60; Laqueur, *Reader*, p. 50.

¹⁴⁴ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 97.

¹⁴⁵ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 259-60.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

self at that time a member of *Hashomer Hatzair*, criticizes MAPAI for its subordination of foreign policy to internal party politics.¹⁴⁸

At that time, the influence of the Revisionists was increasing, their nationalistic propaganda was spreading in Palestine and the Diaspora, and the Zionist labor movement was not strong enough to swim against the stream in defense of the basic common values to all its components.¹⁴⁹

Finally, Persitz belonged to General Zionists B, a conservative union, championing private enterprise. Any Zionist not already owing allegiance to a particular party automatically became a General Zionist. In Palestine this group was divided in A's and B's, the latter being more conservative.¹⁵⁰

The publishing of *At the Parting of Our Ways* brought together leaders from *Hashomer Hatzair*, *Poale Zion Smol*, members from *Aliyah Hadasha* and *ex-Brit Shalom* and *Kedma Mizraha* members, besides individuals from MAPAI and General Zionists B. The only meeting point of many of these people was their common belief in the concept of Bi-nationalism. All Bi-nationalist societies and parties were represented.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ At the time Aharon Cohen was preparing his book *Israel and the Arab World* for publication in Hebrew, in 1958, he was arrested on a charge of giving information to a foreign agent. What actually happened was that he came in touch with the Russian Scientific Mission in Jerusalem, to obtain a copy of a Russian magazine that was not available in Israel. As he used to do in public to anyone who asked about it, he shared his private opinions about Israel's Middle East policy. Martin Buber spoke in Cohen's defense but could not withhold the judge from sending Cohen to jail. He served two years. Cohen himself believed he had been arrested in order to stop the publication of his book, as everyone knew it would be very critical of the official point of view, as personified by Prime Minister Ben Gurion. Ernst A. Simon, 'Buber or Ben-Gurion', in *New Outlook Vol. 9 No. 2* (Tel Aviv 1966), pp. 13-4; Aubrey Hodges, *Martin Buber: An Intimate Portrait* (New York 1971), pp. 62-6.

¹⁴⁹ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 261-2.

¹⁵⁰ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 46-7.

¹⁵¹ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 212.

5. LEAGUE FOR JEWISH-ARAB RAPPROCHEMENT AND COOPERATION

The contributors to *At the Parting of Our Ways* and sympathizers with it, met on 1 April 1939, for further discussion of the Arab problem, while a second meeting took place on 15 April.¹⁵² In May it was decided to found a League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation.¹⁵³ The organizing committee included Kalvarisky, Rabbi Binyamin, Simon and Peterzeil. Also on this committee was Jacob Thon, who had been one of the founders of *Brit Shalom* and who was a member of MAPAI.¹⁵⁴ Another member of the committee was Sali Hirsch, member of *Aliyah Hadasha*.¹⁵⁵ Kalvarisky became President of the League while Peterzeil was its Secretary until the spring of 1942.¹⁵⁶

This newly founded League sponsored the printing of a second booklet on Jewish-Arab relations, prompted by what its editors deemed to be the totally wrong response of the Zionist leadership to the White Paper of May 1939. In August 1939 *Darkenu*, *Our Ways* was published, just before the outbreak of the war.¹⁵⁷ The major thesis of this book is that the Jews should never have relied on the British power to attain their goals but should have sought above all to find understanding with the Arabs. According to Buber, 'our error lay in acting within the scheme of western colonial policies. [...] We received the stamp of the agent of imperialism.'¹⁵⁸ The events of 1939 had driven Buber and other Bi-nationalists to be more openly

¹⁵² Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 220.

¹⁵³ Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, p. 134 states that it was decided to found the League on 16 April while Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 300, speaks of May. Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1161 tells us it happened in August, while Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 160 has October as the starting time. As Aharon Cohen was the Secretary of the League and therefore had access to all papers, there is a fair chance that his date can be followed with confidence. The founding was before October anyhow, as the book they published in August was bearing the name of the League.

¹⁵⁴ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 297 note, 319.

¹⁵⁵ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1088.

¹⁵⁶ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 300 note; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 224

¹⁵⁷ *Darkenu* (*Our Ways*), *A Collection of Articles on the Problem of Zionist Policy and Jewish-Arab Cooperation* (Jerusalem, August 1939); Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, p. 137.

¹⁵⁸ Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, p. 139.

engaged in politics. Buber admitted his mistake in a lack of political involvement in the past.

Everything I say here has already been said by me twenty years ago, partly in public, but the greater part in the committees of the Zionist Congresses and in the councils of Zionist groups. Nothing has been done. Today I accuse myself for being deceived then by prejudice against publicity, a common prejudice among us. It is probable that if at that time we, my friend and I, have overcome that prejudice, we would have been more influential. We held the decree of Zionist discipline higher than that of our own political understanding. That has proven to be a grave error.¹⁵⁹

During the year 1939, those people and groups who held Bi-national ideas and who strove for mutual understanding between Jews and Arabs, united for the first time to influence public opinion. Some individuals set aside their intellectualist prejudice against partaking in the political game because of the problems of the day. Others, for the same reason, did not let their Marxist conviction separate them any longer from those 'bourgeois' individuals who also held Bi-nationalist ideas.

About sixty political leaders, scientists and writers who were known to believe in the possibility of Jewish-Arab understanding, were invited by the League for a conference at the beginning of October 1939. They passed a resolution stating the aim and desired activities of the League:¹⁶⁰

Aim:

The League Unites all those who recognize the need for Jewish-Arab rapprochement and strives for cooperation between the two nations – the Jewish and Arab – and also all of those who consider it necessary that the Palestine question be solved on the basis of economic and social development of both nations together.

Activities:

- 1) Carrying on investigations for concrete plans to materialize this aim.
- 2) Information and propaganda by organizing lectures, discussions, meetings and publication of suitable information material for rapprochement and cooperation between the two nations.
- 3) Explanation of the importance of studying Arabic in the Jewish schools and the Hebrew languages in the Arab schools.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 141.

¹⁶⁰ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 222.

- 4) Organizing lessons, seminars, lectures etc. in order to get to know about the life of one nation by the other, the study of its language, culture, tradition, economic and social life, its history, needs, ambitions etc.
- 5) Opening clubs of the League in various settlements in the country.
- 6) Negotiations and getting in touch with various institutions and groups of both nations in order to awaken them to act in the direction of the aims of the League, such as in the performing of joint activities in all the spheres which have been set as the aims of the League.
- 7) Encouragement and development of economic and cultural ties between Palestine and the neighbouring countries.

It was decided at this conference to invite the Jewish Agency for a talk with some representatives of the League, to demand the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry to study Jewish-Arab relations that had been promised less than two months before, at the Twenty-first Zionist Congress.¹⁶¹

On 25 October 1939, Rabbi Binyamin, Hirsch, Peterzeil, Kalvarisky and Mordechai Bentov, a member of *Hashomer Hatzair*, met with a delegation of the Jewish Agency.¹⁶² Among them was Ben Gurion, the Agency's Chairman. Besides asking for the setting up of the promised Commission, criticism was directed at the Agency for lacking initiatives to promote Jewish-Arab understanding.¹⁶³ Ben Gurion was not open to criticism regarding the Agency's policy towards the Arabs. He told the League that they had no more answers to the problem of relations with the Arabs than anyone else. He also opposed the goal of Bi-nationalism and parity of the League. That shows that, though the resolutions of the October meeting of the League never mention these political goals, it was clear to all that Bi-nationalism was the aim of the League. Ben Gurion said in 1930 that he believed in the possibility of a constitution based on parity, but

[the] Arabs did not want to hear about it. [...] There is no example in history, that a nation opens the gates of its country, not because of necessity [...] but because the nation which wants to come in has explained its desire to it. My prognosis is that agreement will be reached, because I

¹⁶¹ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 300.

¹⁶² Mordechai Bentov (1900-1985) was a member of the Histadrut Actions Committee and of the Zionist Actions Committee. He was the one who pressed the twenty-first Zionist Congress to install a Committee to study Jewish-Arab relations. For the Histadrut, see below.

¹⁶³ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 222-3.

believe in our power which will grow, and if it will grow the agreement will come.¹⁶⁴

A few weeks later the Commission that had been demanded, was created. Its first meeting took place on 16 January 1940. The League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation aspired to unite all Bi-nationalists behind a single program, and both individuals and parties could join. The League had a slow start. Only gradually a united front was forming. Hurewitz is mistaken in writing that *Poale Zion Smol* and *Hashomer Hatzair* had joined in 1939, probably because the leaders of those parties joined the League.¹⁶⁵ But for those Marxist parties it was too great a leap to join the League in 1939. Until 1942 they remained formally unaffiliated.¹⁶⁶

The year 1939 witnessed a parting of the ways within the Jewish community regarding the question of how the Jewish Homeland should relate to the Arab inhabitants of Palestine. The split would continue to widen until, in 1942, Bi-nationalist ideas would formally become *anathema* in the Zionist movement. How that split widened until 1942, is the topic of the next part of this thesis.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 223-4.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 214; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 160-1; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 301-2.

¹⁶⁶ Israel Kolatt, 'The Zionist Movement and the Arabs', in *Studies in Zionism No. 5* (Tel Aviv 1982), p. 150.

WIDENING OF THE SPLIT – 1940-1942

6. APPEASEMENT OF THE PALESTINIAN ARABS

The White Paper stated that only 75,000 Jews were to be allowed entrance in Palestine until April 1944. Both the Arab revolt and the danger of war in Europe had led to this decision. The British Government's motive was their fear of upsetting the Arabs.¹⁶⁷ In accordance with the White Paper the authorities were very strict in checking illegal immigration, as the White Paper threatened that

[...] the number of any Jewish illegal immigrants who, despite these measures, may succeed in coming into the country and cannot be deported will be deducted from the yearly quotas.¹⁶⁸

Also in accordance with the White Paper was the publication on 28 February 1940 of the Land Transfers Regulations.¹⁶⁹ In order to prevent the creation of a landless Arab population the land was divided into three zones. In Zone A, 63 percent of the total area of Palestine, Jews were not allowed to buy land anymore. In Zone C Jews could freely buy land. This zone comprised only 5 percent of Palestine, of which Jews already possessed 51 percent. In Zone B, 32 percent of the total area of Palestine, land could only be sold to Jews after written approval of the High Commissioner.¹⁷⁰ Britain did not implement the constitutional clauses of the White Paper, however, in order not to 'pour even more salt' in the Zionist wound.¹⁷¹

What role did the White Paper and its partial implementation play in bringing to an end the Arab Revolt? Although formally the leaders of the Revolt rejected the White Paper as insufficient, because they demanded immediate independence for an Arab Palestine, they did in fact accept it, as most of their demands were met.¹⁷² Most moderates were satisfied with the prospect of independence after ten years.¹⁷³ It would, however, be one-sided to ascribe the appeasement

¹⁶⁷ Arthur Koestler, *Promise and Fulfillment: Palestine 1917-1949* (London 1983), p. 57.

¹⁶⁸ See Laqueur, *Reader*, p. 74.

¹⁶⁹ Kirk, George, *Survey of International Affairs, 1939-1946, The Middle East in the War* (London 1952), p. 233.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 233-5.

¹⁷¹ Michael Cohen, *Palestine: Retreat*, p. 95. Cohen describes how the fate of SS Patria, being blown up in the harbor of Haifa, cause such a tide of emotions, that implementing the constitutional clauses was being delayed and postponed.

¹⁷² Nathaniel Katzburg, 'The British and Zionist Perspectives 1939-1945', in Shmuel, Almog (ed.), *Zionism and the Arabs* (Jerusalem 1983), p. 203.

¹⁷³ Kirk, *Survey*, p. 228.

of the Palestine Arabs to the White Paper only. The fact that after 1939 most Palestinian Arabs were pacified had other, more pressing reasons.

Not to be overlooked is the fact that in 1939 the Palestinian Arab leadership was hopelessly divided. Whereas the revolt began in 1936 as a struggle against the Jews, in 1937 it became also an internal Arab struggle. Political differences were completely interwoven with personal and family grudges. Because the Husayni-family under the guidance of Mufti al-Haj Amin al-Husayni, led the revolt and was anti-British, most members of the Nashashibi-clan were slightly pro-British and against continuing the revolt. They even organized so-called 'Peace Bands' to fight the revolting bands. These revolting bands had inflicted much suffering, especially on the small Arab farmers, of whom they demanded refuge and food.¹⁷⁴

Because Britain sent strong reinforcements to the army, the backbone of the guerrilla was already broken in 1939. Especially after the Anglo-French declaration of war to Germany on 3 September 1939, when wartime measures for public security were enforced and large military forces were concentrated in Palestine, terrorism subsided.¹⁷⁵

Although after the beginning of the war in 1939 the economy of Palestine was depressed, as exports from Palestine decreased, very quickly a war-boom made the country enjoy an unparalleled prosperity. The many small Arab farmers of Palestine, because of the high food prices, shared in this boom.¹⁷⁶ For reasons of defense, Britain had to extend its military garrisons and the infrastructure of Palestine, which created the need of a vast labor force. In 1942 the number of Arab workers for non-seasonal work in the British Army was about 28,000, while at certain moments not less than 80,000 Arabs were employed by the War Department for seasonal and non-seasonal work together. Between 1939 and 1942 the number of Arab industries more than quadrupled. An even better proof for the Arab prosperity was the rise of deposits in the two Arab banks: from

¹⁷⁴ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 107; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 280. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem was the highest religious judge in Palestine, having the rights to create laws concerning religious questions, the so-called fatwas.

¹⁷⁵ Kirk, *Survey*, p. 228; Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1009.

¹⁷⁶ Many of these small farmers were able now to pay their debts to large landholders, so they became less dependent on their former leaders. Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1057-8.

\$982,000 in 1940 to \$5,300,000 in 1942. The standard of living rose remarkably during those war years. The rise in wages far exceeded the rise in the cost of living.¹⁷⁷ According to Hurewitz,

[...] with money to burn for the first time in their lives, the Arab masses lost interest in politics. Even many of the pro-Mufti politicians temporarily became more absorbed in economic gain than in political intrigue.¹⁷⁸

The division of the Arab leaders and the fact that in the revolt Arab fought against Arab, the strength of the British Army and the economic boom were enough reason to be willing to stop the Revolt, while the White Paper provided the formal reason to do so. Would the Arabs not have been appeased without the White Paper? It seems not unreasonable to suppose that the Arabs would have been appeased anyway.

When Britain entered the war the leaders of the Palestine Arabs were nearly all abroad, so when Britain came into war with Germany and Italy, there was no official reaction of them. Some of the local Palestinian notables, however, did react: groups of them issued statements declaring their readiness to assist Britain. This is no wonder, as the disintegration of the Mufti's activities and the cessation of terrorism had brought great relief to the Arab rural districts.¹⁷⁹ Kirk writes that the Arab press spontaneously called on the community to support Britain, while all acts of terrorism were condemned.¹⁸⁰ Hurewitz is not very sure about the spontaneity of the reaction of the press because

[...] from September 4 on, the Palestine press was at the Government's mercy, with respect not only to content but, as the paper shortage became acute, to the allocation of newsprint...It was alleged that the editors of the Arab newspapers received regular monthly wages...from the Public Information Office.¹⁸¹

Still, those who advised to collaborate with the Germans and Italians had the upper hand during the first three years of the war, when the threat of Axis occupation hung over the Middle East. The Arab

¹⁷⁷ Joel S. Migdal, *Palestinian Society and Poletics* (Princeton, Guildford 1980), p. 27-9; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 120-1; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 281.

¹⁷⁸ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 121.

¹⁷⁹ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1009.

¹⁸⁰ Kirk, *Survey*, pp. 229-30.

¹⁸¹ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 118.

nationalists hope to get rid of France and Britain after and German-Italian victory. Especially the Mufti, residing in Baghdad, propagated choosing for the Axis. This advice was considerably influenced by the fact that Germany supplied him money for keeping intact a small force of three hundred supporters from Palestine.¹⁸²

Germany exploited this situation very well. In the Middle East a network of Axis agents was set up. Press and literature were subsidized, while many intellectuals were on Hitler's or Mussolini's payroll. Much money was spent on radio broadcasts in the native languages of each country. Hitler was being depicted as the protector of Islam, besides being the archenemy of Britain and the Jews. Many anti-Semitic stories were being transmitted. Every day radio promised the day of liberation to be at hand, so Muslims should rise and help the German liberators.¹⁸³

On 3 April 1941, a *coup d'état* brought an anti-British regime to power in Iraq. Germany came to help with a few airplanes, but not with as many as were needed, so after five or six weeks of fighting the British army gained control again. Those who had been instrumental in the coup had to flee the country. The Mufti of Jerusalem, who was one of them, escaped to Berlin via Iran.¹⁸⁴

As soon as those Palestine Arabs who supported the Mufti heard of the *putsch* and the German help that was given, they tried to create trouble in Palestine too. The German offensive in North Africa since March 1941 was a further reason for their willingness to revolt. The Mufti's radio broadcasts to take up arms in Palestine for jihad against Britain, however, were in vain.¹⁸⁵ The population as a whole did not want to begin a rebellion again. When the Mufti fled to Germany his prestige in Palestine was impaired. Of course this did not mean the Palestine Arabs became any more reconciled to the Jews, but they were wise enough to understand that with the strong British presence in Palestine there was not any chance of a successful revolt. They preferred the policy of 'wait and see.'¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 150; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 281.

¹⁸³ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 962.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 978-9.

¹⁸⁵ Kirk, *Survey*, p. 248; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 151-2.

¹⁸⁶ Maxime Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs* (New York 1982), p. 32; Kirk, *Survey*, pp. 248-9; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 281-2; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 114.

When Rommel's *Afrika Korps* drove the British back into Egypt and German troops at the same time approached the Caucasus on the Soviet front, in the summer of 1942, the victory of Germany in the Middle East seemed at hand.¹⁸⁷ The Mufti was assured, in a private talk with Hitler, that Germany only wanted to destroy the Jewish element residing in the Arab sphere under the protection of British power. In that hour of liberation the Mufti would be the most authoritative spokesman for the Arab world.¹⁸⁸ Particularly during this summer Axis propaganda was at its height. The radio broadcasts of the Axis were devotedly listened to. Speaking in the name of God and His Prophet, the Mufti urged Muslims everywhere to rise up against the Allies.¹⁸⁹ An expectant mood prevailed, the pro-Axis fever rose, but hardly anything was practically being done. The Arabs preferred to wait for the Axis to finish their victory. Despite the strength of propaganda in this period the Palestinian Arabs did not respond to the Mufti's incessant fomentation to resume the Revolt.¹⁹⁰

When the Germans were being driven back after their devastating losses at the battle of al-Alamein at the end of October 1942, and the possibility of invasion receded, the Mufti's power waned even more than after his fleeing to Berlin. It became clear the Germans had not won the war yet, and with the Americans and the Soviet Union fighting with the allied since 1941 the chances for a final Allied victory had considerably grown.¹⁹¹

As it was clear that those who had contributed most to the war effort would receive most at the final settlement, the Arabs gradually began to understand the advantage of shifting their allegiance from the Germans to the Allied. Although the Palestinian Arabs did not abandon their hostility towards Zionism and still demanded immediate independence and the implementation of all constitutional clauses in the White Paper, they understood much was to be gained by helping the probable winners of the war.¹⁹² The fact the Britain openly

¹⁸⁷ Joll, *Europe since 1870*, p. 404; Sachar, *History of Israel*, p. 229.

¹⁸⁸ Records of the Conversation between the Fuhrer and the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem on November 28, 1941, in the Presence of Reich Foreign Minister and Minister Grobba in Berlin', in Laqueur, *Reader*, pp. 80-4.

¹⁸⁹ Sachar, *History of Israel*, p. 229; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 120.

¹⁹⁰ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p.120.

¹⁹¹ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1008.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*; Kirk, *Survey*, p. 249.

avored Pan-Arabism will surely have helped the Arabs to justify this policy change.¹⁹³

¹⁹³ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 117-8.

7. FIGHTING THE WHITE PAPER AS IF THERE IS NO WAR

In 1939 Ben Gurion in a few words summarized the future policy of the Zionist movement: 'We shall fight with Great Britain in this war as if there were no White Paper. And we shall fight the White Paper as if there were no war.'¹⁹⁴ These words became an often-used slogan, but it was impossible to implement. Fighting the White Paper automatically meant fighting Britain, while helping Britain in its war effort meant stopping the fight against Britain on other fronts.

Although the Zionist leaders were very angry about the White Paper, they maintained a guarded optimism that it was only meant to pacify the Arabs and that Britain would postpone its implementation indefinitely. The rigid application of the immigration paragraphs and the Land Transfer Regulations of February 1940 dashed the optimism that still lived in the Jewish community.¹⁹⁵

The immigration provisions of the White Paper policy were put into immediate operation. From April to 30 September 1939, 10,350 Jews were allowed to enter Palestine. Because during the same period illegal immigration was very high, the Colonial Office announced its decision not to let any other Jew enter Palestine until 31 March 1940. After 1940 the number of legal and illegal immigrants drastically dwindled.¹⁹⁶

In order to combat illegal immigration, Britain went as far as to deport those who were caught. In November 1940 the Palestine Government announced that the 1,771 illegal immigrants who had tried to enter in two ships, would be deported in the S.S. *Patria* to a British colony. A few days later the ship was sunk in the harbor of Haifa with explosives smuggled on board. More than 250 died.

¹⁹⁴ Koestler, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 78.

¹⁹⁵ Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, p. 144.

¹⁹⁶ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 141, gives the numbers of legal and illegal Jewish immigration into Palestine:

YEAR	LEGAL	ILLEGAL	TOTAL
1939 (April-December)	8,617	12,296	20,913
1940	4,547	3,851	8,398
1941	3,647	2,239	5,886
1942	2,194	1,539	3,733
Totals:	19,005	19,925	38,930

Weizmann used all his abilities in political maneuvering, so finally Britain decided to let the survivors remain in Palestine.¹⁹⁷

1,584 Refugees were sent to Mauritius on 8 December 1940, but because of the storm of protest in Great Britain, no further deportations were carried out during the war.¹⁹⁸ Early in 1942, 769 refugees on the S.S. Struma, a very old, converted yacht that waited in Istanbul, were refused visas. Turkey therefore demanded the ship to leave its territorial waters. On 23 February the ship sank in the Black Sea, probably after striking a mine. The Palestinian Jews were horrified, while in Britain the tragedy was angrily debated in Parliament.¹⁹⁹

Many other small boats, the 'little death ships', as Koestler described them, packed with exhausted people who hoped to be safe in Palestine, were being turned back to the port of origin. The Palestine Coast Guards were authorized to shoot at or into any ship suspected of bringing illegal immigrants and refusing to turn back.²⁰⁰ In 1946 the Jewish Agency's Memorandum to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry summed up what the Jews felt effect of the strict application of the White Paper was: 'There can be little doubt that substantial numbers who are dead today, certainly tens of thousands, might have been alive if the gates of Palestine had been kept open.'²⁰¹

The Land Transfer Regulations of 26 February 1940 also came as a shock to the Jews. A general strike was proclaimed on 29 February and during the next week large demonstrations were held. On 6 March these demonstrations stopped, as on that day the House of Commons in London debated a motion against these Regulations.²⁰² Noel Baker, on behalf of the Labor Party, strongly criticized the Regulations, stressing that in the future the Colonial Secretary would allow the Jews the right to free purchase in only 2.6 percent of the total area of Palestine. According to him the Land Regulations '...brought to the Jews of Palestine the three evils of the dispersion-barred doors, legal discrimination on racial and religious backgrounds, and permanent minority status.'²⁰³

¹⁹⁷ Koestler, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 61; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 140; Chaim Weizmann, *The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (New York 1949), p. 403.

¹⁹⁸ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 140.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.; Sachar, *History of Israel*, pp. 237-8.

²⁰⁰ Koestler, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 59.

²⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 64-5.

²⁰² Kirk, *Survey*, pp. 233-4.

²⁰³ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 939.

The motion was rejected, so the Regulations were enacted. They were effective in greatly reducing the possibility of Jews' acquiring land, but still the organization for Jewish settlement, the Jewish National Fund, found ways of circumventing the rules. They were able to buy large tracts of land in the restricted and prohibited areas, as many Arabs were willing to arrange legal fictions in order to sell land at high prices. Although the Government spoke of 9,387 acres that were being sold in the first three years of the war, the Jewish National Fund said it acquired about 27,000 acres from the Arabs during that time.²⁰⁴ According to Kenneth W. Stein,

[...] the British did not comprehend the depth of Zionist commitment to own land nor did they understand why Palestinian Arabs were positively eager to sell portions of the patrimony. As a result they did not conceive of the artful deceptions conjured up by purchasers and sellers to satisfy their respective needs.²⁰⁵

No wonder in Zionist literature one does read much less criticism on those Land Transfer Regulations than on the immigration quota, as the former were easily circumvented, while the latter were not. As soon as the White Paper was being published the *Irgun* started a terrorist campaign. The only way to make the British change their evil policy, so they thought, would be by means of violence, as the White Paper itself was a result of Arab violence. Very soon most leaders of *Irgun* including their commander-in-chief David Raziel, were imprisoned.²⁰⁶

When the war started, the *Irgun* offered a truce to the Palestine Government, which was accepted. The Revisionists did not even demonstrate after the publication of the Land Transfer Regulations, while all other parties did so. Probably an agreement with the Government assured good treatment if *Irgun's* leaders in jail, provided *Irgun* would co-operate with the British during the war. Even Sami Hadawi, who wrote about Zionist terrorism, is not able to mention

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 941; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 138-9; Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel*, p. 259 footnote.

²⁰⁵ Stein, Kenneth W., 'Legal Protection and Circumvention of Rights for Cultivators in Mandatory Palestine', in Migdal, Joel S. (ed.), *Palestinian Society and Politics* (Princeton, Guildford 1980), p. 256.

²⁰⁶ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 188; Koestler, *Promise and Fulfillment*, pp. 77, 91.

any act of Jewish terrorism in 1941.²⁰⁷ In May 1941 David Raziel was even prepared to be involved in a British action against Iraq.²⁰⁸

Although during the Arab revolt the British Forces had unofficially co-operated very much with *Haganah* (Defense), the illegal Jewish Defense Forces, obeying the orders of the Jewish Agency, and in January 1939 a start was made with giving the *Haganah* better weapons, after May 1939 this policy was totally reversed.²⁰⁹ During the autumn of 1939 and the spring of 1940 British Police and Army searched many Jewish settlements to confiscate their weapons and to arrest the *Haganah* leaders. The military tribunal pronounced heavy sentences.

Most of these sentences, however, were never being enacted, as after the German assault on West Europe in May 1940, unofficially the Palestine Government again began to make use of the military capabilities of the *Haganah*. Very often units of *Haganah* were used as shock troops, sometimes in British uniforms.²¹⁰ In 1942 the threat of Rommel's *Afrika Korps* united the British Military and the *Haganah* even more. *Haganah* received training from the British to perform guerrilla activities in case Rommel would be able to enter Palestine and drive the British out. The cooperation between *Haganah* and the Palestine Military Command did not mean *Haganah* did not continue its smuggling of weapons and clandestine training.²¹¹ Zionist historian Yehoshua Porath supposes that if the war had not been interfered, the revolt would probably have continued, but now not by the Arabs, but by the Jews.²¹²

In 1942 another reversal in relations between the Palestine Government and the Zionists took place. After the affair with the S.S. Struma in February, *Irgun* started with terrorist deeds again. They were no longer willing to bury their resistance against the implementation of the White Paper in order to help the British with their war effort. After Rommel was defeated at al-Alamein the British did not need the help of *Haganah* anymore, and began once more to perse-

²⁰⁷ Sami Hadawi, *Crime and No Punishment: Zionist Israeli Terrorism 1939-1972* (Beirut 1972), pp. 33-4.

²⁰⁸ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 126-7; Koestler, *Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 77.

²⁰⁹ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 109-10.

²¹⁰ Koestler, *Promise and Fulfillment*, pp. 75-6; Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel*, p. 262

²¹¹ Koestler, *Promise and Fulfillment*, pp. 85-6; Sachar, *History of Israel*, p. 233

²¹² Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion, Volume Two 1929-1939* (London 1977), p. 290.

cute members and searching settlements for the many weapons that *Haganah* had been able to smuggle into the country.²¹³

Until 1942 the imminent danger for Palestine kept the level of Jewish violence against the British down. While illegal immigration, the circumvention of the Land Transfer Regulations, the smuggling of weapons and clandestine military training were clearly anti-British acts, as long as the British were confronted by the military danger, self-restraint was exercised by most of the Jewish community. Even the *Irgun* was prepared to stop with terrorism in order to help Britain against the Axis. Many Jews were prepared to enlist in the army in order to fight with Britain against the Axis.

²¹³ Koestler, *Promise and Fulfillment*, pp. 86-7; Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel*, p. 274.

8. FIGHTING WITH BRITAIN AS IF THERE WAS NO WHITE PAPER

Immediately after the war in Europe started, the Jewish Agency drew up blueprints for helping Britain by a total mobilization of the economy and manpower of the Jewish community in Palestine. All men and women between the ages of 18 and 50 were called upon to register. Between 10 and 21 September 1939, a total of 119,293 Palestine Jews did so, expecting to be of use in serving the needs of the Jewish community as regards security, economic life and other public requirements and to be at the disposal of the British military authorities in Palestine for such services as would be required.²¹⁴

Now that war was declared on Hitler, the Jews in Palestine were impatiently demanding to be of military use, in the first place because they wanted to take part in the fight for saving the Jews in Nazi-Europe. The Zionists had other reasons too. They hoped for the indefinite shelving and abrogation of the White Paper, as a reward for helping Britain.²¹⁵

The Jews did not want to just fight in the British Army, they wanted to form separate military units and battalions, fighting under the Jewish flag. If their national status would be recognized in the war, their cause would be strengthened in the peace settlement after the war. But probably of more importance, the recruitment of Palestinian Jews into military units would form the nucleus of a future Jewish Army. Because the Jewish Defense Forces, *Haganah*, were illegal and its leaders were being persecuted since the publication of the White Paper, the Zionist leaders wanted to legalize *Haganah* as a Jewish Army, enlarged and trained in modern warfare.²¹⁶

This future Jewish Army would be the means to compel a Zionist solution of the Palestine problem by forces of arms, by threatening but if necessary even at cost of civil war by the conquest of the country. Sykes speaks of a 'Jabotinskian' policy by the Jewish Agency.²¹⁷ Sixty percent of the Jews who became members of the British services had formerly been members of *Haganah* and remained under *Haganah* directions. Those who were able to do so secured weapons for *Haganah*. Within the *Haganah* committees the

²¹⁴ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1021; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 125.

²¹⁵ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 125.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*; Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, p. 67.

²¹⁷ Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel*, p. 258.

possibility of using the force against the authors of the White Paper was freely discussed.²¹⁸

In order not to strengthen the Jewish position in Palestine and to antagonize the Arabs the British Cabinet viewed the suggestion to organize a special Jewish military force for the defense of Palestine with disfavor. All Palestinian units should be made up of Arabs as well as Jews.²¹⁹ Beside that, during the early months of the war there was no need for a large army in Palestine.²²⁰

After May 1940, when West Europe fully entered the war, and when Churchill became Prime-Minister in London, the Cabinet wanted to take the suggestion of Jewish military units more seriously.²²¹ The conversations between the Jewish Agency representatives and the new Colonial Secretary, Lord Lloyd, did not lead to definite conclusions. The Colonial Office insisted on an approximate parity in the numbers of Jews and Arabs recruited for specific mixed, Jewish and Arab noncombatant units in Palestine. From July 1940 on, however, small fully Jewish infantry units were being formed. Zionist persistence and the threat of losing war led the Britain in July to abandon the rule of numerical equality in noncombatant enlistments and to form a Palestine infantry regiment for defense duties, consisting of two Jewish and two Arab companies of 200 men each, the so-called 'Palestine Buffs'. As Arabs were very slow in enlisting, the number of Jewish units in this regiment could not grow very much.²²²

The parity rule soon had to be dropped with respect to the infantry companies because the number of Jewish volunteers was very high and in the spring of 1941 the military situation in the Middle East became very critical. In August 1942, when the threat from the Western Desert by Rommel was immediate, the Jewish companies were permitted to form separate Palestinian infantry battalions for general service in the Middle East, beside Arab infantry battalions.²²³ Because of the German threat, there was a considerable growth in Jewish recruiting for the British Army. By August 1942, 18,000

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 277.

²¹⁹ Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, p. 67.

²²⁰ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1022.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 1022-3; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 126.

²²² Kirk, *Survey*, pp. 238-9; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 128.

²²³ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 128.

Palestine Jews were incorporated into purely Jewish battalions.²²⁴ Also, the number of Jewish Palestine police was increased to 24,000. Since May 1942 they resorted under Military Command and were employed for military duties in the defense of Palestine.

In order to create a real Jewish Army under a Jewish flag, Weizmann addressed a letter to Churchill in August 1940, wherein he pleaded for a Jewish army:

Should it come to a temporary withdrawal from Palestine... the Jews of Palestine would be exposed to wholesale massacre at the hands of Arabs encouraged and directed by the Nazis and Fascists. This possibility reinforces the demand for our elementary human right to bear arms, which should not morally be denied to the loyal citizens of a country at war.²²⁵

On 6 September 1940, during the Battle of Britain, Churchill assured Weizmann of his full and official support for the Zionist project of raising a Jewish Army. He hoped to be able to recall to Western Europe the eleven British regular battalions, which had been sent to Palestine to suppress the Arab Revolt.²²⁶ After a meeting on 13 September a decision was taken. Weizmann and a small Zionist delegation met with Secretary of State, Anthony Eden, Lord Lloyd of the Colonial Office, and a representative of the Foreign Office. After discussion Eden told Weizmann that

[...] the Government have decided to proceed with the organization of a Jewish army, on the same basis as the Czech and Polish armies. Its size, to begin with, would be 10,000 including 4,000 from Palestine. They would be trained and organized in England and then dispatched to the Middle East.²²⁷

It is recorded that Weizmann afterwards said that, 'it is almost as great a day as the Balfour Declaration.'²²⁸ The Zionists, however, were soon gravely disappointed. As no decision as to a Jewish Army could be taken without reference to the authorities in Palestine and the Middle East Head Quarters, their dislike of the idea led to the postponement of the implementation again and again. Churchill could not override the Middle East opposition.²²⁹ Finally, on 15 Oc-

²²⁴ Sachar, *History of Israel*, pp. 232-3; Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, pp. 1025-8.

²²⁵ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1024.

²²⁶ Kirk, *Survey*, p. 237.

²²⁷ Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel*, p. 249.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

tober 1941, the new Colonial Secretary, Lord Moyne, notified Weizmann that the proposal of the Jewish Agency had been rejected.²³⁰ Not before 1944, a genuine Jewish Brigade – not an Army – with its own flag would be formed with British consent. This flag is the flag of Israel today.²³¹

This rejection made the Jewish Agency redirect its pressures from the British Government departments to the public opinion in Britain and America. Though Britain continued to be of great importance, as the mandate for Palestine was still hers, the United States had become the focal point of Zionist political activity.²³²

²³⁰ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, pp. 1024-5; Kirk, *Survey*, p. 245.

²³¹ Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, p. 69.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

9. AWAKENING AMERICA TO THE ZIONIST CAUSE

At the Zionist Congress in Geneva, in August 1939, the American delegation set up an Emergency Committee, the purpose of which was to maintain contact with the various branches of the Zionist movement, in case the war would cut off those branches from the offices of the Zionist Executive in London or Jerusalem.²³³ Besides representatives from all major Zionist parties in the country, Weizmann added a number of Zionist leaders on behalf of the Jewish Agency Executive, with the World Zionist leaders keeping control, emphasizing the transfer of Zionism's center from Britain to America.²³⁴

As the power of Britain seemed at the point of decline, the Zionists' attention to the United States was not just in the hope that the White House might influence Whitehall to change its policy, but also to replace Great Britain with the emerging superpower as the main-spring of gentile support. If the United States would be the strongest country after the war, the Zionist movement needed its support.²³⁵

The Emergency Committee organized a national network of 380 local committees, while in April 1941 it assisted in forming the American Palestine Committee, an organization intended to enlist the support of American Christianity. At the time of its creation in 1941 this Palestine committee had more than 700 members, including 67 Senators, 143 Representatives and 22 Governors, while at the end of the war the total number of members had risen up to 6,500 public figures.²³⁶

When on 15 October 1941 Lord Moyne informed Weizmann that no Jewish fighting force, bearing a Jewish flag, would be allowed to partake in the war, the Jewish Agency organized a campaign in the United States for a special Jewish Brigade.²³⁷ Also a Revisionist campaign, organized by the American friends of the *Irgun*, demanded since December 1941 in full-page advertisements the immediate formation of a Jewish Army, consisting of 200,000 combatants from Palestine and Europe. They also, in accordance with their Re-

²³³ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1078.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1079; Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, p. 74.

²³⁵ Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, p. 74.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 78; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 144, 210.

²³⁷ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 129; Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, pp. 1032-3.

visionist ideas, demanded the establishment of a Jewish state, which should be recognized as an ally of the United Nations.²³⁸

Opinion polls in 1935-1936 had shown that 76 percent of the Americans were in favor of unlimited immigration and unrestricted settlement of Jews in Palestine. Only 7 percent were against, 8 percent were undecided and 5 percent had no opinion at all.²³⁹ This positive attitude as to maximalist Zionism was probably a result of the strong Evangelical Protestant tradition, believing Palestine to be divinely selected as the site of the Jewish Nation.²⁴⁰ It was much more difficult to convince the American Administration that the goals of Zionism were divinely justified.

Weizmann himself went three times to the United States during the war, each time trying to win the American Administration for Zionism. In February 1940 Weizmann had an interview with Roosevelt, trying to get his cooperation in making a new start with Palestine after the war and in rejecting the White Paper. Although friendly, Roosevelt responded without committing himself.²⁴¹

During the summer of 1943 Weizmann had another talk with Roosevelt, who again refused to commit himself. Weizmann defended his opinion that if both Churchill and Roosevelt would back the establishment of the Jewish national home, the Arabs would finally be forced to acquiesce because of overwhelming power. Summer Welles, the Foreign Secretary, who was present at this talk, tried in vain to evoke a more positive response of Roosevelt, by underwriting the idea of Jewish statehood as Weizmann proposed.²⁴²

With respect to statehood the Zionists had come much closer to the Revisionist position since the publication of the White Paper. They thought that the publication of this Paper destroyed any chance to reach agreement with the Arabs on the Jewish National Home as the Arabs would now refuse to accept anything less than what had

²³⁸ Yakir Eventov and Cvi Rotem, 'Zionism in the United States', in *Zionism* (Jerusalem 1973), p. 215; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 130; Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, pp. 1033-4.

²³⁹ Regina Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism: Its Roots in Western History* (London 1983), p. 111.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 114. Long before the Zionist movement came into existence, many Christians in Europe and the USA believed that the Jews would return to Palestine and prayed for this event, as they considered that related to the end of times and the return of Christ.

²⁴¹ Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 420.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 435.

been promised to them in the White Paper. Gradualism and careful negotiations with Britain had proved to be in vain, so only one alternative was left. Only the way of forcefully erecting a Jewish state remained.²⁴³

²⁴³ Haim, *Abandonment of Illusions*, p. 159.

10. TOWARDS A JEWISH STATE

While until 1939 the immediate goal of the Zionists was population growth, Jewish economic independence and Jewish self-defense, after 1939 the immediate goal became a sovereign Jewish state.²⁴⁴ Of course this Jewish state had been the ultimate aim from the beginning of the Zionist movement, but only during the Second World War did the Zionists abandon any vagueness as to their goals.²⁴⁵

Berl Katznelson of *MAPAI*, and editor of the largest Palestinian Hebrew newspaper, who in the thirties was one of the strongest defenders of Bi-nationalism in his party, wrote in September 1941 that

[...] if we discouraged the demands for immediate Jewish statehood in the past, it was only because we felt that our achievements to date did not yet justify it. We feared that a premature demand for statehood might cause great harm.²⁴⁶

Why did the Zionists not consider the demand for statehood premature and unjustified anymore during the Second World War? The White Paper and its implementation were a very important factor in this formulation of a new political program. The British resistance against immigration and land transfers caused the Jews to realize that they now had extracted maximum from the existing mandate. In order to enlarge the population and land possessions a larger degree of sovereignty was needed.²⁴⁷

This larger degree of sovereignty was very important in order that Palestine could be a 'home for the homeless'. Many non-Zionist Jews began to appreciate the need for a refuge for the millions of Jews living in Europe, and adopted the new Zionist policy of demanding the maximum, a Jewish state.²⁴⁸ Although since 1933 the bad situation for the Jews under the Nazis was evident to everyone, before 1942 the real extent of their plight was not generally known.²⁴⁹

The peace conference after the first Great War had meant a landmark for the Zionist movement. It was then that the Balfour Decla-

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 50.

²⁴⁵ Arthur Herzberg, 'Ideological Evolution', in *Zionism* (Jerusalem 1973), p. 50.

²⁴⁶ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 157.

²⁴⁷ Kirk, *Survey*, p. 13; Katzburg, 'The British and Zionist Perspectives 1939-1945', in Almog (ed.), *Zionism and the Arabs*, p. 197.

²⁴⁸ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1079.

²⁴⁹ Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret* (London 1980), p. 159.

ration was being incorporated into the future policy of the Mandatory of Palestine. The Zionists also hoped the peace conference after the Second World War would be a landmark to Zionism. They thought the best preparation for such a conference would be to redefine their goals unequivocally and to bring these claims to the attention of the Allies.²⁵⁰

This new policy, then, was the result of the transfer of the decisive area of concern from Palestine and Jewish-Arab relations to the problems of European Jewry and the international situation.²⁵¹ The fact that the Jewish community in Palestine had by then more than 500,000 members was of great psychological importance in propagating the idea that they in fact formed the nucleus of a Jewish state.²⁵²

Already on 17 December 1939, in a talk with Churchill, Weizmann, always the champion of gradualism and cooperation with the Mandatory, said they wanted to build up a state of three or four million Jews in Palestine after the war.²⁵³ Churchill's full agreement with that goal must have given the Zionist leaders encouragement to continue with this policy.²⁵⁴ Weizmann declared on 29 March 1941, in Chicago, that after the war a Jewish Commonwealth should be set up beside an Arab Federation, while in January 1942 he published an article in *Foreign Affairs*, stating the goal of the Jews to be establishing a state of their own with a Jewish majority.²⁵⁵ In that state, Arabs would have full autonomy in their own internal affairs.²⁵⁶ Weizmann was obviously still more eager to accommodate the Arabs than most other Zionist leaders cared to do.

The policy of the Jewish National Fund was centered on the aim of creating a Jewish state. In February 1941 the legal adviser of the Jewish Agency could tell a group of Canadian Zionists that during the first year of the war eight new settlements were set up in places on outskirts of the country, 'in order to secure, when the day comes,

²⁵⁰ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1021; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 156.

²⁵¹ Israel Kolatt, 'The Zionist Movement and the Arabs', in *Studies in Zionism No. 5* (Tel Aviv 1982), p. 151.

²⁵² Kirk, *Survey*, p. 250.

²⁵³ Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, pp. 418-9; Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, p. 54.

²⁵⁴ Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, p. 54.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 56; Kirk, *Survey*, p. 242.

²⁵⁶ Kirk, *Survey*, p. 244; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 157.

that the whole of Palestine will be Jewish, and not only a part of it.²⁵⁷

In the weekly *Zionist Review*, articles appeared calling for a Jewish state. The leading article in the issue of 11 October 1940, was titled *A State in the Making*, while in the same issue, Selig Brodetsky, member of the Jewish Agency Executive, expressed the need to prepare a policy that would lead to a Jewish state.²⁵⁸ In December in the same weekly it could be read that

[...] a Palestine must be restored to us which can accommodate all the millions of Jews who are fired with an unquenchable thirst for a free life in a free land. What of the few hundred thousand Arabs how live in Palestine outside the vast under-populated spaces of free Arab States? We cannot say, nor can we be expected to give the answer, for the problem concerns not us alone. [...] In the context of a great world problem, the artificially magnified Arab problem would be seen to be trivial.²⁵⁹

Katznelson wrote in September 1941 that though a Jewish state was not of primary importance, it was the only way of being ascertained of free immigration and land purchase, which were of primary importance.²⁶⁰ Therefore statehood was absolutely necessary.²⁶¹ Concerning the Arabs, he wrote:

We should say to the Arab peoples: We are ready to aid your efforts towards unity and independence if you will cease troubling us and if you recognize Palestine as a Jewish state. On such basis it is possible to achieve mutual understanding and cooperation. I do not wish to imply that such a stand would meet with immediate sympathy among the Arabs. They might reject such a proposal many times, but in the end they might accept it.²⁶²

Of great importance was the decision of the Zionist Organization of America, which had unanimously resolved on 7 September 1941, to demand ‘the reconstruction of Palestine within its historic boundaries as a Jewish commonwealth.’²⁶³

²⁵⁷ Kirk, *Survey*, p. 233.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 243 note 1. Kirk wrongly writes that Katznelson wrote this on 14 November 1941. This mistake is easily explained as the second footnote also mentions the date of 14 November 1941.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 243 note 2.

Because circumstances had dramatically changed after the issue of the White Paper and the beginning of the war, the Inner General Council and the Jewish Agency had since the end of 1939 discussed the future policy that had to be followed. A committee was appointed at the end of 1941, shortly after Lord Moyne had told Weizmann that the proposal for a Jewish Fighting Force under a Jewish Flag had been rejected. This Committee had to draw up a new statement of aims for adoption by the Inner General Council, the quasi Government of Jewish Palestine.²⁶⁴ Although the Inner General Council was composed of representatives of the several parties who were present at the 1939 Zionist Congress, and therefore kept alive the democratic process, the newly established committee submitting their proposals to the Inner General Council in Jerusalem.²⁶⁵

According to Hurewitz this happened because the future of the Jewish community and the national home had, because of the war, become more dependent of the Jews in America than ever before, the largest and wealthiest Jewish community in the world.²⁶⁶ It should, however, be kept in mind that a few months earlier the American Zionist Organization had made clear they supported the striving for a Jewish state. The members of the committee who had to submit their proposals to the Inner General Council knew whom they were asking to endorse their proposals. By asking the support of American Zionism for a Jewish state they hoped to take away as much as possible the resistance that existed in the Inner General Council against the new policy that was to be proposed. Resistance could surely be expected, especially from those who after 1939 had stuck to the aim of a Bi-national Palestine, with a constitution based on parity.

At Ben Gurion's initiative, the American Emergency Committee called together an Extraordinary Zionist Conference in May 1942, in Hotel Biltmore in New York. The six hundred delegates represented all shades of Zionist opinion. Both Weizmann and Ben Gurion were present. Weizmann, always the proponent of gradualism and patient negotiating with Britain, was not able to withhold the conference from voting unanimously for the drastic reversal of Palestine policy that Ben Gurion had proposed.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 158.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 157-8.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

²⁶⁷ Sykes, *Cross Roads to Israel*, p. 258. Whereas Weizmann had always been the typical elitary gradualist, Ben Gurion was the labor populist. The differences between

In one of the speeches Ben Gurion emphasized two points on Arab-Jewish relations. First, he strongly denied the rumor that Zionist policy contemplated a forcible transfer of Palestine Arabs to other lands. Such a transfer would be unjust and not necessary, because in his opinion mass immigration and colonization on the largest possible scale could be effected without displacing the Arab population of Palestine. Secondly, Ben Gurion emphasized the fact that a mass immigration program could not be achieved with Arab consent, as the Arab nationalists would never agree to Jewish immigrations as a priority, but only acquiesce in it when it becomes an established fact. He spoke of an unbridgeable gulf between those who believed that Jewish immigration into Palestine was an inalienable right that did not need Arab consent, and those who thought that Arab opposition and prejudices should be taken into account. With this last group Ben Gurion clearly had the Bi-nationalism in mind, for he attacked the ideas of parity and Bi-nationalism. Without a Mandatory, a state with a government based on parity would be in a permanent deadlock. Beside that, there were no Arabs willing to agree with the principle of parity.²⁶⁸ This attack on Bi-nationalists ideas was the result of a report Ben Gurion had received from Palestine, which had been sent to some two hundred Jewish personalities in the United States, proposing to set up a federal, Bi-national Palestinian state.²⁶⁹

Although of course differences of opinion existed, there was consensus on fundamental objectives. All compromise plans such as partition, Bi-nationalism, or the keeping of the Mandatory status quo, were abandoned. This resolve was certainly strengthened by the fate of the S.S. Struma, that sunk three months before, and the refusal of Britain to allow the Jews to form a Jewish Fighting Force, bearing its own flag. Not to be underestimated is the impact of the news that gradually came in about the mortal plight of the Jews in Europe, although the real extent of the Holocaust was still a 'terrible secret' to them. They still had the illusion Palestine should be a home for millions of refugees after the war.²⁷⁰ On 11 May 1942 the so-called Biltmore Program was adopted by the Extraordinary Zionist Confer-

these two are further described in Michael Cohen, *Palestine: Retreat*, pp. 130-5, and Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, pp. 281-6.

²⁶⁸ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, pp. 1081-3.

²⁶⁹ The so-called Bentov Report which will be discussed below.

²⁷⁰ Laqueur, *Terrible Secret*, pp. 157-8.

ence. After starting with expressing readiness for full cooperation with the Arab neighbors, the Program called for

[...] the fulfillment of the original purpose of [...] the Mandate to afford [the Jews] the opportunity to found [in Palestine] a Jewish Commonwealth. The Conference affirms its unalterable rejection of the White Paper of May 1939 and denies its moral or legal validity. [...]

The policy of the White Paper is cruel and indefensible in its denial of sanctuary to the Jews fleeing from Nazi persecution; and at a time when Palestine has become a focal point in the war front of the United Nations, and Palestine Jewry must provide all available manpower for farm and factory and camp, it is in direct conflict with the interests of the allied war effort. [...]

Recognition must be given to the right of the Jews of Palestine to play their full part in the war effort and in the defense of their own country, through a Jewish military force fighting under its own flag and under the command of the United Nations. [...]

The Conference urges that the gates of Palestine be opened; that the Jewish Agency be vested with control of immigration into Palestine and with the necessary authority for up-building the country, including the development of its unoccupied and uncultivated lands; and that Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world.²⁷¹

²⁷¹ This Biltmore Program is published in Laqueur, *Reader*, pp. 77-9; Sophie A. Udin (ed.), *The Palestine Year Book: Review of Events July 1945 to September 25, 1946 Vol. II* (New York 1946), pp. 424-5.

11. WORKING FOR RAPPROCHEMENT

After the Arabs were appeased and the Second World War broke out, the mood in Palestine was one of an unfinished battle. As soon as political circumstances permitted, the battle might be resumed. For the time being, some cooperation between Arabs and Jews could be witnessed. Most important was the cooperation of Palestine citrus growers. When the war made exporting the annual production of 15,000,000 boxes of oranges impossible, Jews, Arabs, and the British Government united. This heavy blow against 80 percent of the total export of Palestine made all parties realize that only unity was the way out of this crisis. In the two Boards which were established, both consisting of Arab, Jewish and British members, nationality never made any difference.²⁷² Beside that, Arab and Jewish officials and Government workers and those engaged in army projects and foreign companies sometimes cooperated in trade union campaigns. It seems that in general relations between Jews and Arabs became a little friendlier than they were in the years before.²⁷³

As soon as possible after the foundation of the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation, a start was made with implementing its Program.²⁷⁴ In Jerusalem a number of joint Arab-Jewish social gatherings were organized. Scientific and social lectures were delivered to mixed groups of students. Near Jaffa a joint Jewish-Arab youth club came into existence. The League submitted a detailed proposal to the Agency Executive for cooperation with Arabs on emergency work during the war, such as in air-raid protection, first aid, and fire brigades. Posters were printed against boycotting Arab products and for closer economic cooperation.²⁷⁵ As in economic matters some possibilities for cooperation existed, some of the League's activities were a success, though on a very small scale.

These kinds of activities was already being envisaged by *Hakib-butzi Haartzit* of *Hashomer Hatzair* since 1935. The movement's special approach became one of its hallmarks. Although both the lack of suitable personnel and the Arab Revolt hampered many of their

²⁷² Moshe Smilansky, 'Citrus Growers have Learnt to Cooperate', in M. Buber, J.L. Magnes, E. Simon (eds), *Towards Union in Palestine; Essays on Zionism and Jewish-Arab Cooperation* (Jerusalem 1947), pp. 59-60.

²⁷³ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 284.

²⁷⁴ For this program, see above.

²⁷⁵ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p.301; Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1016; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, pp. 224-5.

efforts, they did train some of their leaders in the Arab language and culture, by sending them to Arab villages for a training program of half a year.²⁷⁶ In 1940 an Arab Department was formed, with Aharon Cohen as one of its three members, so in the early forties *Hashomer Hatzair* continued to devote the most serious attention to Arab affairs.²⁷⁷ They were able to create better relations between the *kibbutzim* and the local Arabs, gave medical help, had contact with Arab schools, and partook in festivals, published in Hebrew and Arabic and advised the Arab smallholders in modern agriculture. Very important to *Hashomer Hatzair* was the organization of joint trade-union work.²⁷⁸

The setting up of the Arab Department of *Hashomer Hatzair* was instrumental in bringing together leaders of *Hashomer Hatzair*, *Poale Zion Smol*, the Socialist League, and some Bi-nationalist members of MAPAI²⁷⁹ to put pressure on the *Histadrut* (*ha-Histadrut ha-Kelalit shel ha-Ovedim b'Eretz Yisrael*, the General Federation of Jewish Labor in Palestine) for Jewish-Arab labor co-operation by increasing activity amongst the Arabs.²⁸⁰

In a letter of 25 June 1941 to the *Histadrut* Executive, the signatories urged the *Histadrut* to activate its Committee for Arab Work while rapprochement and cooperation between the Jews and Arabs could be witnessed anywhere, such as among the citrus growers. Although the Iraqi revolt had disturbed these peaceful relations for a short time, they were better again after the Revolt was defeated. As the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation could only do small-scale work, the *Histadrut* (as a public institution with its resources should carry the burden of this work of bringing Jews and Arabs together:

Projects such as the establishment of the Alliance of Palestinian Workers; cooperation between Arab and Jewish workers to obtain cost-of-living allowances for workers employed by the large Government companies; a public works program by Government and municipal institu-

²⁷⁶ Aharon Cohen lived six months in an Arab village for studying Arabic language and culture.

²⁷⁷ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 231

²⁷⁸ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 304-5

²⁷⁹ These founders were E. Bauer, Aharon Cohen (both of *Hashomer Hatzair*), Y. Thon and H. Naaman (both of *MAPAI*), L. Tarnopoler, I. Itzhaki, Moshe Erem, and Y. Peterzeil (all of *Poale Zion Smol*) and A. Lichtinger and H. Rubin (both of the Socialist League).

²⁸⁰ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 231

tions to relieve unemployment; encouragement of producers' cooperatives among Arab workers in town and country; far-sighted and planned efforts to settle the problems of marketing the products of Arab and Jewish workers; provision of medical help for neighboring Arab settlements; agriculture and veterinary instruction and guidance, and the development of mutual aid and cooperation between Arab and Jewish farmers; the establishment of joint centers for adults and youth in mixed residential areas, and help in establishing such centers in friendly Arab settlements; the dissention of Arabic among Jews, and Hebrew among Arabs; extensive educational work in the economic, social, cultural, and political field – all these are waiting for the directing hand of the Histadrut.²⁸¹

The signatories of this letter finally requested the *Histradrut* Executive to receive them as an inter-party delegation for an exchange of views on this weighty problem. When after two months nothing was heard, they sent a reminder. On 28 August 1941, they finally received a letter, stating that the *Histadrut* agreed to a discussion 'within the next few weeks' and asked for practical proposals on the Arab activity of the *Histadrut*. On 7 September Cohen, as one of the signatories, submitted these proposals, which were a repetition of the practical goals and activities of the League and of the Arab Department of *Hashomer Hazair*, and were an enlargement of those written in the letter of 25 June 1941. On 19 May 1942, this correspondence was submitted to the members of the *Histadrut* Council for consideration, as their Executive had not reacted yet.²⁸²

Although there were some small successes in socio-economic and cultural matters on the local level, a large-scale program for economic cooperation was impossible when it depended on a majority vote in the *Histadrut*. The slackness of reacting of the *Histadrut* was a result of its unwillingness to adopt a far-reaching program of cooperation with the Arabs.

Cohen suggests that the defeat of these proposals in the *Histadrut* Council was a result of the adoption of the Biltmore Program on 11 May 1942.²⁸³ Already on 14 May 1942, the Jewish Press in Palestine wrote that a statement on the principles of Zionist policy had been adopted in the United States. On 17 May, Shertok informed the Jewish Agency Executive that 'the censorship kept out from [...] the

²⁸¹ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 317-9.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 319-21.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

resolutions the words on a Jewish Commonwealth and a Jewish Army'.²⁸⁴

It is clear, then, that the politically active people knew the content of the Biltmore resolutions very early, though the censor did not permit the publication of the full text. This does not mean, however, that these resolutions had much influence on the decision of the *Histadrut* in May. The public's main preoccupation was with European Jewry and the advance of Rommel. The *Histadrut*'s decision, therefore, was a result of their preoccupation with things they considered more important than working for better relation with the Arabs. It can be said, however, that the 'general trend' that had led to the Biltmore Program also influenced the *Histadrut*'s Council's decision. This is no wonder, as in the elections of November 1941 for the *Histadrut* Council candidates of *MAPAI*, Ben Gurion's party, received 69.3 percent of the votes.²⁸⁵

The results of the strive for economic and social rapprochement and cooperation were small, but the hope of the Bi-nationalists to bridge the political gap between Jews and Arabs was also disappointed in spite of the friendlier attitude of the Arabs towards the Jews.

In 1940 Adil Jabr, a highly educated Arab member of the Jerusalem Municipal Council began to attempt to negotiate an Arab-Jewish accord. Kalvarisky suggested him to contact the Political Department of the Jewish Agency first, for receiving its consent and support. In the autumn of 1940 he went to Baghdad, to talk with Iraqi, Syrian, Egyptian, Transjordan, and exiled Palestinian Arabs. After returning to Jerusalem he reported his impressions to Moshe, Sherok, head of the Agency's Political Department, and to Kalvarisky. In order to advance the negotiations he repeatedly asked for Jewish proposals. Having waited several months and having received no reaction of the Agency, he drafted in cooperation with Kalvarisky a proposal as a point of departure for further talks with Arab leaders. A basis for further talks would be the idea that a Federal of Semitic

²⁸⁴ This information comes from Dr. M. Heyman of the Central Zionist Archives Jerusalem in a letter to the author (19 June 1986). This contradicts Magnes, who wrote on 7 January 1943 to Dushkin in New York: '...no one here knew of the Biltmore resolutions of last May until Mr. Ben Gurion brought them in his pocket upon his return to Palestine in November.' Maybe Magnes only meant to say that no one knew about these resolutions officially, for he himself must have been informed about the true content of the Biltmore Resolutions. Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, p. 387.

²⁸⁵ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 203.

peoples would be formed with autonomy for all its component States. Palestine would enter this Federation as an autonomous country, with a Bi-national structure based on full equality. Jewish immigration to all federated States should be possible, by agreement with the federated autonomous States. This proposal clearly agreed with the ideas of the League as stated in the next chapter. This is no wonder, as Kalvarisky was the spiritual father of the program of the League.²⁸⁶

On 7 July 1941, Shertok communicated his criticism on this proposed basis for negotiations. Adil Jabr was very disappointed and wanted some clarification of this criticism, so in the absence of Shertok, Kalvarisky had a meeting with Ben Gurion on 21 July. During that meeting Kalvarisky reported his last talks with Adil Jabr and tried to get some clarification on the criticism that was given to the proposals. In his diary Kalvarisky writes that when he laid before Ben Gurion the proposals and the critical letter of Shertok, ‘before he had a chance to even glance at the Jabr proposal, he pushed it aside in unrestrained anger and said: “I don’t want to deal with this document at all, it’s an abomination.”’²⁸⁷

On 19 August 1941, Shertok replied to the question of Adil. The *crux* of the matter was the fact that a favorable attitude to the Federation would be conditional on a Jewish state being part of it. The reason why the negotiations with the Arabs were not continued was the fact that the Zionists wanted a Jewish state, not a Bi-national state. Although rapprochement and cooperation were possible on the social and economic plain, the Zionists were not prepared to give up their vision of a national state of their own.²⁸⁸ It is logical that Aharon Cohen, who blames the Zionists for not having reached political agreement with the Arabs, describes these incidents in detail. The slightly pro-Zionist publication of the Esco-foundation does not mention it, but describes other negotiations, showing that even the idea of Bi-nationalism was unacceptable to the most cooperative Arabs, proving that fault for not reaching an agreement lay with the Arabs.

The Arabs who were not prepared to give up their most cherished ideal of an independent Palestinian Arab state either. Even the most ‘progressive’ groups were not prepared to negotiate about their final

²⁸⁶ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 285-6.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 286-7.

goal. The League of Arab Students, aiming to eradicate illiteracy among Arab Palestinians and to improve the conditions of the Arab village in general, wanted full cooperation with the Jews in the economic, social, and cultural fields.²⁸⁹ As the Palestine Communist Party had much influence in the League of Arab Students, they wanted to struggle with the Jews against fascism and Nazism.²⁹⁰ In December 1941 a secret meeting of leaders of the League of Arab Students with a number of Jewish representatives was held in Jerusalem, where the Arabs assured the Jews of their willingness to cooperate as much as possible. Immigration, however, could not be discussed, and they emphasized their aim of the immediate establishment of a democratic Palestine, where Jews would be guaranteed democratic minority rights.²⁹¹

One of the Jewish representatives, possibly someone of the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation, suggested parity might be a guiding principle, including numerical parity between the inhabitants for a definite period and parity of representatives in all branches of government. Furthermore he proposed Jewish assistance in the formation of an Arab Federation. The Arabs did not want to discuss a Federation, as that was an academic question at that moment, and rejected the idea of Bi-nationalism. In their opinion a government based on parity was no improvement on the usual type of democracy, which meant rule by the majority.²⁹² Constitutional parity would be a negotiation of democracy. So although the League of Arab Students had a reputation of willingness for Arab-Jewish rapprochement, and the Arab-Jewish problem was not very important to them, in the final analysis their position on the Jewish National Home differed not essentially from that of the nationalist leaders.²⁹³

²⁸⁹ Musa Budeiri, *The Palestine Communist Party 1919-1948: Arab and Jew in the Struggle for Internationalism* (London 1979), p. 200.

²⁹⁰ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1018.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1018-9.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p.1019.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1011.

12. WRITING FOR A BI-NATIONAL PALESTINE

The Jewish Agency Committee on the Arab Question, which had been promised at the Twenty-First Zionist Congress in August 1939, had its first meeting on 16 January 1940. Kaplansky, Magnes, Kalvarisky, Thon, Auster, Assaf, and Rabbi Uziel were appointed as its members. All seven were notorious critics of the way the Jewish Executive handled relations with the Arabs, while the first four were well-known Bi-nationalists.²⁹⁴ Ben Gurion, in the first meeting of the Committee, made the aim of its formation very clear:

This is not a committee for action, neither is it a committee with the job of going between the Jews and Arabs and to discuss with one of the sides or to start negotiations leading to an agreement. It is also not a committee for criticizing the Executive. [...] But the task which has been given to it is to investigate the question and make proposals.²⁹⁵

It seems the Executive was primarily interested in silencing as long as possible those who complained about the policy of the Jewish Agency towards the Arabs, and to put into one committee a good number of ‘troublemakers’. In order to be able to keep the Committee in check as much as possible, the Jewish Agency appointed a Secretary to the Committee who also worked for its Political Department.

The task of the Committee was not very promising. Their basic work was hearing evidence from members of the Jewish community in Palestine, political parties and a number of foreign Zionists. With this evidence they had to prepare a report. Of course, the expected evidence came from the expected quarters. None of the Committee members would change his mind because of new insights, so it would be hard for them to produce a common report.²⁹⁶

The Jewish Agency Committee invited the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation to appear at its session on 26 May 1940. On that same day the League, in cooperation with *Hashomer Hatzair*, set up three Committees, of which the one to deal with political questions under the chairmanship of Bentov would be the most important.²⁹⁷ Goal of this Committee was to formulate detailed proposals concerning the political and constitutional basis for

²⁹⁴ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 237.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 237-8.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 228; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 301, 307.

the regulation of relations between the Arabs and Jews in Palestine and submit those to the Jewish Agency Committee on the Arab Question.²⁹⁸

Point of departure for the Bentov Committee were the so-called Kalvarisky Proposals, which were adopted by the League as its political creed. When the League was founded in 1939, these proposals of Kalvarisky as to the future government of Palestine were already being discussed. These were the same proposals he had submitted to the Jewish Delegation at the London Conference, but which to his dismay were not submitted to the British Government by the Delegation.²⁹⁹ In 1940 the League openly proclaimed its support for these ideas, which were an alternative to the White Paper:

- 1) The British Mandate will come to an end after ten years.
- 2) During this period Jewish immigration will be permitted up to the attainment of numerical equality of the Jews and Arabs after ten years.
- 3) After ten years a Bi-national independent state will be set up, on the basis of parity in government and in the legislative bodies.
- 4) During a transitory period the government in the country will be run under the supervision of the mandatory power by a council of ministers and by a Legislative Council, which will be set up immediately and in which Jews and Arabs will participate in equal numbers.
- 5) It will be agreed, that when Palestine reaches independence under these conditions, it will join an Arab confederation as an autonomous unit, when the former is set up.
- 6) A practical program will be worked out on means of wide economic cooperation between the Jews and the Arabs, of cooperation in the execution of development plans in Palestine, and other Arab countries, and a certain amount of Jewish settlement in the neighboring countries.³⁰⁰

The Bentov Committee produced its Report in June 1941. As could be expected, the Report criticized the Zionist leadership for not having done enough to improve Jewish-Arab relations. Also the Bi-nationalist solution was being envisaged, in which a third party beside the Jews and the Arabs, possibly the Mandatory, would arbitrate in case of deadlock. The Report categorically rejected the idea that any final settlement should cut down or restrict artificially the right of the Jews to immigrate to Palestine. The final constitution after the

²⁹⁸ Elkana Margalit, 'Bi-nationalism: An Interpretation of Zionism, 1941-1947', in *Studies in Zionism 4* (Tel Aviv 1981), p. 276.

²⁹⁹ See above; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 227.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 227-8.

transitory period should guarantee the Jewish right to immigrate up to the full economic absorptive capacity of the country. However, during the transitional period a temporary agreement on immigration, not to become a majority, was to be accepted:

It may be advisable to arrive at a temporary agreement for the transition period, and to stipulate that for a certain period – let us say ten years – the number of Jewish immigrants will not exceed a certain number. This can be justified to some extent on the ground that the Arabs must be afforded the opportunity, before the danger arises that the Jewish population will outnumber them, of discovering how the agreed system of government works in practice.³⁰¹

The Report dealt with two possibilities as to the future form of government, that of Regional Federation and Communal Federation. Above all the authors wanted to preserve the economic and political integrity of the country, and to prevent separation between Jews and Arabs. They hoped that one day, relations between the two nations in Palestine would reach a stage where the national differences would have vanished. The two national blocks would then naturally dissolve into groups representing economic or social interests. This would give the government a majority without connection to the principle of parity and the restrictions involved in the proposed constitutional forms.³⁰²

Between Regional and Communal Federalism the Report preferred the former. Two compact Regions, one Jewish and one Arab, should be created. The capital of the Federation would be Jerusalem, lying outside the jurisdiction of either Region and under the direct control of the Federal Government, which would be founded on the basis of parity. The Negev was also to be a Federal Region, as the development of this area required means that neither of the Regions had on its own.³⁰³

In order to secure the cohesion of the country and to avoid sectionalist tendencies the Federal Government should be as strong as possible. The Regions would only receive constitutional powers insofar the Arab-Jewish problem needed it. The problem of immigration and land settlement clearly belonged to the Regional Administration, as did matters of education. The Federal Government

³⁰¹ Margalit, 'Bi-nationalism', pp. 279-80.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 280.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 280-1; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 232.

would have extensive powers in foreign affairs, budget, taxation, defense, foreign trade, customs, public works etcetera, and would endeavor to equalize the income levels and economic development of the Jewish and Arab Region.³⁰⁴

In both Regions there should be a single Regional Chamber, which would be formed according to proportional representation. The Federal Parliament would be bi-cameral. The Federal House of Representatives, like the Regional Chamber, would be formed according to proportional representation. Any bill of Federal legislation of this House of Representation should have to pass the State Council, which had the final decision. The State Council would embody the parity-system, with the same number of Jewish and Arab delegates, but reflecting the political shades existing in the communities.³⁰⁵

Every four years the President and the Vice-President should be elected in popular countrywide elections. The President should be Chief of the Executive and Head of the Federal State. The vice-President would be Chairman of the State Council. The President should be alternatively Jewish or Arab, the vice-President never being of the same nationality as the President. The Prime Minister would be appointed by and be only responsible to the President. In the Cabinet the number of Jews and Arabs should be about equal.³⁰⁶

Amendments to this constitution were not to be easy. The Federal Constitution could only be amended if in each of the Regional Chambers and in the House of Representatives and in the State Council the amendment was accepted with a two-third vote.³⁰⁷

The alternative proposal of Communal Federalism did not divide the country in Regions, but in two National Communities. In such a Federal State the Central government would have more powers than in the Regional variant, as the Jewish and Arab National Councils would have no territorial jurisdiction. These National Councils would have jurisdiction over education, culture in general, social welfare and social service, including assistance to schemes for facilitating the absorption of new immigrants into the country. The Na-

³⁰⁴ Margalit, 'Bi-nationalism', p. 281; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 232.

³⁰⁵ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, pp. 232-4.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

tional Councils would also have the right to impose certain direct taxes over and above state taxes.³⁰⁸

As in the Regional Federal proposal, the State Parliament would be bi-cameral. The most important difference would be that the Cabinet of four members, two Jews and two Arabs, would be chosen by a State Assembly, composed of the State Council and both National Councils. Each member of this Cabinet would preside over the Cabinet for a year, as President of the State.³⁰⁹

As regards immigration, a Communal Federal State would require an Immigration Board of two Jews and two Arabs. This Board would have to judge if immigration was passing the limit of the economic absorptive capacity of the country, for the absorptive capacity would be the determining factor. If the Immigration Board would internally disagree, the President of the State would be the final authority. Concerning the problems that might arise because of land transfers, an equal construction had to ascertain that a solution might be found.³¹⁰

In its preface the Bentov Report stated that it was not a definite pronouncement of the opinions of the writers, but only a first draft, as many details would be considered again and changed, in the wake of forthcoming criticism. In order to receive comments the Report was printed in July at the office of the Jewish Agency Political Department. On 18 September 1941, the highly confidential draft was presented to the Jewish Agency Committee on the Arab Question, while it was also handed over to various central personalities in the Jewish Community in Palestine and to about 200 people in the United States, with the express intention of not having it published.³¹¹

Ben Gurion, being in America at that time, received a copy of the Report and was enraged by it. At that time he was working for the broad acceptance of the Biltmore Program, so he considered this Report to be a frontal attack on his maximalist Zionist position. His furious response after having returned to Palestine in the middle of October 1942, led to the suspension of the work of the League's Committee, as the atmosphere was poisoned and the relations be-

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 235.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid., p. 236; Margalit, 'Bi-nationalism', p. 282.

³¹¹ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p.307; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, pp. 236-7, 255; Margalit, 'Bi-nationalism', p. 284.

tween the parties became very tense. The Report was never completed, nor the final draft finalized.³¹²

While the Bentov Committee of the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation prepared for its Report for the Jewish Agency Committee on the Arab Question, this latter Committee proceeded with its own work. That was not easy, however, as the opinions of the members were diverse. At their very first meeting in January 1940 Magnes had predicted that

[...] after much work this Committee will bring before the Executive a majority opinion and a minority opinion, and the Executive will be able to say: here, even people who have the general will, they too have not found the way, and this conclusion will be a wrong conclusion – that because these people did not find a way there is now way.³¹³

Kalvarisky believed ‘that there are intelligent Arabs who recognize the fact of the Jewish people in Palestine and recognize the great yearning of the Jewish people to Palestine, and that they recognize the fact that there is such a factor in international politics known as the Jewish question.’³¹⁴ Magnes was not an optimistic as Kalvarisky, as he did not believe the Arabs were ready to reach an agreement, but he preferred this optimism of Kalvarisky to the negative, pessimistic attitude of Assaf.³¹⁵

Michael Assaf, one of the *MAPAI* experts on Arab affairs and editor of the Arabic edition of the *Histadrut* paper had seriously criticized the booklet *At The Parting Of Our Ways*, as in his opinion it was unjust to blame only the Zionist policy for the bad relations with the Arabs.³¹⁶ Although Assaf himself was very critical on the Zionist Agency’s policy, he particularly disagreed with Kalvarisky, who only blamed the Zionists, without having an eye for the developing Arab nationalism ‘in all its cruel nudity’. After a meeting in November 1941 Assaf said:

I think that the position of Kalvarisky, Kaplansky and Magnes does not suit the existing aims of the Jewish people, the Arab people nor that of the democratic world. I hope that I shall not be insulting anyone if I shall say that these ideas which are full of liberalism, socialism and mo-

³¹² Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p.308; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 237; Margalit, ‘Bi-nationalism’, p. 277.

³¹³ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 238.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.219; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 262.

rality are very general, and I consider them to be ideas the time of which is gone. These are Ideas of the last century and the beginning of the present century, but not of our own time. [...]

Dr. Magnes writes and speaks a lot about [minority position] and that gives the impression that he has no doubt or hesitation that we can remain here a minority and develop a cultural center. [...]

How can we demand of the Arabs to do better than the Poles and others with regard to minorities? [...] In my opinion the Arab nation is no more idealistic and moral than other nations, but is less civilized than other nations in whose midst the Jews live and are persecuted...[Thon] and other friends such as you, speak on the one hand of rapprochement with the Arabs but on the other hand there is within you a sort of contempt in the sub-conscience. [...] I think this has been one of Kalvarisky's mistakes all the years. Deep down in your heart you think that you can twist the Arabs. [...]

I say, that whoever thinks that on the basis of successful negotiations, even by excellent treatment, one can change the course of the Arab movement, I say, that in his sub-conscience he has contempt for its power.³¹⁷

Finally things went as Magnes had foretold in 1940. In August 1942 the Majority Report was submitted to the Jewish Agency Executive, signed by Kaplansky, Magnes, Kalvarisky, and Thon, advocating a Bi-national Federal State. This Report was already written in December 1941 by Kaplansky, but through the opposition of the Committee members who disagreed with Bi-nationalism, the Report was held up. When the report was finally submitted in August 1942 it was pigeonholed and not presented to the Zionist Executive, which was asked to confirm the Biltmore Program instead.³¹⁸

In its Report the Jewish Agency Committee expressed its opinion with without an agreement the Arabs the friction and restraint on the Zionist path would multiply and its speed of fulfillment would fall. But even if such an agreement could not be reached, the Zionist endeavor should continue. A Jewish-Arab agreement should be reached on an agreed stage of development in a given period, a transition period, not on the final aims of the two national movements. The positive circles among the Arabs, who are willing to seek the satisfaction of the Arab national demands in agreement with Britain and the Jews, not with the Axis, should be strengthened by preparing

³¹⁷ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 240.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 241; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 297.

a plan of cooperation and agreement, such as the Committee proposed.³¹⁹

Such a plan should aim for Bi-nationalism paritative Federalism, with a future State that is neither Jewish nor Arab. Agreement should be reached on the size of immigration for a number of years, until numerical parity is achieved, with guarantees for the continuation of immigration at the end of this period. Also on land purchases an agreement should be reached. Palestine would have to join a Middle East Federation, as an independent nation. This means the Mandatory Government should be abolished, while a treaty with Britain should guarantee the Jewish Arab agreement and the new political regime created by it.³²⁰ Although some of the Committee members thought it too early to make a definite sketch of the future Constitutional frame of the Jewish-Arab paritative government, they considered it useful

[...] to show on the basis of a worked out example, how the abstract motto of paritative partnership may be turned into constitutional and administrative reality, into a system of government and legislative institutions. Therefore we are adding such a plan which was worked out by the Chairman of the Committee.³²¹

These Kaplansky Proposals evidently show the influence of the Bentov Report, which was handed over to Kaplansky three months before he wrote his proposals. The final constitution should be a Bi-national paritative Federation, with a Federal Council consisting of representatives of the Arab and the Jewish Region in equal numbers. Beside that, a House of Representatives should be chosen through direct elections by all citizens of the country. Beside the Federal Authorities there should be two democratically elected National Councils, being responsible for internal national affairs as immigration and land settlement. This Federal State should become an independent member of a political and economic Union of Palestine, Transjordan, Syria, and Lebanon.³²²

For the transition period, Kaplansky had some other suggestions: 'I propose that during the first ten years of the agreements, until numerical parity is achieved between the two nationalities in the coun-

³¹⁹ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 242.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 243.

³²¹ *Ibid.*

³²² *Ibid.*, pp. 244-6.

try there will only be one house to the Legislative Institution, the Federal Council. The House of Representatives will be set up only after this stage of the agreement period.³²³

During this transition period the Federation would not be on a regional basis, but on a national basis. The Regions will be formed after numerical parity has been reached, as the only way to be assured of continued Jewish immigration. During these ten years the general direction of land purchases would be such to create continuous blocs of Jewish owned land, in order to pave the way towards the administrative partition into Regions as far as possible single-national in their population composition.³²⁴

Besides Jerusalem also Nazareth and Bethlehem had to become Federal Cities, while the Negev became a Federal Area. A treaty should be concluded with Britain to give it the right to safeguard the Holy Places and to use the country as a military base. In return Britain should guarantee the Jewish-Arab agreement, as the Middle-East Federation should also do.³²⁵

Neither the Report of the League's Committee nor the Kalvarisky Proposals were written in a political vacuum. Most ideas had been published before. During the thirties there had been some Jewish, British, and even Arab proposals as to partitioning the country in two or more Federated Regions or Cantons. Two examples will be sufficient. At the end of 1929, for instance, when Ben Gurion was very disappointed about the way Britain handled the riots of that year, and he feared that Britain might desert the Jews and their National Home, Ben Gurion wrote a proposal for a future constitution, hoping to appease all parties, as the Jewish community was too weak to fight both the Arabs and Britain.³²⁶ Palestine had to become a Federal State, composed of Jewish and Arab Cantons with exclusive authority in matters of education, culture, religion, and language.³²⁷ A bicameral Federal Council should be formed, the Chamber of Nations being based on numerical parity of the two nationalities, while in the Chamber of Citizens cantonal representatives should be elected in proportion to their population.³²⁸

³²³ Ibid., p. 244.

³²⁴ Ibid., pp. 244-6.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid. pp. 94-5.

³²⁷ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 260.

³²⁸ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 94.

During the early thirties Ahmed al-Khalidi, principal of the Government Arab School, proposed to set up a Jewish and an Arab Canton. Each Canton would have its autonomously governing Council, and over the two Cantons there would be a Supreme Executive. Disputes between the Cantons would be decided by the League of Nations. The British would act as the liaisons between the Cantons. Some sort of internationalization would be necessary for Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth, Safed, Hebron, and Haifa. This proposal was published in the Arabic Newspaper *Falastin* and Magnes received a letter of Ahmed al-Khalidi in 1934 with these proposals. The fact that there were even Arabs who agreed with the idea of cantonization will have greatly encouraged both Committees to come forward with their proposals for a Jewish and an Arab Region in a Federal State.³²⁹

³²⁹ Ibid., pp. 123-5.

**STRENGTHENING AND DEFEAT OF
BI-NATIONALISM – 1942**

13. STRENGTHENING OF THE LEAGUE FOR JEWISH-ARAB RAPPROCHEMENT AND COOPERATION

The Arab Department of *Hashomer Hatzair*, which was formed in 1940, cooperated with the League in many activities, the Bentov Committee being the most important example of their cooperation.³³⁰ In May 1941 representatives of *Hashomer Hatzair* and their urban counterpart, the Socialist League, met with the League in Jerusalem for an investigation as to the possibility of them joining the League. Their condition was a revision of the League's ideology and organization.³³¹

In June 1942 both *Hashomer Hatzair* and the Socialist League formally joined the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation. *Poale Zion Smol* also decided to join the League.³³² They were willing to do so after the League adopted a new platform based on an agreement with *Hashomer Hatzair* and the Socialist League. On June 23, 1942, Kalvarisky, Buber, Simon, Hirsch, Senator, Thon, Rabbi Binyamin, Yaari, Khazan, Aharon Cohen, Gavriel Stern,³³³ Chaim Naaman of *MAPAI*,³³⁴ Litchinger of the Socialist League and Peterzeil signed this new 'creed' of the League:³³⁵

- (A) The League believes that the construction of Palestine as a common homeland for the Jewish people returning to it and the Arab people therein residing must be based on lasting mutual understanding and agreement between the two peoples;
- (B) The principle of the return of the Jews to their historic homeland to build their independent national life in it is unequivocal, as are also the rights of the Palestine Arabs to their independent national life, and their ties with other parts of the Arab people;
- (C) The League will carry on its work on the basis of its recognition of the right of the Jews to immigrate to and settle in Palestine in accordance with its maximum absorptive capacity to an extent that shall ensure the growth of the Jewish community in Palestine toward a full and inde-

³³⁰ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 305.

³³¹ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, pp. 229-30.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 214; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 301, 305.

³³³ Gavriel Stern was in Palestine since 1936, studying at the School of Oriental Studies in the Hebrew University. He contributed articles to various magazines about Arab affairs. He was joint secretary of the League of Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation. He also worked for the monthly *Be'ayot*. (see below).

³³⁴ Naaman was a lawyer from Haifa. Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 258.

³³⁵ Peterzeil did not agree with point (D).

pendent economic, social, cultural, and political life, in cooperation with the Arab people;

(D) On the basis of the immigration principle as defined in paragraph B, agreed immigration quotas may be set for a number of years, it being understood that the League will oppose any aim to perpetuate the position of the Jewish community as a minority in Palestine;

(E) The League considers the basic principles for Arab-Jewish accord to be:

1. Acceptance of the right of the Jews to return to their historic homeland, there to build their independent national life; acceptance of the rights of Palestine Arabs to their independent national life and of their ties with other sections of the Arab people;
2. The non-denomination of one people by the other, regardless of their respective numerical strength;
3. A Bi-national regime in Palestine;
4. Positive attitude towards the participation of Palestine as an independent Bi-national unit in a federation with neighboring countries, when the necessary conditions for this will have been prepared, and the basic rights and vital interests of the Arab people living in Palestine, will have been secured;

(F) The League shall undertake the following tasks:

1. Campaign within the Jewish community and the Zionist movement for a policy of rapprochement, cooperation, and accord between Jews and Arabs.
2. Campaign for the formation of a corresponding Ally with in the Arab community on central and local activities without, however, requiring all of them to belong personally to branches of the League.
3. Strive to improve and enhance Arab economic, social, cultural, and political standards.
4. Research.
5. Training people for public work among the Arab population;

(G) The local branches of the League will be centers of activity and influence; the parties and groups composing the League will detail some of their members to work on central and local activities without, however, requiring all of them to belong personally to branches of the League.³³⁶

The most important difference between this new statement of policy and both the resolution on 1939, stating the aim and activities of the League,³³⁷ and the Kalvarisky proposals which were supported by all members of the League in 1940³³⁸ was the stress on the une-

³³⁶ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp.305-6; Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, pp. 257-8.

³³⁷ See above.

³³⁸ See above.

quivalent right of the Jews to immigrate into Palestine up to the economic absorptive capacity of the country. This is evidently due to influence of *Hashomer Hatzair*, for which achieving a Jewish majority to solve the Jewish question had always played an important role.³³⁹ Whereas in the beginning of the functioning of the League, promotion of social and cultural reconciliation between the peoples of Palestine was paramount, and Bi-nationalism, though from the beginning the political goal of the League, was not being expressed in the 1939 program, but only in the practical proposals of 1940, in 1942 the League had crystallized a political program for a Bi-national state. Therefore in June 1942, Bi-nationalism became an important element of the program of the League itself.³⁴⁰

June 1942 was an important moment for Bi-nationalism in Palestine. Whereas in 1939 for the first time members of all Bi-nationalist parties and groups worked together in the practical project of editing a book, in 1942 these parties and groups all united behind a single political program, even though they differed greatly amongst themselves concerning the details of the policy the envisaged.³⁴¹

The reason why these groups and parties united behind a common program at this time were the same reasons why the Biltmore program was adopted in May in the United States. The British policy made immigration into Palestine very difficult, at a moment that the need for Jews to leave Europe was greater than at any time in history. The only way to make Britain change its policy was to come to an agreement with the Arabs. Whereas for the Zionists the Jewish-Arab problems were secondary to the plight of European Jewry and the aim of creating a Jewish state, for Bi-nationalists the fate of the European Jewry did not change their vision of a just settlement in Palestine in Bi-nationalist fashion. Therefore the Program of June 1942 of the League was not only a reaction to the White Paper and the fate of European Jewry, but also against the spirit of the Zionist Biltmore Program with its demand for a Jewish state.³⁴² The new program of the League and the unity of all Bi-nationalists groups and parties behind this program were an attempt to reverse the Zionist

³³⁹ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 161.

³⁴⁰ Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, p. 148.

³⁴¹ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 256.

³⁴² See above, in spite of Hurewitz, Hattis and Aharon Cohen's opposite opinion.

policy of aiming at a Jewish state, as had been developing since 1939.³⁴³

The new strength of the League gave their activities a certain stimulus. In September the League's Chairman, Kalvarisky, and the new general secretary, Aharon Cohen, were sent on a trip to Syria and Lebanon.³⁴⁴ They had contact with public personalities to study the possibilities of implementing the League's program. Upon returning they reported in the League's newsletter, the *Bulleting to Members*, and to the Jewish Agency that

[...] there is a great distrust of the higher Jewish bodies. The absence of any positive declared policy by Zionist leaders, irresponsible statements by this or that Jewish leader, the attacks in the Jewish press on any attempt to reach accord, the clamor about Jewish military strength, and the political implications of the appeals for mobilization – all these continue to increase this distrust. [...]

It is not always possible to refute the charges of these people against Jewish leadership... Deep distrust of official Jewish policy is almost general among all those with whom we spoke. It is doubtful whether efforts to mitigate the distrust and mollify them were completely successful. On the other hand, they listened with great interest to the purposes and development of the movement forming round the League. [...]

There is no willingness to discuss a plan that includes a Jewish State, but most of those with whom we spoke were prepared to discuss a solution of the Arab-Jewish problem on the basis of the League's platform. Its principles for Jewish-Arab accord were found by a number of the most important of these leaders to be 'a serious, fair, and honest plan, which has a chance, though much work remains to be done to prepare the conditions for its realization'. [...] A number of their prominent leaders with whom we spoke expressed their willingness to influence the Palestinians in favor of our program when they come (as they surely will) to ask their advice.³⁴⁵

These talks strengthened the belief of the League's leaders that struggling for their ideas was not hopeless. Cohen himself says the meetings he had with these Arab leaders were 'encouraging and positive.'³⁴⁶ Not very encouraging, however, were the relations with the Jewish Agency. On June 23, 1942, Cohen, as secretary of the

³⁴³ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 256; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 161.

³⁴⁴ Aharon Cohen, 'Fighter for a Jewish-Arab Alliance', *New Outlook Vol. 20 No. 2* (1977), p. 54.

³⁴⁵ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 323-4.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

League submitted the approved program of the League to Shertok. The League's leaders hoped to find possibilities of cooperation between the League and the Jewish Agency. Cohen stressed that the League was an influential public body now, with clear objectives and a solid political foundation. This was no over-estimation, as *Hashomer Hatzair* and *Poale Zion Smol* together polled 12.4 percent of all votes at the election for the National Council in 1944.³⁴⁷ A few weeks later the Agency replied that they did not want to support any of the League's activities, in order not to give any moral encouragement to the League. The League reacted likewise, deciding neither to report to the Agency nor to consult it anymore.³⁴⁸ Thus they acted against one of their own objectives, to campaign with the Jewish community and the Zionist movement for a policy of rapprochement, cooperation, and accord between Jews and Arabs.³⁴⁹

This choice of the Agency, which did support activities of the Revisionists, and the League's reaction, were an omen of the definite split that was ripening between the official Zionists and the Bi-nationalist movement in Palestine, which would come into the open a few months later, in November 1942.

³⁴⁷ Udin (ed), *Palestine Year Book 1945-1946 Vol. II*, p. 354.

³⁴⁸ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 321-2; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, pp. 161-2.

³⁴⁹ See above.

14. FOUNDATION OF ICHUD

Parallel to the forming of the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation, Judah L. Magnes asked in 1939 a few of his like-minded friends to form a religious society. Buber, Kohn, Bergman, Simon, and Weltsch were amongst its members. The name of this group was *Ha'ol* (the Yoke), as they felt the yoke of God to live according to the message of Judaism to be on their shoulders.³⁵⁰

This group aimed at religious socialism, guided by the principles to endeavor to live in accordance with the 'God within' each and that 'the absolute ethical or metaphysical values must be the real forces determining and directing life.' They stressed the high calling of the Jews to live according to Judaism and to serve the world with the social ideas of justice and righteousness of the Hebrew prophets.³⁵¹ Magnes wrote: 'We believe in a life of faith which carries a commitment to social action and practical political work, and we reject any attempt to separate the two dominions, which are one in theory and practice.'³⁵²

This Bi-nationalist group did not survive its foundation very long, and in fact only its monthly *Be'ayot Hayom*, (Problems of the Day), lived on, appearing between August 1940 and November 1942. Weltsch was its editor, struggling with financial and organizational problems beside the troubles with the British censor. In October 1941 Weltsch left the periodical, disillusioned with the troubles and because there was not the large public for their old liberal humanistic message as he was used to address in Germany, before the Jewish Community was destroyed.³⁵³ Although *Ha'ol* as a group did not succeed to survive, the members individually did not forget their yoke and came together as a group again in extended form in 1942, under the new name of *Ichud* (Union) and publishing the same periodicals, but since November 1942 being called *Be'ayot* (Problems).³⁵⁴

³⁵⁰ Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, p. 112.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-2; Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, pp. 50-1.

³⁵² Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, p. 50.

³⁵³ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, pp. 264-5.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 264; Be'ayot had a print run of 500, according to Magnes before the Anglo-American Inquiry Committee in 1946. *Arab-Jewish Unity: Testimony before the Anglo-American Inquiry Commission for the Ichud (Union) Association* by Judah Magnes and Martin Buber (London 1947), p. 65.

After *Hashomer Hatzair*, the Socialist League and *Poale Zion Smol* became members of the League as parties in June 1942, Magnes took the initiative to organize the independent members of the League in a distinct group. Therefore a committee was set up, whose membership included Buber, Kalvarisky, Smilansky, Magmes, and Henrietta Szold, director of the Medical Organization of *Hadassah* (Myrtle Tree), the American Women Zionist Organization of which she was the founder.³⁵⁵ Ernst Simon and Gavriel Stern also cooperated in establishing this community. The first meeting of the *Ichud* Association took place on 11 August 1942, with about a hundred participants. Its members, though relatively few in numbers, represented a prestige group, because of social standing and intellectual achievement, expressing an 'upper middle class liberalist approach'. Magnes was elected as President.³⁵⁶

At the first meeting of 11 August, Magnes repeated the same message as he expounded in *Ha'ol*, of the merging in Judaism of the political and the religious. The political problem for the Jews in Palestine was they had to create either 'a public life based on justice and mercy' or that they should, 'like all the nations, obtain their aims and by any and all means.'³⁵⁷ He stated amongst other matters some reasons for opposing the setting up of a Jewish state. The warfare that would surely follow might destroy the Jewish community in Palestine, and would certainly breed hatred for generations. It would be the 'way of the nations,' not of Judaism, and could only lead to a pagan state, not to a Jewish state. Magnes did not want to create another center of strife for the New World after the war.³⁵⁸

Both the Arab and the Jewish press dealt extensively with *Ichud*. There was much feeling that this new group was anti-Zionist. In Jewish public bodies *Ichud's* aims were being discussed.³⁵⁹ All slander and half-truths about *Ichud* caused it to publish a Declaration on 3 September 1942, to refute all misconceptions. This Declaration stated the same Bi-nationalist ideas as were being expressed in the

³⁵⁵ Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, p. 148; Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, p. 541.

³⁵⁶ *Ichud*, meaning 'union', had a few hundred members in 1946, according to the testimony of Magnes before the Anglo-American Inquiry Committee in 1946. *Arab-Jewish Unity*, p. 65; Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, p. 148; Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, p. 370; Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1015.

³⁵⁷ Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, p. 51.

³⁵⁸ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 259.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 261-2.

Bentov Report, the Jewish Agency Committee Report and in the League's Program:

- (1) The Association "Union" adheres to:
 - (a) the Zionist Movement in so far as this seeks the establishment of the Jewish National Home for the Jewish people in Palestine;
 - (b) The struggle throughout the world for a new order in international relations, and a union of the peoples, large and small, for a life of freedom and justice, without fear, oppression, and want.
- (2) The Association "Union" therefore regards a union between the Jewish and Arab peoples as essential for the up-building of Palestine and for meeting its basic problems. The Association "Union" will strive for cooperation between a Jewish world and the Arab world in all branches of life – social, economic, cultural, political – this making for the revival of the whole Semitic world.
- (3) The main political aims of the Association "Union" are as follows:
 - (a) Government in Palestine based upon equal political rights for the two peoples.
 - (b) The agreement of the steadily growing Jewish Community in Palestine and of the whole Jewish people to a federative union of Palestine and neighboring countries. This federative union is to guarantee the national rights of all peoples within it.
 - (c) A covenant between this federative union and an Anglo-American union, which is to be a part of the future union of the free peoples. This union of the free peoples is to bear the ultimate responsibility for the establishment and stability of international relations in the new world after the war.

The Association "Union" is to cooperate with the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement, containing, as it does, representatives of organizations with varying points of view. It is also prepared to cooperate with other organizations and groups in specific pieces of work.³⁶⁰

The reason why *Ichud* was established was not, as some of Magnes' adversaries claimed, that he might have an organization in the name of which he might speak.³⁶¹ This he could have done easily as a member of the League. Its founder probably hoped to strengthen the position of the many individual members of the League, who, after *Hahomer Hatzair*, the Socialist League and *Poale Zion Smol* became members as parties, were in danger of losing any influence

³⁶⁰ Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, p. 149; *Arab-Jewish Unity*, p. 40.

³⁶¹ According to Golomb, a Zionist, Magnes decided to found *Ichud* after Awni abd el-Hadi, an Arab leader with whom Magnes had much contact for finding common ground, asked Magnes in whose name he was speaking. Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, pp. 262-3.

in the League.³⁶² A related reason was exposed by Hirsch who said that ‘we were fed up with being called in the League “the intellectuals”, so we decided to belong to the League as a block.’³⁶³

Due to the general circumstances in the world and the direction that Zionist policy was taking, Magnes and his associates evidently wanted to establish a Bi-nationalist association that would be more effective than the League. At that moment opposing the idea of founding a Jewish state, as expressed in the Biltmore Program, seemed more necessary than every before. The experience of the League, as expressed by Stern, one of *Ichud*’s founders, was ‘of much running around and little activity.’³⁶⁴

In fact, *Hashomer Hatzair*, the most important member of the League, saw *Ichud* as a rival to the League. They feared it would fragmentize the movement for Jewish-Arab cooperation.³⁶⁵ This fragmentizing was indeed a danger, as *Ichud* would cooperate with the League, as it was prepared to cooperate with other groups and organizations in specific pieces of work.³⁶⁶ Like the League *Ichud* wanted to be a platform for like-minded people and groups, and in spite of the fact that no groups became members if *Ichud*, it had much in common with the League:

It is not a political party. It is a group of individuals belonging to different parties and of independents belonging to no party. Though members of *Ichud* may have varying views on details, they are united in the firm conviction that there is but one way of meeting the Palestine problem – that of Jewish-Arab cooperation.³⁶⁷

It would be wrong, however, to see *Ichud* as duplication. Its intellectualist leadership was especially interested in influencing public opinion, while the League had many other aims and activities.³⁶⁸ More important, however, the future society as was being envisaged by *Ichud* differed markedly from the League’s visions of that society, which were strongly dictated by *Hashomer Hatzair*. Especially the

³⁶² Mendes-Flohr, *Land of Two Peoples*, p. 148.

³⁶³ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 258.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

³⁶⁵ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1101. Maybe this is the reason why Aharon Cohen does not spend more than 7 lines in his voluminous book on *Ichud*.

³⁶⁶ Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p.307 and Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 163, contradict each other. Probably this is due to the fact that *Ichud* did not join the League immediately after its foundation.

³⁶⁷ *Arab-Jewish Unity*, p. 10.

³⁶⁸ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1100.

willingness of *Ichud* to negotiate with the Mufti and other representatives of the feudal Arab leaders was rejected by *Hashomer Hatzair*, as it believed close cooperation of the working classes of both nationalities offered most hope of reaching an agreement.³⁶⁹ Whereas *Hashomer Hatzair* held maximalist Zionist convictions as regards immigration and land settlement, *Ichud* was prepared to accept a situation of permanent numerical parity.³⁷⁰ For most members of the League the Bi-nationalism Palestine should be a 'home for the homeless', but *Ichud's* Zionism aimed at the creation of an ethical Jewish society, as an example to the other nations. It viewed the Arab question as the touchstone of the moral integrity of Zionism. Returning to Zion was a spiritual renewal, building the just society, in obedience to the yoke of God resting on their shoulders.³⁷¹

Whereas the Zionist leaders did not like the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation, they disliked *Ichud* even more and vehemently attacked it, although *Ichud* was but a small group without a large popular following in Palestine.³⁷² First, *Ichud* was vague concerning matters of immigration.³⁷³ Secondly, and more important, was the Zionist leaders' fear that Magnes and Szold, both enjoying a substantial backing in the United States, might influence the American Jews against the ideas being expressed in the Biltmore Program. The New York Times usually featured Magnes' political statements, as he was a leader of American Liberal Jewry. Szold exerted much influence on *Hadassah*, the American Women Zionist Organization, which she had founded and presided. This Organization was the second largest Zionist body in the United States with close to 90,000 members.³⁷⁴

The Executive of the Inner General Council met on 9 September 1942, to discuss *Ichud*. Some right-winged members wanted to exclude *Ichud* adherents from the Zionist Organization, because *Ichud's* position on immigration was not clear.³⁷⁵ Hirsch, Senator, Yaari, and Kaplansky defended *Ichud* in the discussions. It was decided to invite the leaders of *Ichud* to a joint meeting with represen-

³⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 1102.

³⁷⁰ Kolatt, 'The Zionist Movement and the Arabs', in *Studies in Zionism* 5 (1982) p. 153.

³⁷¹ Ibid.; Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, p. 38.

³⁷² Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 163.

³⁷³ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, pp. 1101-2.

³⁷⁴ Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, p. 54; Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 163.

³⁷⁵ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 163.

tatives of the Executives of the Inner General Council and the Jewish Agency. Magnes, Hirsch, Buber, Szold, Smilansky, and Kalvarisky were present at that meeting. Magnes assured those present that no one in *Ichud* wanted the Jews to remain a minority in Palestine, and he defended the right to have contacts with Arabs to search for a way to an agreement.³⁷⁶

Shertok expressed his fear that a group like *Ichud* would justify the Arabs and the British in taking a less serious view of the demands of the Zionist Organization for a Jewish state. In his opinion the *Ichud* Program was ‘an anti-Zionist document’. According to him ‘the impression has been created amongst the Arabs and the British that a group of substance has been formed [...] who are willing to make fargoing concessions, first of all in the sphere of immigration, and this is harmful.’³⁷⁷

Shertok therefore asked *Ichud* to explain its view of immigration, the main point of criticism of their program. *Ichud* published an addition to its original program as an answer to this request on 5 October 1942:

(1) Immigration. In the *Ichud* Declaration it was stated that the Association *Ichud* adheres to the Zionist movement in so far as this seeks the establishment of the Jewish National Home for the Jewish People in Palestine, and also, that *Ichud* stands for a continuation of immigration and is opposed to fixation of the Jewish Community in Palestine as a permanent minority. *Ichud*’s aim is the creation of a political and economic situation enabling the absorption of the greatest number of Jewish immigrants in Palestine, and this in complete cooperation with the Arabs – economic, social, cultural, and political. *Ichud* is of the opinion that a political program based upon equal political rights for the two peoples of Palestine and the inclusion of Palestine in a Federal Union with neighboring countries guaranteeing the basic right and essential interests of all factors, is the effective and most helpful way of securing an enlarged immigration. From this point of view *Ichud* as an Association is to join the League for Jewish Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation on the basis of the principles agreed upon by the League.

(2) Zionist Discipline. The recognized National Institutions alone have the right to enter upon binding political negotiations with extraneous factors. On the other hand, *Ichud* declares that every citizen and every Zionist group has the right of entering into direct contact with Jews and non-Jews for the purpose of clarifying the situation and of exchanging views

³⁷⁶ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 268

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 269-70

as to possibilities and of preparing the ground for proposals and plans, which are then to be brought before the recognized Institutions.³⁷⁸

Ichud had decided now to join the League. Beside the formal reason that they agreed to the aims of the League, which they already did before, they may have decided to take this step in order to show the Zionist leaders that *Ichud* was not the extreme anti-Zionist group they thought it was. The danger of fragmentation of the Bi-nationalist movement had been averted, while *Ichud* had even strengthened the movement by joining the League. In October 1942 the Bi-nationalist movement had reached the highest measure of organizational unity it has ever had. On the other hand, the Zionist opposition against Bi-nationalism was also better organized than at any time before.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

15. BI-NATIONALISM OSTRACIZED FROM THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION

After the Biltmore Conference adopted its Program, Ben Gurion went on with his campaign in the United States, for each participating organization in the American Emergency Committee still had to accept the Biltmore Program. In October 1942 the Zionist Organization of America held its annual convention. During this convention the ideas of Bi-nationalism, regional Federalism and partition were rejected as halfway measures and half-hearted efforts, as these ideas all meant the restriction of immigration and Jewish development. The stiff rejection of Bi-nationalism, in spite of the opposition of a few *Hadassah* leaders who kept supporting Henrietta Szold, was a result of the formation of *Ichud*, just a month before the convention. The Bentov Report had also played its role.³⁷⁹ At a joint session with *Hadassah*, on 17 October, the American Zionist Organizations adopted the Biltmore Program, stating that

[...] any program which denies the fundamental principles, such as advanced by the *Ichud* or any other group, is unacceptable to the Zionist Organization of American and *Hadassah*...³⁸⁰

After his return from the United States in October Ben Gurion held a countrywide campaign for the acceptance of the Biltmore Program, emphasizing that maximalist demands would be the best guarantee that after the war the Council of Nations would give in to the maximum of their demands.³⁸¹ In America Ben Gurion had told the Zionists that the Palestinian Jews desired the Biltmore Program. In Palestine, however, he told the Jews that the American Zionists wanted it, so in Palestine they should be wise to accept the Program.³⁸² During this campaign Ben Gurion attacked the Bentov Report violently, hoping to discredit as a supposed solution to the Jewish-Arab conflict the working out of the Bi-national idea. He attacked anyone who favored a Jewish-Arab accord.³⁸³ His single-minded determination succeeded to win over a large majority for his

³⁷⁹ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 163; Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, pp. 1085-7.

³⁸⁰ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1087.

³⁸¹ Sachar, *History of Israel*, p. 245.

³⁸² Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, pp. 295-6.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

maximalist proposals.³⁸⁴ In a speech the Inner General Council on October 5, Ben Gurion said:

I was one of those who strongly advocated parity between Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate. 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. So far not a single Arab leader has been found to agree to the principle of parity, with or without the Mandate. But assuming that not only Jews but Arabs also will agree to it, it does not in the remotest way solve the only problem that really matters: that of Jewish immigration. The example of Switzerland, where the difficulty between several nationalities was satisfactorily resolved, is not applicable to Palestine, because the crucial problem and the root of all friction between Jews and Arabs is not so much the problem of the Jews and Arabs who are in Palestine, but almost exclusively the problem of further Jewish immigration.³⁸⁵

Ben Gurion also rejected the idea of Bi-nationalism on the ground that there is only agreement about parity 'between Yaari and Maganes', but not with Arabs.³⁸⁶ In another meeting of the Inner General Council, on 15 October, Khazan replied to that argument, saying that those who wanted to set up a Jewish state had not found Arabs who agreed with that idea either.³⁸⁷ He and Yaari then offered a counter proposal in opposition to the Biltmore Program, demanding a Bi-national independent Palestine after the war, with international supervision in order to assure Jewish immigration in accordance with the full absorptive capacity of the country.³⁸⁸

The representative of *Poale Zion Smol* also submitted an alternative proposal on behalf of his party, stressing its hope that Palestine would become a socialist workers and farmers territorial unit, composed of Jews and Arabs who should not dominate each other. Like in the proposal of *Hashomer Hatzair*, the right for Jews to immigrate and to settle in Palestine was demanded, based on mutual understanding and cooperation between the two peoples of Palestine.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁴ Michael Cohen, *Palestine: Retreat*, p. 135.

³⁸⁵ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 251.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 252; Yaari was a leader in *Hashomer Hatzair*.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁸ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1102.

³⁸⁹ Margalit, 'Bi-nationalism', in *Studies in Zionism 4* (1981) pp. 299-300. *Poale Zion Smol*, as Marxist party, did not like the use of the word 'state', so they spoke of a 'territorial unit'.

Kaplansky of *MAPAI* also expressed his opinion that accepting the Biltmore Program would be neither just nor wise:

Naturally even if we demand the whole thing for ourselves, the Arab demand for the whole thing will appear no less moral and right. [...] I do not believe, that is I do not see the international forces which after this war will be willing to use force, military force, to enter a long war with the whole Arab East with all its countries because of the setting up of a Jewish government here in the country.³⁹⁰

The conflict came to a climax in the meeting of November 10, 1942, of the Zionist Inner General Council. It was the last opportunity for the Bi-nationalists to fight their cause within the Zionist Organization. Reacting to Sali Hirsch of *Aliyah Hadasha*, who asked for a Bi-national Palestine under a third force, which had to assure the functioning of the constitution. Ben Gurion attacked Bi-nationalism, *Hashomer Hatzair* and the Bentov Report. Because the Jewish Agency Committee Report was not being delivered to the Inner General Council for discussions, Ben Gurion did not mention it. About Bi-nationalism he said that

[...] there is no solution, this is an abstract invention which is not taken from reality, which has no base in reality but in the difficulty that you cannot find a solution. [...]

I shall touch on another matter; Hashomer Hatzair was asked to say what a Bi-national state is [...] but [they] did not answer. [...] For a long while this remained a secret. Recently Hashomer Hatzair circulated the answer, it was given in a big book: 'A Committee on the Question of Constitutional Development, Report, Volume 1'. It was circulated by Hashomer Hatzair. Its author is Bentov, and here Bentov sits. He is a member of the Actions Committee and he is an expert on the Bi-national state and can define for us what a Bi-national state is. Why is he silent? But he is silent only here in the country. There is a book also in the country; here it is marked: 'strictly secret.' In America I got the book. [...] There is an explanation by Bentov what a Bi-national state is, and the explanation was sent to America. [...] I asked the people [in the U.S.] who spoke of a Bi-national state, 'What is a Bi-national state?' they said: 'here, you have an essay about it.'

And it reaches the hands of reactionary circles, those who at the Hadasah Conference received 20 votes, they walk around with it [...] all the talk of a Bi-national state, and even these districts – they are the sick phantasmagoria of Jewish boys sitting and confusing their brains and wishing to be believed. The Arabs will not believe all of Bentov's soph-

³⁹⁰ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 253.

istry, that the Jews will come to one district and will not come into the other districts. The Arabs do not even want to agree with the White Book. And you stand before a situation, which you do not dare see as it is. The Arabs are unwilling to allow the Jewish immigration.³⁹¹

Ben Gurion spoke in harsh words about the content of the Bentov Report and its writers' intentions. He called it an anti-Zionist plan.³⁹² He said the plan was written on the basis of the White Paper, as it forbade the Jews to immigrate into and purchase land in Palestine.³⁹³ Ben Gurion also criticized the projected Jewish Region, as this would be very small.³⁹⁴

It is true the Bentov Report suggested restrictions on immigration. Ben Gurion, however, totally disregarded the fact that this restriction was proposed for only ten years so as to arrive at better relations with the Arabs and in order to ascertain that immigration and settlement would continue after the short interim period. The Report envisaged a Jewish majority in Palestine ultimately.³⁹⁵ Furthermore, it should be born in mind that the Bentov Report wanted the Jewish population to grow in this interim period of ten years to numerical equality with the Palestinian Arabs. This means it was being proposed to let the enormous number of about 75,000 Jews enter Palestine annually.³⁹⁶

Bentov himself also defended the Report's proposal of two Regions. As the Regions would only be formed after the transition period, when the number of Jews would be very large, the Jewish Region would not be as small as Ben Gurion suggested. Moreover, the Report was only a draft, submitted to certain people for their opinion and comments, only offering guidelines for negotiations.³⁹⁷

When it finally came to voting, on 10 November 1942, of the twenty-eight members 75 percent voted for accepting the Biltmore

³⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 254-5.

³⁹² Margalit, 'Bi-nationalism', p. 288.

³⁹³ Ibid., p. 284.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 284-5.

³⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 285.

³⁹⁶ Based on data of the Palestine government, the Arab population would have grown to 1,460,000 by 1950, if normal circumstances had prevailed. Without immigration the Jewish population would be 547,000 by then. The Jewish Agency had slightly different figures, and spoke of 1,392,000 Arabs and 597,000 Jews. To attain numerical parity by 1950 would have required an annual immigration of 72,000 based on the figures of the Jewish Agency, and 84,000 if the figures of the Palestine government were correct. These high numbers of immigrants were only reached in the best years of immigration between 1948 and 1959. Margalit, 'Bi-nationalism', pp. 289-90.

³⁹⁷ Margalit, 'Bi-nationalism', p. 285.

Program as the official Zionist Program. As could be expected, the two representatives of *Hashomer Hatzair* and one of *Poale Zion Smol* opposed it.³⁹⁸ *Aliyah Hadassah* also voted against the Program, although they held no Bi-nationalist convictions. They neither wanted to take any steps that might hamper the British war effort, nor wanted to make the Jewish-Arab relations worse.³⁹⁹ They felt that without prior Mandatory sanction the Zionist demand for a Jewish state was precipitate.⁴⁰⁰

Three representatives of MAPAI abstained from voting. They were the spokesmen for MAPAI's Faction B, the left wing in the party. This faction, opposed to the conservative Faction C of Ben Gurion, favored the indefinite continuation of the mandate, as open striving for a Jewish state could only lead to partitioning of the country.⁴⁰¹ Because they adhered to the idea of a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine they preferred stressing the right to free immigration and settlement in the whole country as this would eventually lead to Jewish political self-government in the whole of Palestine.⁴⁰²

This decision of the Inner General Council was being taken a few days after the German troops of Rommel had been crushed at al-Alamein.⁴⁰³ This meant great relief for the Jews in Palestine, who had feared they would have to struggle for life in Palestine against the Germans. It also took away a reason to stand closely by Britain.

This was also the time that the Jews in Palestine began to believe the stories and testimonies they heard about Hitler's *endlösung*. Their 'frantic search for rays of hope' had induced them not to believe the horrible things that were being told, though the all knew what was being told. Only after the Palestinian Jewish leaders on 18 and 19 November had debriefed a small group of Polish women and children, who were being exchanged against a group of Germans, they finally accepted the horrific truth of the Holocaust.⁴⁰⁴ There must have been an increasing awareness, however, even before this moment that these stories were true, so the decision of 10 November

³⁹⁸ Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1016.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1016, 1105.

⁴⁰⁰ Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 159.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰² Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, pp. 1104-5.

⁴⁰³ Kirk, *Survey*, p. 13.

⁴⁰⁴ Laqueur, *Terrible Secret*, pp. 180-195.

1942 of the Inner General Council will have been greatly influenced by it.⁴⁰⁵ Kirk summarizes the situation of the time, saying that

[...] as the war reached the 'end of the beginning' and the leaderless Arabs were vaguely thinking of the 'day of reckoning', the Zionists were being irrevocably impelled along the path of political self-assertion by the moral plight of their kinsmen and co-religionists in Axis-occupied Europe, and the realization that Britain would not compel the Arabs to submit to further Jewish mass immigration into Palestine. The Zionists could not be expected to appreciate a situation in which, while thousands of Greek, Polish, and Czechoslovak refugees from Axis Europe had found temporary sanctuary in Palestine, these Jews who succeeded in escaping from the Nazis, at whose hands they were suffering more atrociously than any other people, were being denied admission to the very land which they had been promised a National Home.⁴⁰⁶

Agreeing with the Zionist that these refugees should be admitted immediate entrance into Palestine, as they favored immigration up to the full economic absorption capacity, the Bi-nationalists did not agree with the demand for a Jewish state. The decision of the Council, however, in the absence of a Zionist Congress during the war, made the Biltmore Program the World Zionist Organization's official policy. Thus it also became the stated policy of the Jewish Agency.⁴⁰⁷ This meant that Bi-nationalism, which until then had been a respected branch of Zionist thought, had been banned from the Zionist Organization.⁴⁰⁸

In fact, in 1942 the Bi-nationalist idea was ostracized from the Zionist Organization, and the Zionist movement had adopted the Revisionist position, of aiming at setting up a Jewish state, irrespective of the attitude of the Arabs. The ideological conflict between the 'official' interpretation of Zionism and its 'dissident sect' of Bi-nationalism had by no means ended, however, but was strengthened because the Bi-nationalists had a greater unity than ever before, and those who aimed at a Jewish state were now speaking on behalf of the Zionist movement. Only after the State of Israel had been founded, did most Bi-nationalists convert their striving for Bi-nationalism into struggling for more general ideas of justice and peace for the Arabs in and around the State of Israel.

⁴⁰⁵ Kirk, *Survey*, p. 249; Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World*, p. 289.

⁴⁰⁶ Kirk, *Survey*, p. 249.

⁴⁰⁷ Taylor, *Prelude to Israel*, p. 58; Esco, *Palestine Vol. II*, p. 1015.

⁴⁰⁸ Hattis, *Bi-national Idea*, p. 256.

Summary and conclusions

In order to appease the Arabs, because a Second World War seemed at the point of starting, in 1939 Britain changed its policy towards the Zionist movement and the Jewish National Home. Until 1939 British policy had essentially been a help to the Zionists, by making immigration and land settlement possible. The MacDonald White Paper, however, meant to end free immigration and land purchase. The mandate did not serve these primary goals of Zionism anymore.

Because Britain changed its policy, the Zionists did likewise. When Britain definitely rejected the idea of a Jewish majority in Palestine, the Zionists did not use the ideas of Bi-nationalism and parity anymore. They had used these ideas mainly as weapons in their negotiations with Britain, to be assured of further immigration. The White Paper meant that Britain was no longer on the Zionists' side, but on the side of the Arabs. Because even with the help of Britain the Arabs were not prepared to give in to at least some of the Zionists' demands, after the White Paper and with Britain on their side, the Arabs would never be prepared to accept anything less than the end of Jewish immigration into Palestine and the independence of an Arab Palestine. After 1939, therefore, the Zionists lost all hope of reconciliation with the Arabs. What they also noticed was that the Palestinian Arabs were acquiesced, not after an agreement was reached, but because of the use of military force. Because in the beginning they still hoped Britain might reverse its policy again, the Zionists kept trying to influence Whitehall. For this reason they also began to extend their influence in the United States. Maybe the United States could exert pressure on Britain to change its course. This was very essential, because a refuge was urgently needed for Central European Jewry.

The Bi-nationalists reacted differently to the White Paper. Like the Zionists, most of them did not want immigration to be halted artificially by Britain, but in fact they blamed the Zionists for it. In their opinion the Zionists had not really worked for rapprochement and cooperation between Jews and Arabs. The Arab Revolt was an immediate result of this lack of good relations between Arabs and Jews, which finally led Britain to alter its policy. Immediately after Britain changed its policy, for the first time Bi-nationalists from all parties and groups came together to publish a booklet. Shortly thereafter the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation

was founded. The urgency for European Jewry to be able to immigrate into Palestine brought members from all Bi-nationalist groups and parties, beside individuals who did not belong to any (Bi-national) party at all, together. They urged the Zionist movement to work for better relations with the Arabs, as they also did themselves, and to adopt as a final aim a Bi-national state. They thought Bi-nationalism was the most righteous solution to the Arab-Jewish problem, which might be the key to opening Palestine for free Jewish immigration and land purchase.

The development that had started within the Zionist movement after the British policy change was even strengthened in between 1940 and 1942. The fate of European Jewry became even worse than could be imagined in 1939. In spite of this, Britain rigidly implemented the clauses in the White Paper about immigration and land settlement, so the number of Jews entering Palestine was very small. The fate of refugees, coming to Palestine illegally in all sorts of boats, enraged the Jewish community. In spite of all this, the Jews could not but be on the British side, especially during the period that Rommel threatened to conquer Palestine. The Arabs were easily won for Nazism by German propaganda, and especially the advance of Rommel made the Arabs have a positive attitude towards the Third Reich, as Hitler promised freedom from France, Britain, and the Jews to the Arabs in the Middle East.

These events of the first years of the war strengthened the Zionists in their change of ideas. The possibility to come to a negotiated agreement with the Arabs seemed further off than ever before, as the Arabs only waited for the moment the Germans would bring total freedom and deliverance from the Jews. Because Britain really implemented the White Paper, there seemed no other way to be certain of freedom immigration and land settlement than to be in sole control of the country. Many Zionists did not see any other possibility but to demand a Jewish state, as the Revisionists had always asked them to do. The peace that reigned in Palestine, thanks to the strong presence of the British Army, strengthened the belief that the Palestinian Arabs could finally be made to accept the Jewish National Home. They would acquiesce in it when they would be forced to do so. The Zionist also fought for Jewish units to be allowed to fight in the British Army. By serving the Allied Forces they hoped Britain would forget about the White Paper. More important, demanding Jews to be allowed to fight under a Jewish flag meant that Zionists asked for

the unofficial recognition as a sovereign nation, which would have been a precedent, valuable for the negotiations at the peace conference after the war. Especially in the United States a campaign was held for a Jewish Brigade under a Jewish flag. The Extraordinary Zionist Conference in the Biltmore Hotel in May 1942 demanded this Jewish Brigade under a Jewish flag. At this Conference, instigated by the Palestine Zionist leadership, it was decided that a Jewish state should be the immediate goal of Zionism. For the first time an official Zionist body officially demanded a Jewish state.

Of course the Bi-nationalists were influenced by the same events as the Zionists. Horrified by the news from Europe and the pro-Nazi attitude of the Arabs, they only saw one way to continue the construction of the National Home, which was the equivalent of immigration and the purchase of land. This only way was to create better relations with the Arabs and to arrive at a political agreement on the Bi-national character of the future independent Palestinian state. Therefore in 1940 the League began to carry out some of its aims concerning social, economic, and cultural rapprochement. Indeed there was some sort of cooperation, but never on the political level. The few talks for political rapprochement came to nothing, as both Jews and Arabs stuck their demands concerning Jewish immigration and settlement. Hoping to be able to influence the Zionist movement to adopt their Bi-national aims, the Bi-nationalists demanded the forming of the Jewish Agency Inquiry Commission, to search for ways out of the deadlock. The majority of the members of this Commission were famous Bi-nationalists. The League did also set up a Committee to advise the Jewish Agency's Commission. The League's Committee presented the first draft of its Report to the Jewish Agency Commission, and sent it to famous Jews in the United States, for receiving their comment. The Report presented an example of what the future Bi-national state that was being envisaged might look like. Ben Gurion was enraged when he found out about this Report, as he was busy at that time to convince the American Zionists that they should demand the setting up of a Jewish state. It became clear now what the future direction of the Zionist Organization was likely to do.

The definite split in the Zionist movement would take place during and after the summer of 1942. As the future Zionist policy seemed to be spelled out ever more clearly, as laid down in the Biltmore Program, the Bi-nationalists were aware of the urgent need to

unite all their strength in the League. In June *Hashomer Hatzair*, the Socialist League, and *Poale Zion Smol*, three Marxist parties, became members of the League as parties, after some discussions about the changes of the Program of the League. The Bi-nationalist character was specified even more clearly. Also a strengthening of the League was the forming of *Ichud*, a group of Bi-nationalist, Liberal-minded intellectuals. They had been members of the League personally, but now worked together as a group, which became members of the League in October. The highest point of Bi-nationalist unity and strength had been reached. On the other hand, the relations with the Zionists had never been as bad as then. Because in June the Jewish Agency decided not to cooperate with the League at all, the League also broke off its relations with the Agency. In August the Majority Report of the Jewish Agency Commission presented its Bi-nationalism proposal. This Report, however, was not being discussed by the Zionists.

For the Zionists Bi-nationalism was an abomination by now, now to be discussed anymore. The fact that Rommel did not succeed and that his army was crushed at al-Alamein in November meant that the Zionists had more freedom to openly take a fully anti-British stand. In the same month finally, after all the sad news that had been coming, the Jewish Agency 'officially believed' the stories of the Holocaust. Never in their history were the Jews more in need of a National Home. For most Zionists gradualism and waiting for the Arabs to consent were unthinkable by now. The Bi-national idea was therefore being rejected definitely, when in November the Inner General Council, representing the World Zionist Organization, adopted as its immediate and final aim the founding of a Jewish state. Especially *Ichud*, having many supporters in the United States, was strongly attacked, as it might distract American support and money for the Zionist Organization's strife for this Jewish state.

Why did Bi-nationalism lose its struggle and were the ideas of Revisionism in November 1942 being adopted as the official Zionist viewpoint? Revisionism understood the irreconcilable nature of Palestinian Arab nationalism. No agreement can be found when the highest aim of two parties is the absolute rejection of the other party's highest aim. The Palestinian Arabs wanted a Jewish immigration and land purchase to stop immediately. The Jews wanted full freedom for immigration and settlement. The Bi-nationalists were too optimistic, believing that these two ideologies might be harmo-

nized. The Marxist Bi-nationalists underestimated the strength of nationalism in the Jewish and Arab working class. The Bi-nationalists who were connected with *Ichud* were hopelessly wrong in believing that Arab nationalism could be changed by the Liberal, Humanistic ideals, which flourished in Judaism.

It is too simple, however, to answer the question to the failure of Bi-nationalism by saying that the Revisionists better understood the irreconcilable nature of the two nationalisms. On a deeper level the choice was not between two opinions about Arab nationalism and Zionism. Of course the Bi-nationalists wanted such an agreement. They did not want to force the Arabs to accept the Zionist enterprise, whereas the Revisionists were prepared to do so. This does not mean Revisionism had no eye for the rights of the Arabs. Just like the Bi-nationalists, most Revisionists were of the opinion that both nations had the same rights in Palestine. For Revisionism this was the reason they did not believe in reconciliation to be possible. For Bi-nationalists this was the reason why they did not want to force the Palestinian Arabs into submission. Should it be concluded, then, that Revisionism was an immoral and Bi-nationalism a moral movement, or that the real difference between the Revisionists and Bi-nationalists was the difference between war-mongers and doves? Did the Zionists adopt Revisionist ideas and methods because they had less high ethical standards? Those who reject Zionism would like to finish with this conclusion. To understand why Zionist adopted the Revisionist and not the Bi-nationalist position, it is necessary to go once more to a deeper level of understanding.

The difference between Bi-nationalism and Revisionism was not that one of them had high moral standards and the other not, and the reason why the Zionist movement in between 1939 and 1942 came to adopt the Revisionist ideas was not because Zionism had become or had always been an immoral movement. The ultimate difference between the Revisionist and the Bi-nationalist attitude towards the Jewish-Arab problem lay in how they related this to the European Jewish problem. Bi-nationalists were horrified, as much as Revisionists, by the plight of European Jewry, and wanted Palestine to be a refuge for the homeless Jews. Unlike Revisionism, however, they did not subdue their idea of justice concerning the Jewish-Arab problem in Palestine, to the moral aim of creating a 'home for the homeless.' Because of the horrible situation of European Jewry, however, the majority of Palestinian Jews chose for finding a solution of the

problems of European Jews as quick as possible, even at the cost of finding a just settlement of the Jewish-Arab controversy in Palestine. The factor of time made them subdue the search for a just settlement in Palestine to the salvation of European Jewry.

Bi-nationalists now had to struggle against the official policy of the Zionist Organization from the outside instead of struggling for one idea on par with the other ideas within the Zionist Organization. The split between Zionism and Bi-nationalism, which had begun in 1939, had completely ripened in November 1942, when the Zionist Organization's Executive expressed its policy of aiming at a Jewish state.

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