THE LETTERS AND PAPERS OF CHAIM WEIZMANN

July 1929 – October 1930

Volume XIV, Series A

Introduction: Camillo Dresner

General Editor Barnet Litvinoff. Volume Editor Camillo Dresner, Transaction Books, Rutgers University and Israel Universities Press, Jerusalem, 1978

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Volume XIV of the letters of Chaim Weizmann, written in the period between the Sixteenth Zionist Congress and the British Government's Statement of Policy of 21 October 1930, gives a central place to the establishment of an enlarged Jewish Agency by the inclusion of non-Zionists, and to the political struggle which followed the 1929 disturbances in Palestine. The achievement of the Jewish Agency would undoubtedly have marked a high point in Weizmann's Zionist leadership were it not diminished by the world-wide economic slump and a crisis in relations with the British Government. The latter development threatened to halt the expansion of the yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine), and left an indelible mark on Weizmann's position in the Zionist movement, with deepening internal dissension and concerted attacks upon his leadership.
Ratification of the agreement for the enlarged Jewish Agency by the Congress, meeting in Zurich from 28 July to 11 August 1929, was assured in advance. But nevertheless the opportunity was taken by the opposing sides to re-state their positions, made known in debate during the preceding six years. The new body, Weizmann stated, would accelerate constructive work in Palestine through improved machinery and increased resources. Furthermore, the adherence of non-Zionists to their efforts would enable the Zionist idea to penetrate the broad strata among the Jewish people which had hitherto held aloof. Opponents of the agreement, while doubting whether it would produce a 'shower of gold,' levelled their main criticism against what they regarded as a blow to the democratic character of the Zionist movement, and argued that cooperation with non-Zionists would obscure the character of Zionism as a national liberation movement of the Jewish people. In the event, the agreement was approved by a majority of 230 against 30, with 45 abstentions.

The constituent meeting of the Council of the enlarged Jewish Agency, opening

on 11 August in the presence of Albert Einstein, Leon Blum, Sholem Asch and Herbert Samuel and such American and British communal figures as Louis Marshall, Felix Warburg, Lord Melchett and Osmond d'Avigdor-Goldsmid, proved an occasion of universal Jewish significance and a personal victory for Weizmann. This was noted by, among others, Menahem Ussishkin, not a supporter of Weizmann at the time, when he described the national revival movement as now entering a new era of identification with the entire Jewish people, with Weizmann as its architect.

The constitution of the enlarged Jewish Agency drew its legal basis from Article Four of the Mandate, which stated: 'An appropriate Jewish Agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home.' The third paragraph of the 15 in the constitution' defined the aims of the Agency as: the encouragement and furtherance of immigration; provision for Jewish religious needs; the fostering of the Hebrew language and culture; the acquisition of lands; the promotion of agricultural settlement based on Jewish labour. Paragraphs 4-8 defined the structure of the organization: the President of the Zionist Organization would also be President of the Jewish Agency unless otherwise decided by a three-quarters majority of the Council; the Council would be the supreme governing body of the Agency and would lay down the lines of policy (para. 5).

Membership was fixed at 224, unless amended by a two-thirds majority and, as in the other institutions of the Agency, was to be equally divided between Zionists and non-Zionists. The Zionist representatives would be chosen by the Zionist Organization according to its own procedures, with the non-Zionist representatives also appointed, as far as practicable, by democratic methods. The Council would hold an ordinary meeting every two years, but the Executive and the President could separately, with the approval of the Administrative Committee, convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council. The Administrative Committee (para. 6) of 40 members, would meet in the intervals between sessions of the Council—if possible, every six months—to consider questions of policy and supervise the work of the Agency. It was authorized to set up advisory subcommittees. Membership of the Executive, responsible for the conduct of the Agency's current business (para. 7), was to be fixed by the Administrative Committee.

Half its members were to be nominated by the non-Zionists on the Council and the remainder by the Zionist Organization, which was entitled to fill the seats if the non-Zionists failed to nominate the prescribed number. For the period to 30 September 1930, eight of the 12 members of the Executive would be nominated by the Zionist Organization and henceforward it would have eight members only, equally divided.

Paragraph 8 dealt with the deputy members of the Council and the Administrative Committee—a point of controversy during the negotiations. According to the constitution, three deputies could be appointed for every full member of the two bodies. A member unable to attend a meeting was entitled to choose his representative for that session from the list of deputies, or to authorize another full member to vote on his behalf. The Keren Hayesod was recognized as the Agency's main financial instrument (para. 9). The Council could dissolve the enlarged Jewish Agency by a two-thirds majority.

Weizmann was elected President of the Agency and Baron Edmond de Rothschild Honorary President. Louis Marshall became Chairman, with Lord Melchett Associate Chairman, of the Council, and Felix Warburg Chairman of the Administrative Committee. Thus did Weizmann's prolonged efforts at last bear fruit. Marshall and Warburg assured him that 'financial troubles are over.'

The general situation was also encouraging. The yishuv , had emerged from its economic crisis and there was a renewal of worker immigration. Nor were there any apparent clouds on the political horizon. In June 1929, Britain had returned a Labour Government, of which Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister, and Arthur Henderson, the Foreign Secretary, had repeatedly expressed their sympathy with Zionism. MacDonald had visited Palestine in 1922 as a guest of the General Federation of Labour, and had later published a warm appreciation of Jewish settlement in the country.' Henderson had participated in the preparatory committee of the Socialist Conference in Brussels in 1928 at which the Socialist Committee for Labour Palestine was established.' Some Zionists, including apparently Weizmann,6 believed that there was an ideological affinity between Zionism and the Labour Party.

He left Zurich with a feeling of 'peace and achievement,' hoping for an extended holiday. A few days later, however, he received the first reports, following eight tranquil

years, of bloody disturbances in Palestine.

They began with a dispute over the Wailing Wall. On the eve of the previous Yom Kippur (23 September 1928), British police had forcibly removed a screen erected by the worshippers at the Wall to separate men and women. Since the days of Turkish rule, the worshippers had been forbidden to erect a screen or to bring chairs, and the British authorities had been meticulous in maintaining the status quo. The behaviour of the police aroused a storm of protest in the yishuv, with representations to the British Government and League of Nations. Arab nationalist circles in Palestine, led by the Supreme Moslem Council and its President, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, exploited the incident to step up their campaign against the Jews. The ostensibly religious character of the dispute enabled them to add a new dimension to their national struggle and win support from wide circles more attracted by religious slogans than by secular national appeals.' These circles accused the Jews of designs upon the Holy Places of Islam, and started building operations in an area impinging on the Wall. They held noisy religious ceremonies, accompanied by singing and dancing. The more indignant Jews demanded that the leadership of the yishuv adopt an uncompromising attitude. The leaders, anxious to avoid a religious confrontation, tried to pour oil on the troubled waters. On the 9th of Ab, however, a youth demonstration, in which the Revisionist Brit Trumpeldor was prominent, was staged, and an Arab counter-demonstration took place the following day. Then a Jewish youth was stabbed and died of his wounds. His funeral, on 21 August, turned into a political demonstration and there were clashes with the police.

The growing tension exploded into violence on 23 August. Following Friday prayers in Jerusalem, a mob of villagers from the neighbourhood, with Bedouin from the Judean Hills, attacked the Jewish areas of the City. The riots spread all over the country, with their climax at Hebron on 24 August, when 66 Jews were killed and 50 wounded, and at Safed on the 29th, where 45 were killed. The toll was: 133 Jews killed and 339 wounded; 116 Arabs killed and 232 wounded, mostly by the security forces.

When the disturbances began the British garrison totalled 77, with a few armoured cars, and the police force consisted of only 172 men. In July 1929, the last sealed armouries, which had been entrusted to the Jewish settlements after the riots of

1921, were withdrawn in accordance with a decision by the Palestine Administration in 1925. Most of the police NCOs and constables were Arabs. The Chief of Police and about one-third of the senior officers were absent from the country at the time. The High Commissioner was on home leave in England, and his place was filled by Harry Luke, the Chief Secretary, who was accused by the Jewish leaders of hostility to the National Home policy and was regarded as chiefly to blame for the developments that led to the outbreak.

The disturbances, however, also exposed the Jewish weakness in self-defence. The prolonged tranquility had left its mark, and many settlements were incapable of resisting the Arab attackers.'

On receiving the first reports of these events, Weizmann telegraphed Lord Melchett, asking him to make representations to the' British Government. He also telegraphed the Prime Minister with the request for all measures necessary to prevent further killings, and demanded an independent inquiry which would 'clearly determine the responsibility.' Returning to London, he had a meeting with the Colonial Secretary, Lord Passfield, which heartened him. He informed the London Executive that Passfield had instructed the authorities in Palestine not to disarm the Jewish defenders, and had accepted Weizmann's demand for the suspension of Luke, and Archer Cust, the Deputy Governor of Jerusalem, for their failure to prevent the disturbances. Passfield further agreed to the Government's issuing a statement on its policy in Palestine and increasing the immigration quota when quiet was restored.

However, Weizmann's optimism proved unjustified. The Jerusalem Executive reported that the order to disarm the Jewish special constables, who had volunteered on the outbreak of the disturbances, had not been withdrawn. Weizmann failed to obtain an interview with the Prime Minister, and instead received a letter from Passfield" which repudiated most of the points reported by Weizmann as having been agreed. The decision to disarm the Jewish constables, Passfield wrote, though taken under pressure from the Arabs, would improve the security of the Jewish population. The leadership of the Yishuv was not aware of the dangers of such a possibility for the Jews of Palestine. Furthermore, Passfield rejected Weizmann's demand for the dismissal of Luke and Cust, as well as the proposal that the Government issue a political statement, and increase the

immigration quota.

Passfield's reversal was undoubtedly due to the influence of subordinates in his department and the reports from the Palestine Administration. He had himself been a Colonial Office official and belonged to the civil service by temperament and training. The ideological aspect of his attitude to the Jewish National Home should not be underestimated, however. He believed that in a clash of interests it was 'his task to protect the poor Arabs against the powerful Jews.' But his hostility to Zionism was not yet fully revealed.

Discussion between Passfield and his officials and Weizmann centred on the character of the commission to enquire into the disturbances. Weizmann regarded such a commission as an opportunity both to put the Palestine officials into the dock and for the creation of political conditions enabling a great leap forward in Jewish settlement work. He therefore called for the establishment of a commission with broad powers, which would examine to what extent the provisions of the Mandate in regard to the establishment of the Jewish National Home had been carried out. The members of the Commission had to be personalities of international standing; as Chairman, he proposed General Smuts.

Passfield and his officials wanted the Commission's terms of reference limited to the investigation of the direct causes leading to the disturbances. Colonial Office opposition to a Commission empowered to investigate the activities of the Palestine Administration in general was understandable, but there were also political reasons for objecting to the Jewish Agency's proposals. Passfield wished to avoid the impression 'that there could possibly be any reconsideration of the acceptance by His Majesty's Government of the Mandate for Palestine or any weakening of policy with regard to the Jewish National Home in accordance with the Mandate.'

This view prevailed. It was expressly stated that the Commission's terms of reference would not extend to questions of major policy,'3 and its members were named as Sir Walter Shaw, former Supreme Court Justice in Malaya (Chairman), with three Members of Parliament: Sir Henry Betterton (Conservative), R. Hopkin Morris (Liberal) and Harry Snell (Labour).

Weizmann feared such a Commission would be 'a purely white 'washing

business,' to cover up the shortcomings of the Palestine Administration, and he asked for the right to summon witnesses who would be interrogated under oath and could be cross-examined, and permission for the parties to be represented by Counsel. Only through Lord Reading's intervention with the Prime Minister was the request granted.

Weizmann still held fast to the hope that the political situation following the disturbances would give prospects for rapid and extensive progress. As he wrote to Oskar Wassermann, a non-Zionist leader and chairman of the Keren Hayesod in Germany: 'I have said repeatedly that in the course of normal evolutionary development we can only progress politically very slowly, step by step. The opportunity of covering a further stretch of road in one great leap only presents itself in very special circumstances, when we are able to jolt the wagon forward with a great revolutionary effort.' Weizmann was not thinking of a change in Zionist policy, but of its more rapid implementation. To the Government he presented 'our old and well-known political demands.'

This he did in a series of meetings with the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary. In his opinion, the Government had to choose between three alternatives: 1) to give up the policy of the Mandate; 2) to allow matters to slide as hitherto; 3) to make a real effort to implement the Mandate in the letter and the spirit, 'which has never been done before.' The first alternative was contrary to the declared policy of the Government, while the second would only aggravate the situation and compel him to resign. The only alternative left, therefore, was the third. In concrete terms, he called for: a liberal immigration policy, allowing for 15-20,000 immigrants a year—a quarter of a million Jews in Palestine could hold their own not by virtue of their physical strength, but of their moral, social and economic power; a liberal economic policy facilitating the acquisition of State land; the alleviation of the tax burden, which weighed heavily on the Jewish settlements in the early years after their establishment; the employment of Jews in the civil service, the police and the frontier guard; an improvement in security arrangements.

Only a friendly administration in Palestine could carry out this policy. Weizmann accused the British officials there of hostility to the National Home policy and even of anti-semitism. Their attitude encouraged the Arabs to believe that in violence they could compel a retreat by the Government. If the Arabs were convinced of the Government's determination, it would not be difficult to bring them to the conference table. He

proposed that MacDonald convene a round-table conference of Zionist and Arab leaders, 'meaning by Arab leaders not merely a few Palestinian Effendis, but the representatives of the Arab people in Baghdad, or Damascus, or Cairo.' Weizmann saw no need, therefore, for any change in the declared policy of the Zionist Organization towards the Arabs, as expressed by the 12th Congress, which stated Zionist determination `to live with the Arab people on terms of concord and mutual respect and, together with them, to make the common home into a flourishing commonwealth.' Violence would not affect this basic attitude. However, the Arabs, or some of their leaders, reacted to the Jewish aspiration for peace by a desire 'to throw us into the sea.' The reply must be the numerical and economic reinforcement of the yishuv, the responsibility for whose security lay with the Mandatory Power. The Jewish people expressed its will to strike roots in Palestine byits readiness to contribute to the upbuilding of the country through constructive work, and not by warships—`. . . and even if we could, we would not .do it.'"

The 1929 disturbances had brought criticism of the leadership's attitude to the Arab question from Zionist and non-Zionist circles alike. It is doubtful whether Weizmann would have been troubled by the criticism of Judah Magnes, Chancellor of the Hebrew University, and the Brit Shalom group, whom he termed 'extreme pacifists,' had it not transpired that men of influence in the Zionist movement and Jewish public life were thinking along the same lines. Among them were some Zionist leaders in Germany, including Kurt Blumenfeld, who had previously supported his policy. Warburg, Chairman of the Administrative Committee of the Jewish Agency, and Einstein sympathised with their view. This increased Weizmann's anxieties at a 'new kind of Revisionism ... much worse than Jabotinsky's.' The critics, some of whom were afraid of a recrudescence of violence in Palestine, charged the leadership with ignoring the Arab problem and thus intensifying the dispute, and they called for a change in the movement's attitude to the question.

There were, indeed, substantial differences among those critics themselves in regard to the long-term aims of Zionism, but they were united by the demand for immediate negotiations with the Arabs, and wished for a Zionist move towards the establishment of a Legislative Council on a democratic basis. Magnes personally took an initiative with the Mufti of Jerusalem, without consulting the leadership. The

intermediary in these talks was H. St. John Philby, who claimed to be a representative of the Colonial Secretary, and a programme for a Jewish-Arab settlement was drafted in talks he held with Magnes and the Mufti. It soon transpired that Philby had had no such authorization, but in the meantime Magnes urged Warburg to use his influence with Weizmann in the direction of what he described as proposals for a settlement.

Weizmann rejected this enthusiasm for immediate negotiations. The Arabs felt victorious, and they would interpret any attempt at negotiations at that time as a sign of weakness. 'You cannot deal. with Arabs or, for that matter, with anybody, under stress or duress; you must show a bold front if you want to negotiate with your adversary. I am not sure whether the Arabs feel themselves very victorious or not: I am inclined to think they have shot their bolt, and that they expected much more damage to be done and much more sympathy on the part of the world, and I think, from what I have heard and what I feel, that they are rather disappointed. I think that the Enquiry is rapidly increasing their disappointment. Above all they must be made to feel that acts of violence will be of no service to them and they are weakening their position by perpetrating them.' Only after the Enquiry Commission had issued its recommendations and the British Government had made it clear to the Arabs that it intended to meet its obligations under the Mandate, would the time be ripe for negotiations with the Arabs—and even then, the initiative should come from the British Government.

Behind the debate on whether negotiations with the Arabs should be started immediately or deferred until the British Government clarified its attitude lay a controversy involving the final aim of Zionism. Liberal circles in the West charged the Zionist movement with depriving the Arabs of Palestine of the right to self-determination, and they specified in this regard the movement's opposition to a Legislative Council in Palestine, democratically elected in accordance with the numerical proportion between the two communities.

Weizmann warned against the adoption of slogans inappropriate to the situation. He did not believe that the Arabs had reached the maturity required for a democratic parliamentary regime. Besides, experience showed that a parliament consisting of representatives of various nationalities developed into an arena for conflicting national hatreds. The lesson was to be learned from the history of the Habsburg Empire. The

implications of the proposals were particularly grave, however, for the continuance of the Zionist enterprise. The establishment of a parliament based on the existing balance of forces, with a large Arab majority facing a Jewish minority, would lead to the liquidation of the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.

However, the idea of a Jewish State in Palestine was in Weizmann's view no longer practicable. `If a Jewish State were possible,' he wrote, 'I would be strongly for it. I am not for it because I consider it unrealisable. If Palestine were an empty country, the Jewish State would have come about, whether we want it or not. Palestine being what it is, the Jewish State will not come about, whether we want it or not—unless some fundamental change takes place which I cannot envisage at present. The propaganda which is carried out in certain Zionist circles, like the Revisionists, for a Jewish State, is foolish and harmful, but it cuts no ice, and you could just as well ask for a Jewish State in Manhattan Island. The Balfour Declaration speaks of a National Home. So does the Mandate. Opinions may be divided on the subject as to how large this National Home can be, whether it will hold half a million, a million, or two million Jews, but whatever it will be, it won't be a Jewish State.' They would now have to be content with a bi-national state. 'But once the firm und of the Jewish State was abandoned,' he wrote to Marshall, 'the picture became blurred; the idea of a Jewish State could be easily understood, just as the meaning of the status quo—a cancelling of the Balfour Declaration and Mandate—would require no interpretation. But equality in rights between partners as yet very unequal in numbers, requires careful thought and constant watching.' The immediate application of the principle of equal rights for Jews and Arabs in Palestine would lead to Arab rule and the end of the Jewish National Home.

A prominent place is taken in this volume by Weizmann's copious correspondence with Warburg, who, on Marshall's death in September 1929 became leader of the non-Zionist side of the Jewish Agency in the United States. As Chairman of the Administrative Committee he was, in fact, Weizmann's senior non-Zionist partner and his opposite number. Their relationship was reflected in the extensive reviews Weizmann wrote to Warburg of the political situation, with discussion of the political and organizational questions at issue between them.

These differences concerned both relations between the Jewish Agency and the

Zionist Organization in America, and the respective functions and powers of the Executive and the Administrative Committee. Warburg held that once the Jewish Agency had been established, the authority to deal with political and economic affairs had been transferred to its central institutions, and the functions of the Zionist Organization were limited to publicising the work in Palestine and assistance in the collection of funds. Warburg disapproved of what he regarded as nationalist declarations by Zionist leaders and in articles in the *Neu Palestine*, the organ of the Zionist Organization of America. He demanded that Weizmann close down the paper and saw the latter's refusal as weakness vis-a-vis local Zionist federations. But Weizmann's leadership had taken shape in a democratic movement sensitive and responsive to the moods of the rank and file; authority was imposed by persuasion, and by consideration for the balance of forces. Warburg, whose public activity had been of a philanthropic nature, found it difficult to understand this approach.

Antagonism came into sharp relief in the controversy over the demarcation of functions and powers between the Executive and the Administrative Committee, which had not been clearly defined at the outset, and thus left room for conflicting interpretations. Warburg held that the only function of the members of the Executive was to carry out the policy of the Jewish Agency as laid down by its Council and Administrative Committee. He took as a pattern the hierarchical structure of economic undertakings and the political tradition of the United States. Weizmann, on the other hand, compared the Executive to a Cabinet in a European parliamentary democracy, which was not only an executive body, but also took decisions on policy, while the function of the Administrative Committee was to lay down general lines of policy.

From December 1929 reports began reaching London from Palestine that the disturbances had had a profound effect on the High Commissioner's attitude to Zionism.'5 The Administration feared a recurrence of disorder, with possible repercussions on the neighbouring Muslim countries. The general view among British officials was that the National Home policy was unjust and impractical. According to Harry Sacher, it would be impossible to avoid constitutional changes: let the Jewish Agency take the initiative with proposals of its own to prevent the imposition of a settlement.

Still more grave, in Weizmann's view, were reports that the Enquiry Commission

was exceeding its terms of reference by addressing itself to such matters of major policy as immigration, lands and constitutional changes. He considered this development a catastrophe, and on 17 December had an all-party meeting with M.P.s sympathetic to Zionism. It was decided there to try and prevent the commission from exceeding its terms of reference, and to press for the establishment of a further commission to enquire into the substantive problems of the Mandate. A letter published in The Times over the signatures of Lloyd George, Balfour and Smuts, all members of the War Cabinet responsible for the Balfour Declaration, stated that the fulfilment of the task assumed by the British Government in connection with Palestine was not making satisfactory progress, and it accordingly called for the appointment of a new commission to investigate policy and examine the workings of the Mandate as a whole.

The Prime Minister disputed the advantage of establishing a new commission, which would only prolong the unrest in Palestine. He agreed, on the other hand, that the basic problems relating to the implementation of the Mandate should be examined. On 23 December, MacDonald told Parliament that the substantive problems of the Mandate were 'clearly outside the terms of reference of the Shaw Commission and cannot be made a part of its report."

Weizmann doubted whether The Times letter or the Prime Minister's statement would have the required effect, 'as of course every Commission wishes to be as important as it can make itself.' Fur accordingly.

The Shaw Commission's report" was presented to Parliament on 31 March, 1930. It concluded that the outbreak in Jerusalem was from the beginning an attack by Arabs on Jews, but that it was not premeditated. The majority found that the Mufti of Jerusalem and the Palestine Arab Executive had not been guilty of deliberate incitement, although the movement which the Mufti in part created became a factor in the events which led to the outbreak. The Mufti had co-operated with the Government in its efforts to restore peace and prevent the spread of disorder. Nor did the report find fault with the behaviour of the Palestine Government, rejecting the Zionist charges that it had shown lack of sympathy towards the establishment of the Jewish National Home.

The report distinguished between the immediate causes of the outbreak and the fundamental cause, which, in the Commission's opinion, was the Arab feeling of hostility

towards the Jews consequent upon the disappointment of their political and national aspirations and fear for their economic future. The immediate causes included: the Wailing Wall dispute; inciting and intemperate articles in some Arabic and Jewish papers; incitement of the less-educated Arab people; the enlargement of the Jewish Agency; the inadequacy of the military and police forces; and the belief, due largely to a feeling of uncertainty as to policy, that the decisions of the Palestine Government could be influenced by political considerations.

The report admitted that Jewish settlement had improved the economic position of the Arabs, but the latter feared that with Jewish immigration and land purchase they might be deprived of their livelihood and in time pass under the political domination of the Jews.

Charging the Jewish authorities with a serious departure from the doctrine that immigration be regulated by the economic capacity of Palestine to absorb new arrivals, and criticizing the selection of immigrants according to their political creed rather than their qualifications for admission, the report recommended a clearly defined policy in regard to the regulation and control of Jewish immigration, with consultation of non-Jewish interests in Palestine on the subject.

The report recognised that in their land purchase transactions the Jews acted with the knowledge of the Government, and paid compensation to dispossessed Arab cultivators, even though this was not required by the law of Palestine. However, the existing legislation was inadequate to prevent the displacement of the Arab cultivators, and the discontented and landless class thus being created was a potential source of disturbance. Palestine could not support a larger agricultural population unless methods of farming underwent a radical change. A scientific enquiry was recommended into possible improved methods of cultivation, having regard to the natural increase in the rural population. Meanwhile, the tendency towards the eviction of peasant cultivators from the land should be checked by appropriate legislation or some other means.

Attention was drawn to the difficulties faced by the Palestine Government as a result of the ambiguity involved in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, and of the dual obligation to facilitate the establishment of the Jewish National Home, on the one hand, and to protect the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish population on the other. The British Government should therefore define more clearly the passages in the

Mandate which provided for the safeguarding of the rights of the non-Jewish communities and take into account the disappointment of the Arabs in not receiving self-government, when recognition granted to the Jewish Agency gave a special status to the Jews.

Harry Snell, while signing the report, added a Note of Reservations in regard to the part played by the Mufti and the Arab Executive in the incitement which preceded the disturbances, and the actions of the Palestine Government. He also disagreed with the Commission's conclusions in regard to immigration and land purchase. Snell attributed to the Mufti a greater share of responsibility for the disturbances than did the report, and also found fault with the actions of the Palestine Government. He did not subscribe to the criticisms made in the report in regard to the method of selecting immigrants and the acquisition of land. Understanding could be achieved between the two peoples, in his opinion, not by a change of policy, but by a change of mind on the part of the Arab population, which had been led to believe that they were victims of injustice and that the Jewish immigrants were an immediate danger to their future. These fears, he said, were exaggerated. Zionist activity in Palestine had raised the standard of living of the Arab workers and laid the foundations for future progress towards understanding between the two peoples.

The report 'has come as a terrible blow to the whole Jewish nation,' Weizmann wrote to MacDonald. The fact that the Arabs were blamed for the outbreak of violence was not enough to cover up the grave political significance of the commission's conclusions and recommendations. It had almost completely ignored Jewish achievements in Palestine, the meaning of Zionism and the Jewish problem. Weizmann saw the report as a deliberate attempt to exonerate the Palestine Administration and the Arab leaders, and its political aim was to institute 'measures which would, in effect, render null and void the Jewish National Home.'

He still believed, however, that he could succeed in dissuading the Government from adopting the Commission's conclusions, and in this he had the support of the leaders of the two opposition parties, Stanley Baldwin and Lloyd George, as well as other M.P.s of all three parties. At a meeting attended also by Passfield, Melchett, Lord Reading and Warburg, MacDonald admitted that the report was 'very bad; it will depress the Jews and

elate the Arabs; it contains a great many ()biter dicta for which there is no evidence.'" He agreed that the British officials in Palestine were narrow-minded, and as to another commission, thought it preferable to send a personality of international standing, mentioning Smuts as a possible candidate. Weizmann fiercely criticised the report and hinted at resignation.

Deciding on a policy of quiet political action rather than a public campaign and open struggle, he avoided condemnation of the report in a letter to The Times. He wrote instead of the commission's confirmation that the disturbances of August 1929 had started with an attack by Arabs on Jews. But the question that interested the Jewish people, he declared, was: 'Is the policy of the Jewish National Home in Palestine, the policy of the Mandate, to be re-affirmed, encouraged, or arrested?'

It seemed at first that Weizmann's moderate line would prove to be justified. On 3 April, the Prime Minister stated in Parliament that the Government would continue to administer Palestine in accordance with the terms of the Mandate. A double undertaking was involved, he continued: to promote the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and to safeguard the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish population.' On the previous day the Cabinet had decided, Passfield dissenting, that there should be an authoritative enquiry into problems of agricultural set- tlement, immigration and development, taking into consideration, the political background to these problems." Weizmann said: 'I believe that the first battle hasn't gone too badly for us.'

Once again, he had been too optimistic. The Government decided against Smuts, a known Zionist sympathiser, and appointed Sir John Hope Simpson, who had recently been deputy chairman of a League of Nations Commission for the settlement of refugees in Greece. Weizmann immediately perceived the danger of despatching to Palestine an expert who was not aware of the 'moral and political implications' of the problem, but failed to secure a meeting with Hope Simpson before the latter's departure. He blamed Passfield for breaking a promise given to him. The incident had a harmful effect on his relations with the Colonial Secretary.

The nomination of Luke, and T. I. K. Lloyd, Secretary of the Shaw Commission and 'hero and the author of the report,'" to the British delegation to the session of the

Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations due to take place that June, added to Weizmann's resentment. He regarded their appointment as 'a studied insult,' and proof that the Government supported the Shaw Commission's conclusions.

In the background of this tension between Weizmann and the Colonial Office, the British were conducting talks with an Arab delegation from Palestine, which had reached London at the end of March. In these discussions the Arabs maintained their stand on the abolition of the Mandate and the establishment of a democratic regime in Palestine on the basis of the numerical relation between the communities in the country. The Government rejected the demands, but expressed readiness to carry out certain constitutional reforms. The delegation further demanded the immediate suspension of immigration, with legislation to forbid the acquisition of Arab lands. The talks reached an impasse, and in a statement on 13 May, the Arabs ascribed their failure to the strong influence of the Zionists on the British Government." The Jewish Agency received no information on the talks while they were in progress, and this aroused anxiety and suspicion.

Weizmann had already decided on his course of action: the Government must be told unequivocally that he had no intention of standing idly by while the Zionist cause was destroyed. If its interests were ignored, and unacceptable concessions were made to the Arabs, he was in favour of breaking off relations with the Government, summoning a Zionist Congress together with a Council meeting of the Jewish Agency, and submitting his resignation from his offices." He also spoke of a policy of non-cooperation with the authorities in Palestine.24 His friends in Parliament, including Lloyd
George, 'fully agreed that we were being dealt with very unfairly,' but advised him to be patient. Nevertheless, at a meeting with the Prime Minister, whose sincerity and Zionist sympathy he did not doubt, he warned: 'One thing the Jews will never forgive is to be /lay fooled.'

Among those present at this meeting was Pinhas Rutenberg, Chairman of the Va'ad Leumi (Jewish National Council of Palestine). He proposed a plan, subsequently presented at MacDonald's suggestion to the Colonial Office," for a settlement and for Jewish-Arab cooperation. This embraced the establishment of separate representative institutions for Jews and Arabs, with a joint advisory council of five (two Jews, two Arabs and the Chief Secretary of the Palestine Government as chairman). The Chief

Secretary would have two deputies, one Jewish and one Arab, and in the event of disagreements in the Council, the High Commissioner would decide. Immigration would be related to the economic absorptive capacity of the country, land sales would require government approval, and the Administration would be reorganized and manned by officials sympathetic to the idea of the Jewish National Home. Finally, in order to dissipate the depressing effect of the Shaw Report on Jewish public opinion, the Prime Minister would reaffirm the National Home policy. MacDonald and Passfield examined the proposals and Rutenberg was informed that they were under sympathetic consideration, but they were not submitted to the Arabs, to whom gestures continued to be made. One of these was a sudden decision to restrict immigration pending publication of Hope Simpson's Report." Weizmann saw this as a cynical violation of the Mandate and was more than ever determined to resign, except that other leaders of the Agency, and the Zionist institutions, counselled against it.

The suspension of immigration aroused a wave of protests and demonstrations against Britain, especially in Poland and the United States, and demands were heard for the transfer of the seat of the Executive out of England. Simultaneously, condemnation of Weizmann's policy came from the Revisionists, General Zionists and the Mizrachi, with calls both for his resignation and that of the entire Zionist Executive.
Weizmann's relations with Lord Passfield and his officials reached their nadir. In effect, he broke off contact with them, though maintaining his bridge to the Prime Minister through the latter's son, Malcolm, who was henceforth to play an important role. Through his son, Ramsay MacDonald informed Weizmann that the Government had no intention of abandoning the Mandate, but action would be suspended until Hope Simpson presented his findings. He asked Weizmann not to resign, although he could understand his difficulties, and expressed his hope for continued cooperation between them." But Weizmann was dubious. 'If there were real cooperation between the Government and ourselves,' he replied to Malcolm, 'difficulties such as the present would not arise; or if they did arise, could be put right before they got out of hand. In the past I have often defended acts of the British Government before my own people, and have had to face many a storm over things for which I could hardly have been expected to assume responsibility. I did so for the sake of the policy and of cooperation.' The Colonial Office,

however, was always -facing him with faits accomplis, and not only him but the Prime Minister as well.

Indeed, it was generally thought that Ramsay MacDonald was the weak head of a divided Government, and its parliamentary support was shaky. Its Palestine policy was determined, in effect, by the Colonial Office, headed by a man who was hostile to the Zionist cause.

The wave of protests and demonstrations against the suspension of immigration aroused the displeasure of the Government, and the Prime Minister reacted angrily. 'I do not want to lose my patience with the Zionists,' he wrote, 'but really they try it greatly. They have already gone near to destroying any influence they have by their policy.'29 He demanded measures of the Agency to restrain its supporters, and Weizmann was charged by the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, Drummond Shiels, with a lack of moral courage." But Weizmann recognised that the protests were 'a spontaneous expression of the indignation of the Jewish people,' and 'you could no more stop them than you could Niagara.' The British, he wrote in the same letter, 'are now trying to deliver a blow to [the] very life of the National Home, and they must expect their best friends to be unable to defend them.' Men like Reading and Harold Laski thought that the demonstrations, especially among the American Jews, had an influence upon the Government.

On 28 May, the British Government published the Statement of Policy on Palestine which it intended to present to the Permanent Mandates Commission in June." Although the statement did not expressly adopt the Shaw Commission's recommendations, it reviewed them sympathetically. Thus, it stated that a temporary suspension of immigration was under examination and that legislation was to be introduced to prevent the dispossession of Arab cultivators. Weizmann regarded the statement as tantamount to acceptance of the Shaw Report, and Drummond Shiels' speeches to the Mandates Commission did not dispel his forebodings. Shiels reiterated that the Government intended to carry out its obligations under the Mandate, and he praised the achievements of the Jews in Palestine,33 but Jews the world over must understand that Britain's policy was to promote the establishment of a Jewish National Home and not of a Jewish state."

The anti-British demonstrations grew in intensity, as did the angry reactions of the

Government and its officials. Weizmann thought the demonstrations should be continued, and supported a proposal to organize a mass petition among American Jews against Britain's policy in Palestine.

At Executive meetings on 18 and 19 June," he made a grim forecast of the political future. He did not share the optimism expressed in reports from Palestine about Hope Simpson's mission; he was convinced the findings would be disadvantageous to the Jews, with immigration halted and land purchases forbidden. The movement should therefore declare that the British Government was about to violate an international obligation, and the Jews should react by reducing their activities for Palestine for a certain period. The Jews had no interest in making things easier for the British Administration. At the same time, the Zionist movement must open negotiations with the Arabs. The British Government should also be told that, to the Jews, the question of who should hold the Mandate for Palestine was immaterial.

This would be a difficult policy to carry out, Weizmann admitted, especially in view of the weak organization of the Jewish people, but it was the right way for the immediate future. The mask of hypocrisy must be torn from the face of the British Government, he insisted to the Executive, where neither his pessimistic forecasts nor his extreme policy found endorsement. His support for Britain in the past had been conditional on the possibility of developing the National Home. As soon as this possibility was blocked, the policy must be changed. On 17 June, Weizmann had rejected an offer by Lord Passfield to meet him. There was no point in the meeting, he argued, so long as the Government had no clear proposals to make. Weizmann had just returned from discussions on the Continent. During his absence, Reading and Rutenberg had talks with the Prime Minister and the Colonial Office, when Rutenberg's plan for a Jewish-Arab agreement was again presented. Weizmann was convinced that the High Commissioner and the Colonial Office would frustrate the plan, but the efforts to hold up the legislation to restrict land sales were successful, and this somewhat relieved the tension between Weizmann and Passfield. On 4 July, the latter wrote that he regretted that the 'misunderstanding between us' had led to Weizmann 'boycotting' him. A meeting duly took place on 7 July and was conducted to Weizmann's satisfaction.38 It was friendly, and 'nothing was said about past transactions.' The Government had no

intention, Passfield assured Weizmann, of deviating from the policy of the Mandate and the Jewish National Home. On the contrary, it wanted to promote that policy. The Arabs, however, claimed that a hundred thousand cultivators had been dispossessed. He did not believe this claim, but the Government had to give an authoritative reply, and that was the purpose of the Hope Simpson enquiry. The question of immigration in general was also mentioned in the conversation. At a meeting with the Board of Deputies of British Jews a few days before, Passfield had remarked that he estimated the number of Jews who could be absorbed in Palestine at one or two hundred thousand. It should be clear to the Government, Weizmann emphasized, that 'we are not interested in developing a country for the Arabs ... Our view of the Jewish National Home is that of a large Jewish settlement. To that end we should seek to pack as many Jews in Palestine as was possible.' These words were an echo, albeit moderate, of the extreme statements he had made two weeks previously at a meeting of the Executive. Passfield was not prepared to talk about numbers, but promised to discuss with the High Commissioner the release of the suspended certificates. The promise was not kept, however, and it was not until November that a small number of entry visas was granted.

Despite Passfield's conciliatory tone, it was obvious that the Government would refrain from accepting any commitment in advance of the publication of the Hope Simpson Report. Rutenberg's efforts proved fruitless. As Weizmann had anticipated, the High Commissioner opposed the proposals because he thought they would be rejected by the Arabs, and the Colonial Secretary was of the same opinion." The leaders of the Conservative Opposition were of the view that until the Hope Simpson Report was published, the Government would remain evasive and noncommittal." The Hope Simpson's Report, presented to the Government on 22 August, concentrated on the agricultural absorptive capacity of Palestine, with little reference to the possibilities of industrial development. It estimated the area of cultivable land in Palestine as 6,544,000 dunams, 40 per cent below the figure of the Palestine Government's Commissioner of Lands and excluding the Beersheba area, which Hope Simpson did not consider as then suitable for settlement. After deducting the million dunams in Jewish ownership and assessing the 'lot viable' for an Arab fellah family as not less than 130 dunams, he concluded that the remaining lands were insufficient to maintain a decent standard of life

for the country's agricultural population. On the basis of a survey by a Palestine Government committee on the economic conditions of 23,500 fellahin in 104 villages, he found that 29.4 per cent of Arab villagers were landless." Hope Simpson described the Arab fellah as in 'a desperate position,' .heavily in debt, heavily taxed, and with insufficient land to support him.

The Jewish settlers, on the other hand, had every advantage that capital, science and organization could give them. Their remarkable progress was due to these and to their own energy. The rapid growth of the Arab population, and the decrease of available land through the million dunams passing to the Jews, aggravated the position of the fellah. Hope Simpson admitted that the Jewish authorities had behaved correctly in the acquisition of Arab lands: they had paid high prices, as well as large sums in compensation which they were not legally bound to pay. However, he criticised the leases of the Jewish National Fund and the agreements with the Keren Hayesod for prohibiting the employment of non-Jewish labour and the transfer of land to non-Jews. As a result of these provisions, he declared, the land purchased by the Jewish National Fund had been 'extra-territorialised' so far as the Arabs were concerned. This policy of the Zionist Organization, he wrote, was incompatible with Zionist expressions of the desire to live in friendship with the Arab population, as well as with Article Six of the Mandate. In addition, it was a constant and increasing source of danger to the country: 'The present position, precluding any employment of Arabs in the Zionist colonies, is undesirable, from the point of view both of justice and of the good government of the country.' On the other hand, the relations of the old P.I.C.A. colonists with their Arab neighbours and Arab workmen were excellent, and the Arabs had profited by them.

Hope Simpson took a sceptical view of Jewish Agency arguments for basing prospects for the industrial development of Palestine on the expanding domestic market created by Jewish immigration: and spoke of the dangers in attracting extensive capital in order to establish doubtful industries and so justify increased immigration.

He admitted that Jewish immigration had provided additional openings for Arab labour, but it had also led to serious Arab unemployment, and, in regulating immigration, the employment position among the Jews and Arabs should be considered simultaneously. However, there was justification for permitting the immigration of

Jewish labour if it also benefited the Arabs by creating 'derived demand.' I lope Simpson called for firm measures to prevent 'illicit immigration.' He pointed to the political repercussions of Arab unemployment: Arab politicians no doubt exaggerated the number of Arab jobless and used the problem as a political pawn. In view of Article Six of the Mandate which, according to Hope Simpson, directed that the rights and position of other sections of the population should not be prejudiced by Jewish immigration, he called for the reduction, or, if neccessary, the suspension, of such immigration if it adversely affected Arab opportunities for employment. He approved the suspension of immigration under the Labour Schedule in May.

The apparently conflicting responsibilities of the Administration under the Mandate—to encourage close settlement of the Jews on the land, without prejudicing the position of the Arabs—could only be reconciled by an active policy of agricultural development, Hope Simpson concluded, with schemes for the improvement of the method of the fellah, the re-arrangement of holdings, and the development of irrigation. For this purpose he proposed the appointment of a Development Commission of three: one Arab, one Jew, and a British national as chairman. He thought this would make possible the settlement of an additional 20,000 Jewish families.

The Statement of Policy" issued by the Government on receipt of the report, known as the Passfield White Paper, comprised two parts. The first presented the general principles of the Government's policy: the Government would continue in accordance with the terms of the Mandate, which imposed a dual obligation—toward the Jewish people and toward the non-Jewish population of Palestine; it reaffirmed the policy laid down in the 1922 White Paper, particularly in regard to the definition of the expression 'the Jewish National Home,' to the principles which should govern immigration, and to the position of the Jewish Agency; it accepted the 1922 White Paper's limited interpretation of the term Jewish National Home,' the principle of economic absorptive capacity in regulating immigration, and the ruling that the position of the Jewish Agency did not entitle it to share in any degree in the governance of Palestine. A noteworthy feature of the Statement of Policy was its failure to mention the Balfour Declaration.

The second part of the statement dealt with security, constitutional development, and economic and social development. With regard to security, the Government stated

that changes would be made in the light of the recommendations of Mr. Dowbiggin, a senior police officer, who had enquired into the organization of the Palestine Police Force in 1929-30. As to the constitutional question, the Government intended to set up a Legislative Council, generally on the lines indicated in the 1922 White Paper. On questions of land policy, agricultural settlement and immigration, the Statement of Policy adopted Hope Simpson's recommendations. With the present methods of Arab cultivation, there was no margin of land available for agricultural settlement by new immigrants, with the exception of land held in reserve by the various Jewish agencies. As for State lands, some of them were occupied by Arab cultivators and the rest had to be made available for landless Arabs. The position of the Arab fellah was difficult, and the statement found unconvincing the claim that Zionist colonisation had not dispossessed the fellahin from their lands. The conditions on which the Jewish bodies held, utilised and leased their lands, and the insistence on Jewish labour in Jewish settlements, had adversely affected the position of the non-Jewish population and, however logical the arguments of the Jewish leaders might be from the point of view of a purely national movement, they took no account of the provisions of Article Six of the Mandate. Further Jewish settlement would be possible only after the carrying out of a methodical plan of agricultural development, which would take several years. In the meantime, the Jews could continue their operations on the large reserve of land in their possession. Until progress had been made with the development plan, transfers of land would be permitted only in so far as they did not interfere with the plans of the Development Authority.

The statement endorsed Hope Simpson in criticising the role of the Histradrut in the selection of immigrants, declaring that the Palestine Government should be the deciding authority in all matters regarding immigration. Any hasty decision in regard to more unrestricted Jewish immigration was to be strongly deprecated, not only from the point of view of the interests of the Palestine population as a whole, but even from the special point of view of the Jewish community. 'So long as widespread suspicion exists, and it does exist, among the Arab population, that the economic depression, under which they undoubtedly suffer at present, is largely due to excessive Jewish immigration, and so long as some ground exists upon which this suspicion may be plausibly represented to be well founded, there can be little hope of any improvement in the mutual relations of the

two races,' the statement said.

In two respects, the Passfield White Paper went even further than the Hope Simpson Report, as was pointed out by the Royal Commission of 1937: it contained no commitment that Jews, as well as Arabs, should benefit from part of the land surpluses that would be created by the agricultural development plan, and it ignored Hope Simpson's finding that Jewish capital might have a beneficial influence on the employment situation among Arab workers." But particularly revealing was the White Paper's unsympathetic approach to Zionism and its obvious bias towards the Arab side. The 1937 Royal Commission remarked that the Statement of Policy 'betrayed a marked insensitiveness to Jewish feelings.'

Passfield was instructed by the Cabinet to inform Reading and Weizmann personally of the content of the Hope Simpson Report and the Statement of Policy. A meeting took place on 1 October.45 According to Lewis Namier, who was present, Passfield endeavoured to sugar the pill, while Weizmann refrained from expressing his opinion on the two documents before he had examined them, though he remarked that the Zionist Congress would have to be convened after the publication of the Statement of Policy. Passfield assured Weizmann that he would receive copies of the documents some days before publication, and Weizmann was left with the impression that the Government had not approved a final draft of the statement. He wrote Warburg: 'We know nothing yet about the Hope Simpson Report except its general theoretical foundations, which may still be questioned very much, and we certainly have no idea of what the Government is going to propose on the basis of this Report.' Nor was the fog dispelled at a second talk with the Colonial Secretary, after Weizmann had written to him expressing his reservations about

the two documents in the light of what he had been told at the previous conversation. It was Namier's impression that 'Lord Passfield tried to say everything he could to prevent any kind of unpleasantness or difficulties and was playing for time.'" Despite the deliberate ambiguity and Passfield's noncommittal tone, the gravity of the Statement of Policy now became clear to Weizmann. He again warned Passfield that, if the Government confirmed the policy, he would have to resign.

Weizmann received copies of the report and the Statement of Policy on 17

October. He was struck with 'utter bewilderment.' He found that the content of the two documents was much more serious than he had anticipated. Next morning he telephoned Passfield in an effort to hold up publication, which was scheduled for the 21st. Pass-field declared that this was not possible, and other efforts made through Harold Laski in the same direction were of no avail.

Weizmann saw no alternative but to resign as President of the Zionist Organization, to be announced simultaneously with publication of the Government's Statement of Policy. He wrote Passfield about his resignation on 20 October, and made his reasons known at a Press Conference on the same evening. The following day he published a manifesto to the Jewish people entitled 'In a Solemn Hour.' His resignation was followed by those of Melchett, Chairman of the Jewish Agency Council, and Warburg, Chairman of the Administrative Committee.

Weizmann's resignation, rather than marking the end of a period, was the beginning of a political campaign. Without bringing about the withdrawal of the White Paper of October 1930, this succeeded in securing its official re-interpretation more favourable to the Zionists and the removal for a few years of the threat it contained to the very existence of the Jewish National Home in Palestine.

CAMILLO DRESNER