

THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION  
AND  
THE JEWISH AGENCY FOR PALESTINE

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# IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT

## INTRODUCTION

### THE BATTLE FOR IMMIGRATION

At the outbreak of the war the danger loomed large that immigration into Palestine would come to a complete stop. Perplexity arose in all parts of the Jewish diaspora. The disasters that had befallen the Jews in Nazi Germany in the preceding years now came upon the Jewish masses in other countries of Europe, over which the shadow of conquest was beginning to spread or which were immediately engulfed in the whirlpool of war.

During the first period it became clear that thousands of immigrants who had already been granted immigration certificates were caught in Europe without any possibility of obtaining a visa to Palestine. British consulates in enemy countries were closed down, and all visas already granted to travelers abroad were suspended. These circumstances had for all the Jewish communities of Europe, and there was some danger in the continuation of activities of the Palestine Offices. Communications in the Mediterranean were cut off because all shipping was at the disposal of the Military authorities; the neutrality of Italy – one maritime country that did not declare war at the beginning – was extremely dubious; every channel of immigration was closed and there appeared to be no possibility of transferring immigrants from one country to another.

In this chaos, with barriers raised between countries, and communications destroyed, the Department of Immigration of the Jewish Agency established a temporary office in Geneva, which set itself the aim of rescuing the immigrants who remained in enemy territory and of transferring them to Palestine via Italy, which had not yet entered the war. From Geneva it was still possible to maintain connections with the enemy countries on the one hand and with London, Jerusalem, New York, etc. on the other.

Communications were rapidly established with the Palestine Offices in Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Bratislava, Trieste and Budapest, which received instructions to continue their activities in all circumstances, and the Jewish Agency in London and Jerusalem began negotiations to get the British Government's confirmation of the validity of immigration into Palestine. This phase continued throughout the years of the war and served to rescue the Jews of Europe from utter annihilation.

Since then there have been changes and fluctuations in immigration, and it was necessary to take action appropriate to the strategical conditions and the political changes of the various periods of the war.

After Italy declared war and Switzerland was surrounded by an impregnable Nazi wall, it became imperative to transfer the center of our activities to some neutral country from which one could communicate with Jews in the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

While a slow trickle of immigration continued from enemy territory, in spite of all difficulties, including the opposition of the British and Palestine authorities, the Department of Immigration had somewhat better possibilities in countries friendly to the Allies or under their control. A Palestine Office was established at Teheran in 1943. This office organized the immigration of refugee children who had escaped from Poland to Russia at the beginning of the war and who had managed to reach Iran, where they received immigration certificates. At the same time the question of the refugees from the Yemen became acute; they flocked in their thousands to Aden to escape persecution in their own country. They succeeded in establishing contact with the institutions of the Yishuv and were sent immigration certificates for Palestine.

The representatives of the Department of Immigration carried out another major task – organizing rescue work. The Yishuv in Palestine, moved to the quick by the news of the annihilation of the Jewish masses in Poland and other Nazi-occupied countries, established “The United Rescue Committee”. All sections of the Yishuv in Palestine took part in organizing the rescue of the Jewish remnants. Istanbul was the center from which rescue activities were directed, in collaboration with the underground movement in the Diaspora. At Geneva and Lisbon, too, Rescue Offices were set up which worked in coordination with the central office at Istanbul and with the “The United Rescue Committee” in Jerusalem and the world Jewish relief organizations active in this sphere.

With the advance of the Allied forces in Europe in 1944, the Department of Immigration commenced activities of a different kind, relief activities. It sent people for this purpose to Lisbon and later on to Paris – cities which then served as centers for immigration and rescue work among refugees in the countries of Western Europe. Then, too, immigration activities commenced through Italian ports, from which set out the ships that carried “illegal” immigrants making their way to Palestine.

The pressure of immigration was already acute during the years preceding the war, when European Jewry was struggling for existence in the countries of its sojourn. In the years of the war, however, when the campaign against the Jews was being conducted in all its ferocity, reaching one country after another and destroying community after community, the masses of Jews sentenced to extermination tried to find an exit for themselves, and it was then that the immigration policy of the Mandatory Government revealed itself in all its mercilessness. Not only did the British Government not come to the aid of the persecuted Jews, but those who succeeded through superhuman efforts in escaping from the charnel house of Europe were met by the White Paper restrictions, which blocked all roads of escape. Tens of thousands endangered their lives by organizing “illegal” entry to Palestine, making their way in un-seaworthy vessels on mine-strewn seas, the immigrants sustained only by the hope of reaching the land of their desires.

The division of the period covered by this report according to years will serve as a measure of the struggle and the efforts made to expand immigration since the publication of the White Paper and throughout the years of the war.\*

#### IMMIGRATION DURING THE YEARS 1939-1946

	Legal Immigration	"Illegal"	Total
January – August 1939	12,313	6,826	19,139
September – December 1939	4,092	4,330	8,422
1940	4,547	3,851	8,398
1941	3,647	2,239	5,886
1942	2,194	1,539	3,743
1943	8,507	**	8,507
1944	14,464	**	14,464
1945	12,751	370	13,121
January – August 1946	*** 4,845	9,615	14,460
	67,360	28,770	96,130

Immigration during the war, which cannot be measured in figures alone, added considerable weight to the Yishuv in Palestine. It was the mainspring of its work of self-maintenance and of rescue during the period of the destruction of the people in the Diaspora.

#### A. DECREES & IMPEDIMENTS IN THE WAY OF IMMIGRATION

It is difficult to go into the details of the difficulties encountered in immigration during the period of the war when the sword of the enemy hung constantly over the heads of European Jewry. There was a constant struggle between the hand stretched to rescue and the rapidly spreading flame of Nazism advanced over the European continent, destroying one Jewish community after another. When one government, in answer to our appeal, granted facilities to immigrants another government would go back on its promises. While one government would grant exit permits to refugees, another would prohibit the transit of Jews through its territory. It was within this tragic circle that our struggles continued, only a few succeeding in saving themselves. The cry for succor from many remained a voice crying the wilderness.

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\* As to the political activities in this struggle for immigration, a detailed survey will be given in the report of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency. We shall here confine ourselves to the survey of those activities which concern immigration as such during the period of the war.

\*\* The fact that there are no "illegal" immigrants during the years 1943 and 1944 is accounted for by the fact that all immigrants set out without certificates from Rumania, receiving them at Istanbul and so arriving legally in Palestine.

\*\*\* Provisional figures.

## IMMIGRATION – THE WHITE PAPER RESTRICTIONS

The various restrictions which previously existed, throttling immigration into Palestine in order to arrest the development of the Yeshuv, had reached their peak with the publication of the White Paper of May, 1939, fixing a final limit of 75,000 immigration certificates for a period of five years. This system of a “numerical maximum” imposed for political purposes in 1938 took the place of limiting immigration according to the “economic absorptive capacity” of the country – the principle which had governed the official immigration policy during the previous years – and was now an established fact. Government was determined to limit immigration so that by the end of the five year period, in April, 1944, the Yishuv would not exceed one third of the whole population. The number of immigrants was divided at the outset into “immigrants” and refugees” and in article 14 of the White Paper “definite” instructions were given, namely.

- (a) That a schedule of 10,000 immigration certificates for Jews should be issued annually during the five year period.
- (b) In addition, by way of participation in the solution of the Jewish refugee problem, another 25,000 refugees – especially children and relatives – should be permitted to enter the country, subject to the High Commissioner being satisfied that they would be cared for in Palestine.
- (c) After the five year period, the continuation of immigration should be subject to Arab acquiescence.
- (d) The number of illegal immigrants arriving in Palestine would be deducted from the immigration schedule during this period.

The Palestine authorities were quick to put the restrictions of the White Paper and all their implications into force. Instructions were given in regard to a strict allocation of immigration certificates according to periods, after which all unutilized certificates would be invalidated. Immigrants arriving in Palestine were numbered as individuals, instead of certificates being issued for families as previously, all previously unrestricted categories of immigrants (capitalists, relatives, etc.) were abolished and included in one schedule for every period. The number of “illegals” arriving in Palestine were deducted from each schedule beforehand, so that even before the outbreak of the war, the whole question of immigration was overshadowed by these decreases, and that at a period when the persecution of the Jews in Germany and other countries of Europe had already risen to a high pitch.

At the beginning of the war, the British Government issued a fresh decree, which would have put an end to immigration of all residents in enemy territory ‘for security reasons.’ It was only after long and persistent negotiations that permission was given to immigrants from Germany and Eastern Europe to come to Palestine subject to strict scrutiny by special officials sent to Trieste.

## Istanbul Lists

The Jewish Agency did not relax its efforts to bring about a change in the authorities' attitude towards the fate of the immigrants, and to get facilities for the immigration of those in the most imminent danger at each stage. Negotiations with the Government that lasted for about a year finally secured facilities for the granting of immigration certificates in the following categories:

- a) Wives and children of Palestine residents (who had entered the country legally);
- b) Children up to the age of fifteen;
- c) Immigrants confirmed by the Jewish Agency as "veteran Zionists", namely, communal workers, authors, and Rabbis.

However, the possibilities originally granted for emigration from Europe were reduced after Italy entered the war. And even Turkey, the only transit route, was closed when the wave of Jewish persecutions set in in the countries of occupation. The journey through Turkey was dependent on documents which it was difficult to obtain, and the representatives of Switzerland, which had undertaken the supervision of British affairs in enemy territory, were called upon under international law to act as intermediaries with the countries of transit. It was then agreed that the lists of those approved for immigration by the Jewish Agency should be handed over through the British Embassy in Istanbul to the representatives of the Swiss Government for the purpose of obtaining exit permits from the Nazi authorities for immigrants from Nazi-conquered territories. The Jewish Agency representative in Istanbul used to send certificates on the basis of the "Istanbul Lists" to immigrants in Nazi territory through the Red Cross, with the confirmation of the British Embassy to the effect that immigration certificates for Palestine had been granted to them. The local authorities in Germany and German-occupied territory regarded the holders of such certificates as "foreign protected persons" and they were not taken to forced labor or sent to the death camps.\*

The number of "rescue certificates" dispatched from Istanbul up to the middle of 1944, were as follows, according to countries:

Bulgaria	3,545
Belgium	552
France	389
Rumania	4,528
Holland	2,917
Hungary	9,426
Miscellaneous	<u>353</u>
	21,710

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\* See report of the Government of Palestine to the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry, 1946, Volume I, Chapter 7.

The Palestine office in Geneva, which was in contact with such countries as Holland, France, etc., issued about 10,000 “rescue certificates” of this kind on the basis of the “Istanbul Lists.”

The chief impediment on the road to immigration from the Balkans, from which the exit of Jews was not permitted, lay in the difficulties of transit through Turkey, who was apprehensive that the Jews passing through her territory might not be able to continue their journey. It was only at the end of 1943 that the British Government could be prevailed upon to inform the Turkish authorities that all Jews arriving from Europe to Istanbul would receive a visa for Palestine if the Security Authorities expressed no objection. Actually a visa was granted to all Jewish refugees arriving, but the efforts to bring over the refugees to Turkey encountered the difficult and intricate procedure laid down by the British Government in connection with the granting of such approval – a procedure hardly commensurate with the rapid advance of events in Europe and countries from which Jews fled in fear of their lives.

### THE CRY OF THE PERSECUTED

Together with the reports from the underground of Europe on the destruction of the Jewish masses in Poland and other countries of Nazi occupation, cries for help reached us from the persecuted themselves. The Jewish Agency increased its efforts to rescue those refugees to whom immigration permits had been granted within the narrow limits of the immigration regulations: about 1200 wives and children of Palestine residents who had remained in Poland, 4500 children in the Balkans, about 1200 refugees in France and others. The wall of limitations however, that had been raised allegedly for “security reasons” and the prolonged negotiations that had to be carried out with neutral countries for the transfer of the immigrants to Palestine counterbalanced all these desperate efforts, so that only a few thousand were rescued.

In addition to all these factors and stumbling blocks in the way of immigration, there was also the lack of shipping for the transfer of immigrants by sea, and the British and American Governments would not allocate a single ship for this purpose. The Bermuda Conference, which was convened in April, 1943 to consider the problems of assistance to refugees in Europe, and on which large hopes centered, \* failed completely. About 50,000 immigrants, both legal and “illegal”, had reached Palestine by April, 1944, the end of the period laid down in the White Paper, so that the question arose of the validity of permits that it had not been possible to utilize in time.

The following were the immigration figures for the five years ending March 31, 1944:

Immigrants according to White Paper schedule	75,000
Immigrants Arriving by Permit	31,221
Immigrants Arriving Without Permits	<u>19,965</u> 51,186
No. of Certificates Unused	23,814

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\* Statement of the Minister of State in the House of Commons on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1943.

The question of the continuation of immigration after the five year period laid down by the White Paper became a subject for discussion with the British Government, which announced:

“The British Government has been considering the position and has reached the conclusion that it would be inequitable to close the doors of Palestine to those persons on account of the time factor.

No effort will be lacking on the part of the British Government to facilitate their arrival, subject to the criterion of economic absorptive capacity.”\*

The Jewish Agency requested at different times that the unutilized permits should be transferred to the countries from which the refugees came, and that the schedule of immigration certificates generally be removed. The long drawn-out negotiations finally produced the following announcement:

- 1) 10,300 of the immigration certificates which had lapsed could be renewed and sent to the Balkan countries, Italy, France, Belgium, Turkey and Aden.
- 2) Immigration should be so organized that the number of immigrants arriving in Palestine should not exceed 1,500 per month.
- 3) The facilities granted to refugees arriving in Turkey for receiving visas should be wit drawn, seeing that residence in the Balkan countries no longer entailed the danger of persecution.

The schedule of 75,000 permits under the White Paper was exhausted by the end of 1945. The number of Jews who had reached the country over all that period was:

Immigrants by permit	54,727
Immigrants without permits	<u>20,304</u>
Total	75,031

### THE HUNT OF ILLEGALS

It was then that the new chapter of suffering commenced. The British Government began its delaying tactics, relegating matters from one commission to another. The Government laid down the number of 1,500 immigrants per month “until a solution of the Palestine problem generally be found.” The policy of delays and hesitations and the desperate situation of the refugees in the “displaced persons” camps in Europe gave an impetus to “illegal” immigration. The Government began stringent countermeasures against these “illegal” immigrants. Their ships were confiscated and they were taken to the camp at Atlit to be detained until their turn should arrive under the 1,500 monthly quota. The recommendations of the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry to permit the unconditional and immediate entry of 100,000 refugees to Palestine

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\* The statement of Mr. Eden, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in the House of Commons on May 19, 1943.



were not implemented, and the Government entered upon a new phase in its fight against immigration.

The British Government no longer limited its activities to Palestine itself, but tried to forestall the “evil” and to stop “illegal” immigrants at the ports of departure. In April, 1946, the Government succeeded in catching two ships carrying “illegal” immigrants, the “Fede” and the Eliahu Golomb” at the port of La Spezia in Italy and blockading them there. The British authorities exerted considerable pressure on the Italians to return the “illegals” by force to their country of origin. The opposition of the immigrants and the favorable attitude of the Italian authorities, however, overcame the pressure. The “illegal” immigrants went on hunger strike in protest against the prohibition to sail for Palestine. Their hunger strike aroused all sections of the Yishuv and fifteen of its representatives joined the hunger strike until the embargo was lifted and their immigration permitted.

The attitude of condoning in practice the immigration of these “illegals” by transferring them to the camp at Atlit and liberating them when their turn arrived under the monthly schedule came to an end in August, 1946. In continuation of the repressive measures taken by the Military authorities against the Yishuv, Government state that it could no longer suffer the arrival of “illegal” immigrants, particularly under the conditions obtaining in the un-seaworthy vessels which endangered the lives of the passengers, and that all ships intercepted would be diverted to Cyprus, where a detention camp was set up. When four ships carrying “illegal” immigrants were intercepted in mid-ocean, the authorities used large military forces to transfer the arrivals, who put up a desperate struggle, to military vessels which took them to Cyprus. After years of life in concentration camps these immigrants were doomed to live behind barbed wire again. The struggles of the 4,000 “illegals” who arrived in “The Four Freedoms”, the Henrietta Azold”, the Dov Hos” and “Katriel Yaffe” and who were forcibly transferred to Cyprus provided scenes of supreme heroism. The policy of expulsions is still in force, but it is unable to stop the stream of homeless Jews seeking entry to the land of their dreams.

### VICTIMS OF “ILLEGAL” IMMIGRATION

“Illegal” immigration has had its disasters costing many lives. At the beginning of the war, several ships carrying thousands of immigrants made their way to Palestine in the endeavor to break through the blockade. About 1,100 immigrants from Austria and Czechoslovakia set sail in a small boat along the Danube on their way to Palestine. For weeks on end they were buffeted from shore to shore until they were finally landed at the small town of Kladova in Yugoslavia. The refugees remained there for about two years, being maintained by various charitable institutions, until the Nazi hordes swept over the country. They destroyed the camp and butchered all its inmates.

In September, 1940, the motor boat “Salvador” set out with 350 “illegal” immigrants, mainly from Bulgaria. The little boat broke up in mid-ocean while crossing the Sea of Marmora, 230 of the passengers being drowned. Of the survivors, some

returned to Bulgaria, while others made their way to Palestine in the “Dorian”. They were detained in detention camps for many months before they were liberated.

At the end of November, 1940, occurred the “Patria” disaster. To this ship, which was anchored off Haifa, the Palestine authorities had transferred by force 2,000 immigrants who had arrived in various boats, for deportation to Mauritius. With the aim of annulling the deportation order, the ship was scuttled before it could set sail. 257 immigrants met their deaths in the disaster. This was the price paid by the survivors for the right to remain in Palestine.

In December, 1940, the “Atlantic” arrived bringing 1,584 “illegal” immigrants. The arrivals were taken by force from the detention camp of Atlit, and deported to Mauritius. Their deportation was accompanied by an official statement that they would never be permitted to return to Palestine. The Jewish Agency persisted in its protests against this deportation order for five years; the refugees finally reached the shores of Palestine in August, 1944.

The most terrible of all was the “Struma” disaster, which will stand to the eternal shame of the nations of the world who had stood aside and refused to help rescue the Jews. In 1941 the ship arrived at Istanbul from Rumania. The majority of the immigrants it carried were refugees from Bukovina and Bessarabia who, after the massacre of the Jews in Bessarabia, were to be sent together with the other Jews to the concentration camps in Transdnistria. The ship was anchored off Istanbul for several weeks, the British Government refusing these people entry to Palestine, until they were sent back to Rumania which was already pogrom-ridden. But these unfortunates never reached the shores of Rumania, for 769 “illegal” immigrants met their doom in mid-ocean. There was only one survivor, a living witness to the British Government’s inhuman immigration policy during the years of the war.

When the flow of “illegal” immigration commenced anew by sea off Turkey in 1944, the “Mafkura”, one of a group of ships carrying “illegal” immigrants from Constanza, was attacked by the Axis forces, and sank with all on board.

#### IN MEMORIAM

May the Jewish people long remember those who set out to reach the shores of Palestine, but failed to arrive. They have left no traces behind and no grave stones can be erected in their memory. Only the fact of their death can be noted:

At the Kladowa Camp on the Danube	1,160 souls
On the “Salvador” off the coast of Istanbul	230 souls
On the “Patria” off Haifa	257 souls
On the “Struma” off Istanbul	769 souls
On the “Mafkura” off Istanbul	430 souls
Total	2,846 souls

May the memory also be kept alive of those engaged in organizing immigration, who in time of stress and suffering remained at their posts, serving the interests of immigration with devotion, until they met their deaths for the sake of their ideals:

*M. Urchovsky*, Director of the Central Palestine Office at Bucharest, killed in the anti-Jewish riots in that country. His ashes were brought to Palestine and buried at Kvutzat Shiller. *Jacob Edelstein*, Director of the Palestine Office at Prague and Head of the Community of Czechoslovakian Jews, deported to Theresienstadt, where he did great things for the rescue of Jews from destruction; he was sent to the crematoria at Oszwiecim. *Dr. I. Green*, Director of the Palestine Office at Vienna during the war, continued his difficult and responsible work until his execution in 1943. *Shimon Spitzer*, Head of the Palestine Office at Belgrade and member of the Jewish community Council there, rescued many thousands of Jews from death and extended assistance to tens of thousands of people during the Nazi occupation, falling in the struggle together with his fellow Jews. *Frieda Krapiol*, Secretary of the Palestine Office in Paris, looked after the Immigration of Jews from France during the war, and took an active part in the rescue of Jewish children, killed while endeavoring to cross the frontier into Spain at the head of a group of refugees. *Dr. I. Cohen*, at the Head of the Palestine Office in Holland until his expulsion to Poland; *Otto Komoli*, Chairman of the Zionist Federation and the Palestine Office at Budapest, who stayed at his post until his murder by the Nazis in January 1945; *Gizi Fleishmann*, a member of the Rescue Committee and the immigration department of the Jewish Council at Bratslava, who was murdered while being deported to Poland.

Many others who served in the ranks of immigration and rescue work will not be forgotten, though their names are not mentioned here.

## B. THE ORGANIZATION OF IMMIGRATION ABROAD

### *The Temporary Office of the Department of Immigration in Geneva*

When the war broke out it appeared as if the end had come for immigration from Europe generally, for it was impossible to transfer refugees through the blockade by sea and past the strict barriers that were set up between the various countries. Despite everything however, the Jewish Agency made an attempt to maintain immigration even in these circumstances, and the temporary office of the Department of Immigration at Geneva, of which Mr. H. Barlas was in charge, sent instructions to the Palestine Offices to continue their activities and to inform would-be immigrants that there was hope for their immigration.

At the outset it was clear that a large number of immigrants to whom immigration certificates had been granted in the period April- September, 1939, had remained in Europe and had not been able to leave for Palestine. According to the information received from the Palestine Offices, the number of certificate holders thus remaining was: Berlin – 960; Vienna – 540; Prague – 2,150; Bratislava – 250; making a total of 2,900 certificates, exclusive of 2,000 unutilized certificates at Budapest, Warsaw, Bucharest and other Palestine Offices.

The British Consulates in enemy countries had closed down and affairs were handed over everywhere to the American Embassies, to whom the special character of immigration to Palestine was none too clear. The question of transport, too, presented difficulty, for at the outbreak of the war all shipping had been placed at the disposal of the military authorities, and communications in the Mediterranean had actually come to a stop. As a result of the representations made by the Jewish Agency representative to the competent authorities in Italy, a permit was received for the transfer of immigrants from Trieste to Palestine. The Nazi authorities viewed favorably the emigration of Jews from their various countries, and Dr. S. Scheeps, Director of the Palestine office in Switzerland, paid several visits to Germany in this connection. The difficulties were caused chiefly by the British authorities, who cancelled all immigration permits. But after the British Government had agreed to the request of the Jewish Agency and allowed the entry of immigrants already in possession of certificates, all immigrants in possession of immigration certificates arrived via Trieste, in five boats especially chartered by the Jewish Agency for the purpose. Through the Palestine Office in Berlin there arrived 717 immigrants, from Vienna – 448, Prague – 1,019, Bratislava – 173, Warsaw – 126, miscellaneous – 332.

The temporary office at Geneva also took steps to secure the transfer of immigrants from the Baltic countries – Lithuania and Latvia – the majority of whom had come originally from Poland, having escaped from that country after the German invasion. About 2,000 immigrants came to Palestine by sea via Marseilles, while some came by air through Sweden and France.

#### IMMIGRANTS TO PALESTINE VIA TRIESTE DURING THE YEARS 1939-40 – ACCORDING TO NATIONALITY

##### *During September – December, 1939*

Polish Subjects	312
German Subjects	<u>1,985</u>
	2,297

##### *During January – June, 1940*

Polish Subjects	1,209
German Subjects	<u>2,345</u>
	3,554

Total	5,851
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When Italy entered the war on the side of Germany in June 1940, both Trieste and the Greek ports were closed to Jewish immigration to Palestine. The last refugees who had gathered in Italy were quickly transported to Palestine, the last ship to set sail from Italy before the latter's entry into the war being the "Rodi", which left Trieste on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1939, with 170 refugees from Poland and a number of Palestinian subjects aboard (including Dr. I. Goldin, Director of the Palestine Office). At Alexandria the ship was sent back to Italy, but on the way it was intercepted by a Royal Navy patrol and brought to Malta, where the vessel was impounded as a prize, the passengers finally reaching

Haifa after long and troublesome delays. Thousands of other refugees who were not in possession of certificates set out for the Far East, and about 500 immigrants from Poland who were in Italy and Greece managed to leave via the Balkans for Turkey in the hope of making their way to Palestine from there.

*Office of the Immigration Department at Istanbul*

After the connection between Palestine and Europe through Trieste and Marseilles was cut, the only possibility that remained for the continuation of immigration overland was through the Balkans and Turkey. Turkey, however, had prohibited the transit of Jews through its territory, and thousands of immigrants possessing certificates remained scattered throughout Central Europe, the Balkans and the occupied territories in Lithuania, without any possibility of reaching Palestine. The number of certificates remaining thus unutilized was: - Lithuania, 1,800; Rumania, 1,500; Sweden, 450; Hungary, 700; Yugoslavia, 400; Bulgaria, 100; Switzerland, 300; making a total of 4,650.

The Jewish Agency therefore found it necessary to expand the only possible exit remaining, via Turkey, and sent the Director of the Immigration Department, Mr. H. Barlas, to organize activities there.

Turkey regarded with disfavor the Jewish refugees who had reached its territory (for the most part as Christian converts) after the entry of Italy into the war, and who had no possibility of continuing their journey, while the British Embassy held aloof, refusing to extend them any assistance. The political tension, due to the war operations that had spread over Greece and the advance of the German Armies in the Balkans, also served as obstacles to the attempts that were made to lend assistance to these refugees. The negotiations with the authorities lasted for months, until finally the Turkish Government agreed to the Jewish Agency's request to facilitate the transit of immigrants to Palestine, and an official order was published empowering Turkish Consulates to grant transit visas to Jews of foreign nationality suffering persecution in their countries of origin, provided that

- a) they possessed entry visas to the country they wished to settle in, as well as transit visas through the territory they intend to cross after leaving Turkey;
- b) they had travel ticket to a point beyond the Turkish frontier.\*

Thus all immigrants who had received immigration certificates in their own countries were able to pass through Turkey and to reach Palestine before the revolt in Iraq and the extension of the theatre of war to Syria, which blocked entry into Palestine for a considerable time.

The Soviet authorities also made it possible for 1,200 refugees from Lithuania to set out for Palestine via Moscow, Odessa and Istanbul. About 400 other immigrants from Lithuania who had not managed to leave via Turkey made their way to the Far East,

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\* The ordinance was officially published on February 12, 1941, but Turkish Consulates had received instructions to act in this spirit even before that date.

reaching Palestine in a round-about way through Siberia, Vladivostock, Japan, Burma, India, South Africa and Egypt – spending as much as two years on the way, some freezing to death I Siberia, or being mown down by enemy bullets, or falling by the way otherwise and failing to reach Palestine.

Hundreds of refugee children from Germany who were gathered in training camps in Denmark in 1939 had remained behind when the war broke out. When Denmark was invaded by the Nazis, the children were transferred to Sweden, where desperate efforts were made to bring them to Palestine. Negotiations in various directions for their transfer to Palestine lasted for about two years until finally about 180 children arrived in Palestine, making their long way via Stockholm, Helsinki, Odessa and Istanbul.

NUMBER OF REFUGEES ENTERING PALESTINE THROUGH TURKEY UP  
TO JUNE, 1941 – ACCORDING TO CUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Rumania	1,668
Lithuania	1,121
Hungary	518
Yugoslavia	404
Bulgaria	250
Latvia	10
Sweden	180
Turkey	<u>250</u>
	4,401

YOUTH ALIYA VIA ISTANBUL

At the beginning of 1942 the Jewish Agency renewed its efforts to save the Jews from the clutches of the Nazis and their satellites, making Turkey a main base for these activities. Meanwhile, another change had set in in Turkey's political situation. The economic difficulties and complications in that country and the stoppage of all means of communication by land and sea brought about stringent measures against foreigners. After many efforts we received the British authorities' agreement in principle to allow the entry into Palestine, under certain conditions, of Jews from Rumania and Hungary. The Turkish authorities agreed to renew transit facilities through Turkey. A complicated procedure was established in regard to the identification of immigrants in enemy countries, through the Swiss Consuls, while the International Red Cross agreed to grant the ship the protection of the Red Cross should the children be sent from Rumania by sea from Constanza. It was only in January 1943 that the first group of the "Youth Aliya" from Rumania and Hungary arrived in Palestine via Istanbul.

*Exchange Plan*

During the years 1941-43 additional efforts were made to make possible the immigration of special categories of Jews who had remained in enemy territory. On the basis of the "exchange plan", which according to international law makes possible the

exchange of belligerent nationals, negotiations were conducted through the Swiss Government, which had taken charge of British interests. Negotiations were conducted along two lines: -

- a) the exchange of families of Palestinian civilians against Germans from Palestine;
- b) for wives and children of Palestinian residents who had not yet become naturalized and whose families had remained behind, particularly in Poland.

The first groups under this “exchange plan” arrived from Poland through Istanbul at the end of 1942 and included 180 Palestinian nationals or families of residents in Palestine, in exchange for 320 German subjects who were returned from Palestine and Iran. In 1944 another 282 refugees arrived from Poland, Germany and Holland after receiving permits on the exchange basis. The remaining persons eligible under this plan, including 1,200 from Poland alone, were unable to set out because Germany did not allow their emigration as long as there was not a similar number of German civilians in Palestine or in territories of the British Empire willing to be repatriated.

Efforts were made to induce the Mandatory Government to include in the “exchange plan” additional categories of immigrants to Palestine; veteran Zionists, rabbis, scholars, scientists, etc. The negotiations between the various Governments and the relevant institutions in London, Jerusalem, Berlin and Geneva were protracted. The lists were approved by the Palestine Government and were transferred through the proper channels to Switzerland, which informed the German Government of the permit for their immigration to Palestine. Meanwhile, however, the occupying powers banned the emigration of Jews from their territories, and only a few of those on the approved lists managed to reach Palestine.

While the situation of the Jews in German-occupied territories was deteriorating, immigration through Turkey remained slow, and embraced *two categories only*: a) Individual immigrants – 27 families weekly – from Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary, according to previously approved lists; b) Youth immigration in groups of 50 to 75, traveling by sea or land. It was only in August 1944, when the assurance was received from the British Government that the immigrants could enter Palestine, that instructions were given to the Turkish Consulates in Bucharest, Sofia, Budapest, etc., to grant transit visas through Turkey to three categories of Jewish refugees: 1) Immigrants who had received confirmation of their immigration certificates to Palestine from the representative of the Jewish Agency in Istanbul; 2) Immigrants possessing certificates from the Swiss Embassy that they had been included in the lists of immigrants to Palestine; 3) Immigrants in possession of confirmation from the Palestine Offices of the Jewish Agency in Bucharest, Sofia or Budapest that they would receive immigration permits to Palestine on arrival at Istanbul.

## ESCAPE FROM THE BALKANS

The efforts to make possible immigration by sea met with organizational difficulties that were well nigh insurmountable. The attempts made by the Jewish Agency in London to induce the British authorities to allocate one of their ships for immigration to Palestine failed. With the assistance of the United States Ambassador to Turkey, Mr. L. Steinhardt, and the representative of the Committee for War Refugees in Washington, Mr. I. Hershman, who visited Turkey, an agreement was reached whereby the Turkish Government would lease one of its ships for Jewish immigration on condition that the United States guaranteed its safety. The International Red Cross at Ankara and Geneva succeeded in obtaining a "safe passage" for the boat from the belligerent governments of Rumania, Bulgaria and Russia, but the ship could not set out because of Germany's refusal to allow it the right of passage by sea.

However, what the Allied governments by sea from Constanza, was achieved by the efforts of emissaries from Palestine who were working tirelessly in Istanbul and Bucharest. The Rumania Government, whose failures in war has somewhat modified its attitude, promised its aid for Jewish immigration. Small boats were chartered in Bulgaria and transferred by special efforts to Constanza. On the strength of an undertaking by the representative of the Jewish Agency at Istanbul that the passengers would receive immigration certificates and proceed to Palestine by rail, the boats were allowed to proceed from Constanza to Istanbul. From then on the ships plied between Constanza and Istanbul where the Jewish Agency office confirmed their immigration permits on account of the "Balkan schedule." The Palestine Office in Turkey also looked after the equipment of the passengers who arrived there penniless and facilitated their transit through Syria under the difficult conditions then obtaining. The immigrants arriving from Constanza also included refugees from Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria, who by one way or another had made their way to the Rumanian port for the onward journey to Palestine.

A special undertaking was the dispatch of refugees from Greece in fishing smacks from the Greek Islands to the Smyrna coast. They came together with the wave of Greek émigrés who had volunteered for the Army, so that the British Consul at Smyrna granted them visas for Palestine.

Immigration from Hungary, to which much effort was devoted by all those engaged in rescue work, was of minor proportions. About 160 immigrants arrived in Istanbul through Bulgaria, and about 1,600 refugees came to Switzerland. The plan for the immigration of 8,000 families who had received confirmation from Istanbul in regard to their immigration certificates to Palestine was defeated by the tragic circumstances which arose during the last few months before the fall of Hungary.

Among the immigrants from Nazi-occupied territories which were closed to the exit of Jews there was also a group of 282 refugees from Holland and Poland who succeeded in escaping from the concentration camps of Vittel and Bergen-Belsen and who reached Palestine via Istanbul.



After the end of the war, a decisive turn set in with regard to the continuation of immigration through Turkey. The exit of refugees from the Balkans which under certain circumstances was permitted even during the war was absolutely forbidden by the Russian authorities in Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary. Even the groups of immigrants from Rumania – 1,700 in number - who had already set out were detained for months at the Bulgarian-Turkish frontier, and it was only with great difficulty that a permit for the transit of some of them was secured, while a thousand were sent back to Rumania. At a later period, following on a visit of a Jewish Agency representative to Sofia, permission was received for the emigration of 1,000 people from Bulgaria. Likewise, at the beginning of 1946, 1,000 immigrants from Rumania arrived in the “Transylvania” on certificates sent at the time to Bucharest.

#### SUMMARY OF IMMIGRATION VIA TURKEY

1940-41:	Rumania, Yugoslavia, Lithuania	4,411	
1942:	Rumania, Sweden	1,090	
1943-44	Bulgaria	1,681	
	Hungary	319	
	Rumania	4,488	
	Greece	969	
	Poland	282	
	Turkey	3,234	10,973
1945	Bulgaria, Rumania	2,086	
	Turkey	227	2,313
			18,787

The summary of immigration through Turkey presents us with a very small figure when compared with the magnitude of the disaster that had befallen the Jews of the Diaspora. Special importance however, attached to this immigration, since it was a source of hope and encouragement to the oppressed masses in the Diaspora, to whom Palestine was the only goal and a ray of light in the darkness of their lives.

The Turkish Government showed great humanity in allowing the transit of immigrants through its territory at a time when all other routes were closed to Jewish refugees, and made an important contribution to the rescue of thousands of Jews from extermination and their immigration to Palestine.

#### *Immigration of Turkish Jews*

Owing to the special circumstances obtaining for the national minorities in Turkey, Turkish Jewry, which geographically lives so near the country of its fathers, was for many years far removed from the path of immigration. The arrival of Jews from Nazi-occupied territories exercised a powerful influence on Turkish Jewry's attitude to Palestine. In 1943 the position of the Jews in Turkey deteriorated considerably,

especially in view of the heavy taxation imposed on national minorities in that country. The contacts with the Yishuv in Palestine which resulted from the migration of Jews through Turkey during the war, led to a desire for immigration among the young people who began training and learning Hebrew in preparation for immigration to Palestine.

In allocating immigration certificates, special regard was paid to the Jewish communities in the districts of Smyrna and Adrianople, as well as to the Jews in outlying districts, among whom there was a great awakening as regards immigration to Palestine.

The number of immigrants grew steadily from year to year during the period of the war as may be seen from the following figures: 1941 – 118; 1942 – 450; 1943 – 2,072; 1944 – 1,162; totaling – 3,802. However from 1945 onwards, when all attention had to be given to the concentration of the remnants of Jewry who had escaped annihilation in the liberated countries of Europe, immigration certificates could no longer be allocated to Turkey, so that immigration from that territory almost entirely ceased.

#### *Immigration of Jews from the Yemen*

The Yemenite Jews from a very ancient community in exile, numbering about 40,000 souls, who maintain close ties with their relatives and with families that have succeeded in settling in Palestine (these at present number about 20,000). Their immigration tradition is at present many decades old. Life in an Arab country to which western civilization has not yet penetrated is unbearable for Jews, who are subject to oppression and degradation. They suffer hunger and a high death rate. The Yemenite Jews flock in their thousands by devious paths to Aden, where they remain for years until they succeed in coming to Palestine.

During the war very disturbing news in regard to the position of the Jews in Yemen reached Palestine, and the Department of Immigration sent emissaries to assist the refugees who had gathered in Aden to ameliorate their condition and to expedite their immigration to Palestine. A number of immigration certificates from the immigration schedules granted during the war period was allocated to the Yemenite Jews who had fled to Aden. The number of arrivals during these years was as follows:

1939-1942	526
1943	2,421
1944	1,822
1945	<u>1,024</u>
	5,793

Assistance to Yemenite refugees formed part of the rescue activities carried out by the Department of Immigration of the Jewish Agency in collaboration with the J.D.C. A medical commission was sent out to Aden; a camp was established for the families who slept out in the streets without shelter; while some assistance was made available for the maintenance of the refugees in Aden living in dire circumstances and awaiting rescue.

### *Immigration of Refugees from Russia*

At the outbreak of the war, tens of thousands of Jewish refugees from Poland escaped to Russia and wandered thence to the region of Central Asia and Siberia. There were varying estimates regarding the number of these refugees. From information gathered from refugees in the years 1940 and 1941 it would appear that many had concentrated in Central Asia, their number reaching about 200,000.

When the German invasion of Russia began, the stream of refugees from the Baltic countries, from the frontier regions of Poland from Bessarabia and other countries increased considerably. Most disturbing news regarding the condition of the refugees there began to trickle through. The Jewish Agency then began to seek ways and means of contacting these refugees in order to give them assistance and bring them to Palestine. The first attempt made by the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency in that direction, namely the dispatch of 260 immigration certificates to Kuibyshev for distribution by the British Embassy there among Jewish refugees was unsuccessful, because the Soviet authorities did not grant exit permits on the ground that these refugees had become Soviet citizens by virtue of the referendum of November 1939. It was therefore clear that it was necessary to draw nearer to the Soviet Russian frontiers and from there to try and establish contacts with the Jewish refugees. In April 1942 the Jewish Agency established at Teheran an office whose duties were: a) To bring out people from Russia to Teheran and to send them to Palestine. B) To deal with refugee problems in Iran. c) To extend assistance to the refugees in Russia through the dispatch of parcels, food and clothing; and d) To establish contacts between the refugees in Russia and their families and relations.

When it became clear that there was no possibility of the Polish refugees leaving Russia on the strength of immigration certificates, the Jewish Agency representatives decided to attempt to bring out the refugees from Russia together with the Polish evacuation groups. Among the 110,000 Polish citizens leaving Russia there were only 7,000 Jews, despite the fact that the Jewish refugees in Russia constituted 50% of the Polish nationals there. After the refugees reached Iran a fresh difficulty presented itself. The Iraqi Government refused to grant transit visas to Jewish refugees, and so it became necessary to transfer these refugees together with the Polish Army contingent in the summer of 1942. About 500 children – for the most part orphans – reached Palestine on immigration certificates in an English ship through the Persian Gulf and India.

The condition of these refugees on arriving in Iran was horrifying. The greater part of them were diseased and famine stricken and without a rag to their backs. The Jewish Agency office helped them and also raised funds among the Jews of Iran and Palestine, who responded generously. A branch of the Palestine office was opened at Pahlawi on the shores of the Caspian Sea, where first aid was given to the refugees on arrival. Special children's quarters were erected in the refugee camps in Iran where the children were looked after until their arrival in Palestine in February 1943.

At Teheran also hundreds of refugees from Bukhara gathered for immigration to Palestine. For many months they were in danger of being deported from Teheran, but in view of the efforts made by the representative of the Jewish Agency there, they were given permits to come to Palestine. The refugees were 325 in number, and it was they who renewed the immigration of Bukharan Jews after prolonged interruption in recent years.

### C. IMMIGRATION INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPE AFTER THE WAR

At the end of the war, when the first attempts were made to renew immigration from Europe within the narrow limits that were possible, it became clear that there was no suitable organization to carry out the task. The emissaries sent out to conduct activities in this field did their best under difficult conditions with communications in all countries restricted and disorganized, and succeeded with the collaboration of the relief organizations charged with refugees affairs in sending out groups of immigrants who had received immigration certificates for Palestine.

The Palestine Office which before the war unified all activities in the sphere of immigration and training were closed down and disbanded when the Jewish communities in all the countries affected by the war were destroyed. The communal leaders at the head of public institution had either left with the mass expulsions or had been murdered at their posts. It was therefore necessary to build up the immigration institutions once more – except those of Switzerland and Sweden which had remained undisturbed – and to start work. Following the confusion that set in during the first months after the war, signs of a reawakening of public life in the liberated countries became visible. It should be mentioned that the members of the Jewish Brigade were the first to infuse a spirit of life into these disintegrated Jewish communities. The refugees who returned to their countries of origin quickly braced themselves to new activity and set up organizational instruments for communal work. The emissaries sent out by the Department of Immigration assisted in these activities in France, Belgium, Italy, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary etc. Palestine Offices were set up after the model of the immigration institutions that had existed before the war. Groups of emissaries went to Germany, Austria and Greece, working as relief teams in the refugee camps, and together with the activities which they organized within the framework of the relief organizations (J.D.C., UNRRA, etc.) they also set up Palestine Committees and Offices to deal with immigration according to the certificates sent from time to time to these countries.

#### *Warsaw*

The Palestine Office in Warsaw, the father of all Zionist Immigration institutions in the Diaspora ever since immigration to Palestine began, was destroyed soon after the outbreak of the war together with the destruction of Polish Jewry.

In November 1939, after the Nazi occupation of Poland, the first news of the remnants of Zionist workers and the Palestine Office in Warsaw was received at Geneva. Immediate steps were taken by the Immigration Department's temporary office there to

open up possibilities for immigration through Italy for any Jews who would succeed in leaving Poland in those terrible conditions. Conditions of travel and communication for Jews entailed the greatest danger. Entrance to Italy was conditional on the possession of an immigration certificate and at the same time the immigration of Jews from enemy countries had already been prohibited. Nevertheless, about 600 Jews were rescued from Poland having succeeded in obtaining exit permits from that country on the strength of confirmations arranged at Trieste. In April 1940 the frontiers were closed for all Jews, so that among the candidates for immigration about 250 communal workers, writers and rabbis, who were already in possession of entrance visas to Italy and for whom all arrangements have been made, remained behind in Warsaw.

When the anti-Jewish excesses which led to the complete annihilation of Polish Jewry began, immigration came to a complete standstill and only a few individuals succeeded in escaping from the Polish charnel house.

After the liberation of Poland, the Jewish remnants who had been miraculously saved from extinction were left to the mercy of pogroms, persecution and remain so to the present day.

The principal activity on behalf of the few thousands of Jews who remained in Poland or who returned from their hiding places in the woods where they had lived for months and years on end, was to extend to them immediate relief from starvation, and to assist them to flee to other countries where they would be free from the danger of death.

Efforts were also made to reopen the Palestine Office in Warsaw in order to start immigration activities when the time arrives. Dr. M. E. Ishai was sent to Warsaw at the end of 1945 on behalf of the Immigration Department and the Palestine Office has been re-established to become the first official institution of the Jewish agency in Poland.

### *Geneva*

The activities of the Palestine Office in Geneva, headed by Dr. H. Scheeps and Mr. H. Posner, form a continuation of the work carried on by the office of the Department of Immigration of the Jewish Agency, which was established at the outbreak of the war.\* The Office conducted activities throughout the whole period of the war in the sphere of immigration and rescue work, maintaining contacts with enemy countries on the one hand, and with the office of the Jewish Agency at Istanbul on the other. After the liberation of Europe, a reduction was made in the scope of activities in Switzerland, which ceased to be an international center, but certain fields of activity are still concentrated in this Office. Of the tens of thousands of Jewish refugees who found shelter in Switzerland during the war, about 8,000 remain, not having returned to their countries of origin (about 2,000 immigrated to Palestine in 1945), and the majority of them await possibilities for immigration.

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\* For details see page 2.

### *Bucharest*

A temporary interruption in the activities of the Palestine Office at Bucharest took place in the year 1942 following the “Struma” disaster. When the Nazi laws on the basis of the “Jewish Council,” which replaced the Jewish Institutions, were promulgated, the Palestine Office was closed down and went underground, where its activities were directed mainly towards the rescue and assistance of Jews deported to Transdnistria, and towards preparations for immigration by all possible ways.

The Palestine Office was headed at various intervals by workers who had conducted its activities through the maze of internal and external difficulties, and the change of personnel at the head of affairs added to the difficulties of its work. In July 1944, the Rumanian authorities decided on the opening of a “Jewish Emigration Office” headed by Mr. I.L. Zisu, Jewish Agency representative in Rumania. Secret preparations for unauthorized immigration by sea were continued unremittingly and in close contact with the Jewish Agency’s representative at Istanbul, who endeavored to provide immigrants on arrival there with the opportunity of continuing their way to Palestine. After numerous efforts and on the strength of an undertaking from Istanbul, to grant Immigration Certificates, the Rumanian authorities allowed the ships to set sail from Constanza. In April 1944 the first groups of immigrants who set sail in the steam ships Mariza and Molka arrived at Istanbul, where they received visas and were transferred by rail via Syria to Palestine. Since then ten ships arrived from Rumania bringing with them 4,144 immigrants.

After the capitulation of Rumania, however, a turn for the worse set in. Rumania, having ceased to be an enemy country, the British Embassies cancelled all facilities granted to refugees and so this road to immigration was closed to them. On the other hand, the Russian Control authorities prohibited the exit of Jews from Rumania which became a closed territory. The 2,000 certificates allocated to Rumania remained unused. Efforts were made to transfer 1,000 immigrants overland via Bulgaria but the immigrants were held up on the Turkish frontier and were released only after some months, part of them being returned to Rumania. The remaining 1,000 immigrants from Rumania to whom certificates had been already allocated in 1944, arrived in Palestine on the Transylvania in October 1945. Since that date immigration from Rumania, where the Jewish masses are permeated with a desire to come to Palestine and among whom the Hachshara Movement embraces tens of thousands of youth, has practically ceased.

### *Budapest*

The Office in Budapest was one of the few Palestine offices in existence throughout the war and fulfilled a very important role in immigration and rescue work. From the beginning of the war until June 1941 the number of immigrants from Hungary was as follows:

Via Trieste	<u>744</u>	
Via Istanbul	518	1262
During years 1943-44		
Via Istanbul	<u>319</u>	
Total	1,581	

The prohibition of the exit of immigrants in possession of certificates, which was applicable to all countries in the Soviet sphere of influence, was particularly strict in Hungary. (However, the wave of illegal immigrants from Poland through Hungary did not cease and Budapest was the first and principal transit station on this underground route.) In recent months a change has taken place and the Palestine Office has received permission to send immigrants who receive Palestine visas from the British Consul in Budapest. A few groups have already come to Palestine on the strength of this confirmation.

Even when Hungary joined the Axis, the Palestine Office did not stop work and by means of the "Rescue Certificates" dispatched to it by the representative of the Jewish Agency at Istanbul assisted in the rescue of immigrants from deportation to Poland. When the German armies entered Budapest in March 1944 and the persecution and expulsion of Hungarian Jews began, the Palestine Office under the direction of Mr. M. Kraus became a means of rescue for tens of thousands of immigrants who were placed under the protection of the Swiss Consulate and whom the right to Immigration Certificates saved from expulsion to Poland. In this way some 40,000 Hungarian Jews were saved from death.

After the liberation of Hungary a reorganization of the Palestine Office was made in accordance with conditions reigning in the country.

### *Czechoslovakia*

The Palestine Office at Bratislava served as a rescue station for the Jews of Eastern Europe during the war, one of the most important tasks it undertook being the care for the needs of refugees from Bohemia and Poland. When the institutions of the Zionist Organization were closed by the Nazi-Slovak Government, the Palestine Office succeeded in freeing its funds which had been frozen by the authorities. When the "Jewish Center" was officially established (with the permission of the Slovak Government) it included a Department of Immigration which was staffed by the Director of the Palestine Office and his assistants. During 1942 the office in Bratislava, assisted by the Palestine Office in Budapest and "Hicem", succeeded in organizing a group of 100 immigrants. The activities of the Palestine Office also included the dispatch of food parcels to occupied Poland. The parcels were sent according to the addresses supplied by the Jewish Agency Office at Istanbul and Dr. Morgenstern, representative of "Hias" which was active in Poland, confirmed their receipt.

The Palestine Office was headed by Dr. Oscar Neumann, Dr. Rosenthal and the late Mrs. Gizi Fleishman, who also organized rescue work among the Jews of Bohemia.

These activities were accompanied by much difficulty and danger and thus the number of Jews rescued was not large. In view of their contacts with high Government officials they were able to organize an information service for reports on the condition of Jews in Bohemia and Poland, which news was transferred to Jewish institutions abroad. They were thus able to provide the first news of the expulsion of Jews from Maerisch-Ostrau. The Palestine Office extended its assistance to a large group of Jews from Vienna who had been expelled from that city and who stayed for some time at Patronka near Bratislava.

When deportations began from Slovakia, energetic efforts were made to postpone the date of expulsion as far as possible and news that they might flee and save themselves from expulsion and certain death. Through the international Red Cross an information service was set up between the Jews of Slovakia and their relatives in Palestine and America. With the assistance of the Jewish Agency and relief organizations in Geneva, Lisbon and Tangier, food parcels and assistance were sent to the Jews deported to Poland and Theresienstadt. Sums of money were received monthly from the relief committee at Istanbul for members of the Zionist movement in the labor camps and places of expulsion. This relief activity was maintained until September 1944.

Immigration activities did not cease throughout this period. The Palestine Office succeeded in obtaining transit visas through Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania for groups of immigrants but the visas through Turkey were no longer valid. The plan to transfer the children to Hungary was not carried out in view of the pressure of members of the Hechalutz Movement and refugees from Poland. The Slovak Red Cross agreed to certify to the list of candidates for immigration in to Palestine, but these documents had no validity and so could not save the Jews from expulsion.

When Czechoslovakia was liberated in the Spring of 1945, active members who had been deported also began to return to Prague and Bratislava and the activities of the Palestine office were officially renewed. Our members returned and placed themselves at the head of such important institutions as the J.D.C., the Central Community Councils, etc. In August 1945 the first immigration certificates for Czechoslovakia Jews were received by the Jewish Agency.

There are two Palestine Offices in Czechoslovakia, where the Jewish population at present numbers about 45,000 as against 320,000 before the war. The central office is established in Bratislava, while the Prague office attends to visa and transportation questions through the appropriate Government Departments and the British Consulate. In Czechoslovakia there exists a special problem in regard to Jewish refugees from Carpatho-Russia (a Czechoslovakian province ceded to Russia in accordance with the Peace Treaty), who had gathered in the Sudeten province and who are in danger of being repatriated unless they are able to immigrate into Palestine. About 20,000 Jews, mainly refugees, have registered for immigration. The directors of the Palestine Offices are Dr. L. Rosenthal (Bratislava) and R. Friedel (Prague).



## *Sofia*

The Palestine Office in Bulgaria continued operating throughout the years of war, to begin with at Sofia and, after the expulsion of the Jews from the capital, at Roschuk. After efforts which had been made for about a year, the first group of 50 children out of a total of 1,000 Youth Aliya candidates left Bulgaria for Palestine in 1943. Afterwards a procedure was established for the granting of transit visas in accordance with the instructions and lists received from Ankara, to veteran Zionists who left for Palestine at the rate of 9 per week. In the middle of 1944 the announcement was made that all Jews in possession of an immigration document issued by the Jewish Agency in Istanbul would be allowed to enter Turkey were they would receive the visas for Palestine. This announcement came too late, for the battle front was nearing Bulgaria and the difficulties in receiving passports under the anti-Jewish laws almost nullified the advantages accruing from these instructions. After the liberation of Bulgaria in September 1944, 1,000 Immigration Certificates were allocated to the Palestine Office in Sofia, but the authorities, which were overwhelmingly under Communist influence, refused to permit their holders to leave Bulgaria. It was only in October 1945 that these thousand certificate-holders were allowed to leave Bulgaria and they all arrived in Palestine in the course of a few months.

The Palestine Office in Sofia also devoted attention to immigrants from Rumania – about 1,000 in number, who had remained stranded on the Bulgarian frontiers in November 1944 where they were held up by the Russian authorities on the suspicion that they were Russian subjects or that they came from regions in Poland that had been ceded to Russia. These immigrants remained for about seven weeks in goods trucks at the frontier station of Svilengrad until permission was received from Moscow for them to continue their way to Palestine.

After the expulsion from Sofia, the Palestine Office attended to the distribution of relief sent by the “Relief Committee” in Istanbul.

The stream of refugees coming to Sweden from Poland, Hungary and other countries increased in 1944, reaching a total of 12,000 souls. A Palestine Office has long been in existence in Stockholm, but it was expanded and adapted to its new tasks last year. The Office is headed by Mr. Daniel Brick, who collaborates with the emissaries of the “Halutz” and “Youth Immigration” movements. The assistance of the Swedish Government has also been enlisted for refugees until they are able to set out for Palestine.

## *Lisbon*

In the latter half of 1943, the Immigration Department devoted particular attention to the organization of activities in the south western corner of Europe, and sent a special emissary, the late Mr. Siegfried Israel, to commence operations. After Mr. Israel's tragic death in an air crash on his way from London to Lisbon, a permanent office was opened in the latter city, which was conducted during the years 1944 and 1945 by a

representative of the Department. The Head of the Department spent three months in Portugal and Spain in the summer of 1944.

Negotiations were conducted between the Jewish Agency representatives, in collaboration with the Jewish World Congress, and the Governments of Portugal and Spain in connection with the entry of Jews from occupied Europe to these two neutral countries. The negotiations were directed at the following three objectives:

(i) *Right of entry for Jews of Spanish or Portuguese origin:* This right was recognized by the Governments of Spain and Portugal at the beginning of 1944, and some 800 Jews of Spanish origin, together with about 300 Jews of Portuguese origin, succeeded in taking advantage of it during the war, and in making their way out of various countries under Nazi occupation to reach Spain and Portugal. The majority of those rescued by this means were refugees from Greece.

(ii) *Right of transit and temporary protection for immigrants from Europe:* This was the subject of protracted negotiations which only came to a close in the middle of 1945. On the strength of the Jewish Agency representative's undertaking to allot immigration certificates to Palestine to all immigrants arriving in Spain and Portugal, the two Governments agreed to extend temporary protection to a few thousand children, while the Spanish Government also agreed to the Jewish Agency's request to permit the entry of 1,500 Jews from Hungary as an extraordinary measure. In this regard, mention must be made of the assistance rendered to the Jewish Agency representative by the British Ambassador in Madrid whose intervention led to the dispatch of instructions to the Spanish Embassy in Budapest to grant the necessary visas. The state of communications, however, prevented the holders of these visas from making use of them, but thanks to the efforts made, 1,500 were saved, who after a short spell in a transit camp were later transferred to Switzerland. In addition to this group, a few score children managed to reach Spain on the basis of the certificates mentioned above.

(iii) *Transit of Refugees via the Pyrenees:* The difficulty of obtaining legal permission for the evacuation of Jews from occupied Europe and their transit and entry into the neutral countries urged Jewish organizations in this corner of the continent too to encourage and assist the rescue of Jews by transferring them illegally via the Pyrenees Mountains. Attention was devoted mainly to the Jews of France, and in particular to orphaned children from France and Belgium. During a certain period the Gestapo did not send orphaned children to the death camps, and many of them were concealed in village farmsteads, in general orphanages and even in monasteries. A Jewish Underground movement was organized in France which conducted the work of rescue and transfer of Jews to the Spanish frontier. Many devoted members of the underground movement fell while engaged on this task. There were a number of young men and women volunteers who conducted selected groups of refugees repeatedly until they were eventually captured by the Gestapo and executed. An agreement was concluded between the Jewish Agency representative and the leaders of this 'Underground' which undertook to place its rescue organization under the authority of the Zionist Movement. Particularly noteworthy was another agreement signed between representative of the Jewish Agency,

the American Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish World Congress on one hand, and representative of the British and American Embassies in Portugal on the other, for joint action in this field. This joint action, which was carried out with the full knowledge and approval of the two Governments concerned, had considerable effect on the progress that was made. 3,200 refugees crossed the Pyrenees frontier in this way to find temporary refuge in Spain, Portugal and Tangier. Of this number a part later succeeded in reaching Palestine in the boats "Nyassa", "Gini" and "Plus Ultra" thanks to the efforts of the Jewish Agency Office in Lisbon.

There is no doubt that this part of the world also provided a route for the rescue and immigration to Palestine of many thousands, but, owing to the meager assistance provided by the Great Powers, only a few were actually saved. The Allied Governments regarded the problem as one capable of solution only by a military victory, and thus, except for the special cases noted above, either gave no help at all or came on the scene when it were almost too late. Those that were rescued were rescued mainly by 'unauthorized' means, and in particular, as a result of Jewish efforts alone.

#### *Athens*

The fate of the Jews in Greece, who numbered 70,000 before the war, was that of expulsion and destruction in common with other Jewish communities in Nazi-occupied Europe. A community of about 10,000 Jews who succeeded in escaping and concealing themselves among the Greek population is all that remains of Greek Jewry. Special commission was sent out from Palestine to assist the Greek Jews, who have remained destitute and among whom famine and pestilence have played havoc. The Palestine Office was reopened at Athens in May 1945, and its first activities were directed towards youth immigration – the transfer of orphans who had remained behind after their parents had been deported to Poland, whence they never returned. About 200 children, mostly orphans, have come to Palestine on immigration certificates and hundreds of others are awaiting their turn for immigration. The relief teams, with the assistance of the J.D.C. have succeeded in encouraging and organizing a training movement for pioneers preparing for immigration to Palestine.

In September 1945 there were 3,000 children under the supervision of the "OZE" organization (1,200 in "OZE" institutions, a thousand others, recovered from gentile hands and placed in Jewish institutions for education, and the rest with Christian families). From Paris, too, activities were directed for the rescue of orphans in neighboring countries – Holland and Belgium – where special children's homes were set up.

According to the directions of the Department of Immigration, immigration certificates were allocated, by the Palestine Committee in Paris composed of eight members representing the political parties, as follows: 45% for the immigration of youth up to the age of 18; 35% for Halutzim and artisans; and 20% for veteran Zionists and special cases.

One of the first activities of the Palestine Office was to find means of transport for 3,200 immigrants from France, Switzerland and Belgium, to whom immigration certificates had been allotted. The American military authorities generously agreed to make available for immigration from France several of their ships sailing for Egypt.

The greater part of the immigration certificate allocated to France was granted to refugees in that country. Of the 1,300 immigrants from France only 350 had lived there before the war, as the number of French nationals who applied for immigration certificates was not large – of 1,800 registering for immigration in 1945, there were only 150 Jews of French nationality. A large part of French Jewry endeavored to reestablish itself, and to find their relatives who had hidden themselves during the war.

### *Paris*

Force of circumstances after the war made Paris, the center of immigration activities in Central and Western Europe. In January 1945 our representative, Mr. D. Shaltiel, arrived in Paris to inquire into immigration affairs in these countries, and set up again the Palestine Office which was charged with the duty of organizing immigration activities in France and in neighboring countries such as Switzerland, Belgium and Holland. In addition there was set up the “Committee for Youth Immigration” which, apart from dealing with youth affairs and selecting candidates for immigration had also the duty of gathering together the Jewish children from all the places where they had found refuge during the war. Numerous difficulties were put in our way by the French Government, which claimed that the children remaining alive were the orphans of the State, and that the State would look after them in the future. The French Government promulgated a law prohibiting the exit of children from France without the permission of their parents or guardians. Opposition to the immigration of the children was forthcoming also from the Jewish social services, so long as there was any hope of their parents being alive.

### *Brussels*

The Palestine Office in Brussels is staffed by people who had engaged in immigration work before the war and with the cooperation of emissaries from Palestine has established ties with Government institutions and with organizations for the relief of refugees who have registered for immigration to Palestine.

### *Amsterdam*

Activities were begun by the members of the Jewish Brigade stationed in Holland who revived the training activities of the “Halutz” and the other outstanding youth movements of that country. The Palestine Office was established at the beginning of 1946, with Mr. De Jong at its head. Activities centered chiefly on the training of youth immigration groups for Palestine.

### *Vienna*

In February 1946 a Palestine Office was established in Vienna to deal with the affairs of refugees in the various camps in Austria and in Vienna itself, which serves as an important transit station for refugees from Poland on their way to the American zone of occupation in Germany. At the head of the office, which has the cooperation of all surviving Zionist workers in Vienna, is Mr. N. Braver, a member of the staff of the Vienna office before the war.

The Jewish refugees in Austria are dispersed over the camps of Graz, Linz and Salzburg, but have recourse to the institutions in Vienna.

### *Rome*

Immigration activities in Italy were begun by Jewish soldiers who established the "Merkaz Lagola" and brought a ray of light and hope to the refugee's camps during the first period after the liberation and also strengthened the feelings of nationalism among Italian Jewry. The dispatch of immigrants organized in Italy on the strength of certificates sent from Palestine, was carried out by people who were also in touch with the countries of origin of these immigrants. At the end of 1944 D. A. Nahon was sent out as a Jewish Agency representative to Italy, and the Palestine Office was opened in Rome to centralize all immigration activities in the country. In Rome there is also the "Refugee Committee", representing the Jewish refugees in Italy, whose numbers fluctuate according to immigration possibilities to Palestine. There are at present about 20,000 Jewish refugees in Italy, all of whom are candidates for immigration.

### *Munich*

The Palestine Office at Munich was established in December, 1945, and served as the central office for all occupation zones in Germany. The office also concentrates the activities of the Relief teams, which were sent to Germany by the Department of Immigration, under the charge of Dr. H. Hoffman, of the Jewish Agency.

During the first months of its activity the Office appointed a committee of seven members representing the parties and organizations in existence there. In the various camps local committees operate with the collaboration of delegates of the Jewish Agency. In conjunction with the Palestine Office there exists also a Training Committee composed of five members representing the Halutz movements which maintain training centers. In collaboration with "ORT" vocational training schools are maintained where about 2,500 men and women receive instruction, as for example at Landesburg where about 700 youth and adults are being trained.

JEWS IN THE GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN REGIONS  
AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER 1946

<i>Germany</i>	
American Zone	140,000*
British Zone	25,000
Berlin (including 8,000 Jews who have returned)	17,000
French Zone in Germany and Austria	2,000
<i>Austria</i>	
American Zone	32,000
British Zone	<u>3,000</u>
	219,000

In June 1946, there were about 17,000 children up to the age of 17 in the camps.

In order to facilitate arrangements for the receipt of visas to Palestine, there centers were established: In the British Zone – the British Passport Control Officer at Luebeck; In the American Zone – the British Political Representative at Frankfurt-am-Main; In the French Zone – the British Passport Control Officer at Strassbourg.

The Palestine Office at Munich, together with the J.D.C. and the Central Committee for Jews in the Camps, deals with questions relating to the expansion of existing camps and the opening of new ones. It is the plan of the office, in collaboration with other bodies, to employ the refugees until the time of their immigration to Palestine falls due and to organize independent craft schemes (household utensil, clothing work implements, etc.) under the supervision of experts and instructors from Palestine

Extensive activity has been carried out in the organization of Palestine Offices since the war, but one must not be oblivious to the fact that the organization of these offices is still weak and does not embrace all the activities that the Palestine Committees are entitled to undertake according to Congress resolutions. The Palestine Offices are representative institutions as far as relations with the various Governments are concerned. They arrange for the registration of immigrants and deal with questions of visas and transport. The certificates are received from Palestine together with instructions in regard to their allocation for "Youth Aliya," Halutzim, veteran Zionists and other categories. With regard to Halutzim, the certificates are granted according to lists prepared by the "Halutz" "youth Aliya" offices in almost every country. The certificates for relatives and for veteran Zionists are few in number, and are also confirmed in Jerusalem. There is still a long way to go before the Palestine Offices can be organized to embrace all immigration activities. It is necessary to re-examine the organization and authority of the Palestine Offices and Committees in preparation for future immigration activities in order to define their position in relation to other institutions active in this sphere.

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\* There were only 115,000 Jews in this region at the beginning of September, so that another 25,000 refugees must have arrived in the zone during the month.

### C. HACHSHARA DURING AND AFTER THE WAR

The development of the pioneering movement in the Diaspora was, until the outbreak of the war, subject to fluctuations according to the ebb and flow of immigration. The peak period of the “Halutz” movement was between the years 1933 and 1935, when the number of Halutzim (apart from members of youth movements) reached 120,000 members, of whom about 33,000 were undergoing training.

#### *Consolidation of Hachshara Undertakings*

In view of the restrictions on immigration, an appreciable retrogression in the pioneering movement set in, and “Hachshara” (training) activities were reduced. Nonetheless, the movement preserved its principal features, and important “Hachshara” undertakings were consolidated. With the disintegration of the urban branches, the loyal pioneering elements withdrew to “Hachshara” farms which became their homes, where they lived and worked until the day they set sail for Palestine. The permanent “Kibbutz” became the mainstay of the “Halutz” movement. Difficulties of immigration made it necessary for pioneers to remain in their training centers for four to six years, but at the same time taught the “Halutz” community to stand steadfast in face of all obstacles.

In the year 1939, on the threshold of the World War, the pioneering movement in all its branches numbered from 13,000 to 14,000 members in training farms in Poland, Galicia, Rumania, Austria, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and a *first nucleus* in the United States. The pioneers training movement in Germany was transferred in part, in view of the special circumstances, to England, Holland, Denmark and Sweden.

#### *In the Underground and on the Road*

The disaster which befell European Jewry at the outbreak of the war also undermined the splendid structure which the “Halutz” movement had erected with the toil of years. However, even during the war, its vitality and strength remained apparent. When the Soviet Armies occupied Eastern Poland, it was clear that the “Halutz” camp had remained faithful to its flag, staunch to its ideals, and prepared for suffering and persecution. The “Halutz” movement was able to overcome all sufferings, both spiritual and physical, caused by the difficult conditions obtaining in the occupied territories, and began working in the “underground” by relying on loyal “cells”.

### HALUTZ MOVEMENT THE CENTER OF DEFENCE

When Poland was occupied there began a mass migration of pioneers towards frontiers that might bring them nearer to the roads leading to Palestine. In Vilna, which was ceded to Lithuania, there gathered about 2,000 pioneers, among the best of the movement in Poland. These people displayed great activity in the organization of training camps and in arrangements for immigration, as well as in establishing ties with the nuclei of the movement in occupied territories.

In the German-occupied territories the movement made efforts during the first period to re-gather its forces. Training camps were restored and scattered members were regrouped. In the darkness that surrounded European Jewry, the firm stand of the “Halutz” was a ray of light and hope for salvation. The “Halutz” was the principal standard-bearer of the Zionist ideal among the oppressed and downtrodden Jews of Europe.

### *Defense and Revolt*

When the position of the Jews in Nazi-occupied territories deteriorated, and the first signs of the extermination campaign became apparent, the “Halutz” movement became the center of Jewish defense. It was they who were the moving spirits behind the Jewish revolt in the ghettos; it was they who filled the partisan units in the forests and fought the war of Israel.

Nor did “Halutz” activities cease in Western European countries under Nazi occupation. The movement continued for a long time, so long as it was possible to keep the flame burning, and until Jewry in these countries was entirely obliterated.

In the free countries (England and Sweden) the training farms were kept going despite the absence of immigration prospects during the years of the war, and there are many who have been in these training farms for as long as eight and ten years.

### *The Revival of the Remnants*

When Europe was liberated from the Nazis a revival set in among the remnants of the Jewish youth. The “Halutz” movement revived, and training farms were reorganized. In place of the strongholds of the “Halutz” movement in Eastern Europe that were destroyed, new centers sprang up. There is now no country in Europe where a Jewish community has survived, that has not its “Halutz” organization. The importance of “Hachshara” has risen, and the “Hachshara” center has become a shelter for thousands of Jewish youth who have lost their homes and means of support.

Viewed from the point of view of the number of training farms and their scope, this is an unprecedented period for the “Hachshara” movement in Europe. The Number of pioneers organized in training farms is now upwards of 40,000 despite the fact that these farms suffer from lack of work, and only a part of the members are engaged in actual physical labor. Mention should be made of the important role of agriculture in training activities. In Germany alone there are now more than 25 agricultural training farms. The agricultural branch in training activities is outstanding also in the Balkans (Rumania and Bulgaria), as well as in Hungary and Italy. Some of the pioneers are also engaged in maritime activities.



### *From All Parts of Russia*

The pioneers who at the beginning of the war wandered to Russia form an appreciable force in the rise of the “Hachshara” training centers in Europe. About 2,000 pioneers from the training centers in Poland were scattered throughout the length and breadth of Russia, and many of them maintained contact with Palestine from the places of their dispersion. The relief extended to them, among other Jewish refugees, brought them valuable material support as well as spiritual encouragement from Palestine and has given them strength to hold out until they are able to leave, by whatever means, ready for the realization of their ideal.

The training centers that have now risen in all parts of the Diaspora carry out an important social and educational task among the young people that have remained in the countries of Europe. During the seven years of horror through which these young people passed, they were bereft of all education, both general and Jewish so that the training center serves also as a school which provides them with cultural and national values and social training. Such cultural and educational activity is carried on with the aid of the emissaries from Palestine who work among the “Halutz” movement in the Diaspora on behalf of the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency.

The Department of Immigration has also paid special attention to providing camps and training centers with text books for the study of Hebrew, reading material, journals, etc. Since December 1945, the Department has dispatched to the Diaspora a total of more than 20,000 books.

### *Pioneer Training in Figures*

The wandering of Eastern European Jewry and with it the “Halutz” movement, make it impossible to give precise figures concerning the composition of the “Halutz” training movement in the various countries and according to the various parties. The following, however, are general figures concerning countries where there are at present concentrations of “Halutzim”.

Germany and Austria	18,000
Italy	5,000
Rumania	4,000
Hungary	5,000
Poland	3,000
France	1,000
Sweden	3,500
Holland	400
Czechia	1,500
Slovakia	1,500
Belgium	500
English-Speaking countries, about	<u>2,000</u>
	45,000

## HACHSHARA IN ORIENTAL, ENGLISH COUNTRIES

### *Central Countries*

During the war, when the sources of immigration in Western countries were destroyed, the Zionist movement expanded its activities among Oriental Jewry. The Jewish Agency initiated its activities among Jewish youth in Oriental countries; the seeds of pioneerdom, sown by its emissaries, have taken root, and a uniform “Halutz” movement has sprung up in most countries of the East. Hundreds of pioneers from Oriental countries are to be found today in communal settlements and youth groups in Palestine.

Training in “Halutz” centers in Oriental countries is limited largely to cultural activity in view of the fact that conditions obtaining in most of these countries do not lend themselves to the establishment of training centers in the accepted sense of the term. Nevertheless, experiments have been made in the organization of agricultural training. In these countries (Turkey, Iran, Egypt, North Africa and India) the number of those who have joined the “Halutz” movement is 5,000.

### *The Anglo-Saxon Countries*

In English-speaking countries (the United State, Canada, England, South Africa, Australia), where about half of world Jewry is now concentrated, the tendency for “Halutz” training is also noticeable, and the Department of Immigration, in collaboration with other bodies, is devoting much attention to these activities. Assistance is given by sending emissaries to direct activities (there are at present 25 delegates active in these countries), as well as by extending financial help for agricultural training (such as for example, the “Halutz” training farms in the United States). The scope of the “Halutz” movement in these countries is still, however, limited and does not exceed 2,000 members.

### *Hachshara Budgets*

The Department of Immigration of the Jewish Agency has extended its full support to the organization and maintenance of “Hachshara” centers. The budget has risen from year to year, reaching £P.46,000 in the yea 1945-46, apart from the sums expended on the dispatch of emissaries and the organization of their activities in the Diaspora.\*

### *Efforts to Achieve Unity*

Realizing the great harm that is caused by the breaking up of the movement into sections, the Department of Immigration has made efforts to consolidate the “Halutz” movement and to unite it. “Halutz” education has been built up on common values, and

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\* See Budget for sums spent by Jewish Agency on training activities.

Zionist education is based on the following foundations: self-realization; immigration; labor; mutual assistance; Hebrew culture; agricultural training; and unity among workers.

Unfortunately, these efforts have not been crowned with success. Dissension in the “Halutz” camp still continues, and leads to a great waste of strength and effort. The Jewish youth in Europe was permeated with a tendency to unity, but the influence of the realities of the Yishuv has tended in an opposite direction.

The Department of Immigration is increasing its efforts in the field of “Halutz” activities in the conviction that it is imperative to give Jewish youth a “Halutz” education in order to maintain an organized nucleus, strong-willed and conscious of its tasks, among the despondent and derelict Jewry that has remained to us after the destruction of Europe.

#### D. DELEGATES FOR THE DIASPORA

The activities of the Palestine delegates in the service of the Zionist and “Halutz” movements did not cease even during the war. A number of delegates remained behind in the occupied territories, keeping alive the flame of the movement. Parachutists who penetrated the enemy lines brought the message of Palestine to the Jewish masses. At the beginning of the liberation of Europe, the Jewish soldiers came into contact with the remnants of Jewry in Europe; they did great work for their rescue and for the education of Jewish youth, and initiated an immigration movement. The Zionist movement has never known so fruitful and so successful a band of emissaries as these soldiers, in every contact with whom the remnants of European Jewry saw the harbingers of redemption.

##### *Tasks by the Emissaries sent out by the Institutions*

When the war came to an end a special Committee for Emissaries Abroad was set up by the Department of Immigration, in collaboration with the Department for Youth Affairs of the Zionist Organization and the Head Office of the Jewish National Fund, to prepare delegations to the Jewish Diaspora and to adapt their activities to the conditions obtaining there – conditions that necessitated uniform delegations under the direction of the central Zionist institutions, with special stress on the questions touching the movement generally rather than on particular problems. This committee approves of the delegates for Zionist activity in all countries, for work on behalf of the Jewish National Fund, for directing the activities of the “Halutz”, for educational work among youth organizations, and for immigration activities.

The training of the delegates was affected by three seminars conducted by the Jewish Agency, in which representatives of all parties in the Zionist movement participated. Instruction was given in the problems of the Zionist movement, of the Yishuv and of the Diaspora, as well as in the languages of the countries to which the delegates were to be sent.\* Scores of delegates have been working abroad on behalf of the Department of Immigration during the period covered by the present report.

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\* See report of the Department for Youth Affairs.

Activities in this field were extended after the establishment of the Committee for Emissaries Abroad, and by the end of the year 1945-46 there were 105 emissaries at work (apart from 125 members of Relief Teams).

The emissaries are working in the following countries: Poland - 13; Hungary - 1; Rumania - 6; Czechoslovakia - 4; Holland - 5; Italy - 16; Greece - 3; England - 7; United States - 16; Canada - 1; Mexico - 1; Uruguay - 1; Australia - 1; Bulgaria - 1; While 6 emissaries are active in countries of the Near East.

### RELIEF TEAMS IN THE BALKANS

New tasks have fallen to the lot of the delegates this year after the destruction of European Jewry and the breaking of ties between Palestine and the Diaspora. The delegate from Palestine must act as link between the Yishuv and the Jews in the country in which he is working, and at times he must rebuild Zionist life from the very foundations and not only attend to Zionist education, but also undertake material assistance, rescue work, the transport of immigrants, the rescue of children from their non-Jewish surroundings, feeding, etc.

The education forces in the countries of the exile having become impoverished, the Palestine emissaries have to undertake the organization of the Zionist movement there, and they serve as the mainstay of Zionist life around which the Jews rally.

The disruption of Jewish life in the various countries necessitates an increase in the number of delegates, and the longer mass immigration is held up, the larger is the number of delegates needed to keep Zionism in the exile alive until such time as the storm clouds disperse.

### RELIEF TEAMS

A new chapter in the history of emissaries to the Diaspora has been written by those delegates who left in the form of relief teams to work among the refugees and the Displaced Persons' camps. The first relief team was organized by a joint committee of the Jewish Agency and the Vaad Leumi in the year 1944, for aid to war sufferers in Europe. After negotiations with UNRRA, the latter began sending relief teams to the Balkans, and also organized a Jewish unit from Palestine for activity among the refugees, although according to the regulations these delegations were supposed to be organized by Government institutions, and not by the representatives of any one "community."

#### *Activities in Greece*

Two relief teams, consisting of thirty members, were sent out for work in Greece. One group was active in the Greek Islands, and in its wanderings over towns and villages throughout the length and breadth of the territory it extended medical assistance to 80,000 war sufferers. A second group conducted a large camp for the absorption of Greek refugees repatriated from occupied territories. Everywhere the delegates were received

with the greatest respect, and in the report issued by the Greek Government, honorable mention was made of the activities of this Palestine team.

The members of the relief teams endeavored all the time to establish contact with the Jews, and many of them came to Athens where they undertook important Zionist work. They established a Zionist youth organization, an orphanage, a home for “halutzot”, and three agricultural training farms for hundreds of pioneers. The members of these teams also did good work in the redemption of Jewish children from their non-Jewish surroundings.

## IMMIGRATION – RELIEF – GERMANY, ITALY

### *Work among the Displaced Persons in Germany and Italy*

According to the recommendations of the Jewish Agency, UNRRA agreed to send a team to the refugee camps in Italy. This team carried out an important role as an autonomous Jewish unit in the camps.

At the end of 1946 the military authorities in the American zone of Germany agreed to the dispatch of a Palestine relief team for work among displaced persons. The members of this group, although employed by UNRRA, work as delegates of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. The American military authorities assisted in the transport of these delegates by providing a direct air service between Germany and Palestine. The delegates flying to Germany took with them books, maps of Palestine, flags, and educational material. When these air communications with Germany ceased, all kinds of difficulties were encountered in the transportation of our delegates. During this period 125 members of relief teams left for work in various regions. Of these 103 are active in the American and British zones in Germany and Austria, and 22 in Italy. The members of the relief teams are for the most part members of labor settlements, people who have had experience both in pioneering activities and in organizational work, or are teachers and youth leaders who gave up their work in Palestine for work among the refugees. Some of them are specialists in their own particular field, such as social work, child welfare, agriculture and handicrafts. All trends, parties and public organizations in the Zionist movement and the Yishuv participate in these relief teams, which constitute a unified Zionist delegation working in the name of the Jewish Agency and subject to its control. The directing body of these teams, which is headed by Dr. Haim Hoffmann, draws up its plan of activities on independent lines within the framework of UNRRA.

Apart from the regular assistance extended by UNRRA to the inmates of the camps, such as housing, feeding, the establishment of educational institutions for children, clubs, etc., other duties fall to our delegates, such as the absorption of refugees from Poland, Hungary and other countries and their training for a life of labor – since their enslavement during the years of war has left these displaced persons with a certain antipathy to work. The work of the delegates in these sphere of youth education in the camps is comprehensive and many-sided, for it must be remembered that the UNRRA workers in the camps cannot provide the displaced children with the education they need.

Likewise, the emissaries endeavor to restore their spiritual equilibrium to the tens of thousands of refugees who are living in their camps.

The Committee for Emissaries Abroad is now engaged in the dispatch of 50 additional members to the relief teams in the refugee camps in Germany.

The budget for the dispatch of delegates and their maintenance in the Diaspora, together with the budget for the relief teams, was approximately £P.100, 000 in the year 1945-46. In part it was covered by the delegates' budget of the Department of Immigration, the Department for Youth Affairs and the Jewish National Fund, and in part by special income allocated to the relief teams.

#### D. IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR ABSORPTION IN PALESTINE CATEGORIES AND PERIODS

The direction of the stream of immigration which had been dependant on the rules and regulations laid down by the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency in its allocation of Immigration Certificates according to categories and country of origin was no longer applicable in view of conditions reigning in the Diaspora during the War. The official categories on which the immigration laws had been based were annulled and all immigrants were grouped rigidly within the strict limits of the schedules granted from time to time to the Jewish Agency under to the White Paper. Under all circumstances, however, the Immigration Department granted preference in its allocation of certificates to Youth Aliya and veteran Zionists, and the Palestine Offices were instructed to direct their activities along these lines. The movement of "illegal immigrants" arriving by sea from Constanza via Turkey was influenced mainly by the factor of the rescue of refugees insofar as this was dependent on conditions of time and place, but the immigration, under all conditions, of young and trained Halutzim was always the primary consideration. The desperate condition of Jews in enemy countries and the drastic changes that took place during the war put their stamp on the ways and means adopted, which were adaptation to all circumstances and the utilization of all possibilities of rescue and immigration.

About 100,000 immigrants, legal and "illegal" arrived in Palestine during the years 1939-46. From all corners of the Diaspora, east and west, they streamed to Palestine, with and without certificates. Information concerning the refugees cannot be regarded as accurate because they wandered to and from until they finally reached their haven of safety in Palestine. The great majority of them are refugees from *Eastern Europe*, remnants of the Jewish communities in Poland, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, etc., but thousands also came from Oriental countries.

IMMIGRANTS, LEGAL AND “ILLEGAL” DURING THE YEARS 1939-1946  
ACCORDING TO COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Europe	1939		1940/45	1946	
	Jan-August	Sept.- Dec.		Jan. Sept.	Total
Austria	2,743	375	2,075	124	5,318
Belgium	81	32	647	.....	760
Bulgaria	124	258	2,656	541	3,579
Czechoslovakia	1,944	1,973	3,567	847	8,328
France	52	56	696	147	951
Germany	4,079	946	2,529	415	7,969
Great Britain	128	42	285	30	485
Greece	16	10	1,066	462	1,554
Holland	149	59	473	186	867
Hungary	553	754	1,888	732	3,916
Italy	321	1,307	1,104	66	2,798
Latvia	47	40	95	218	400
Lithuania	92	74	1,255	.....	1,421
Poland	3,081	1,078	3,326	4,428	11,913
Rumania	641	369	7,449	2,007	10,466
U.S.S.R.	.....	.....	.....	F33	33
Yugoslavia	60	29	983	66	1,138
Other Countries	719	114	803	222	1,858
Asia					
Iraq	.....	.....	622	.....	622
Palestine	.....	.....	.....	1	1
Turkey	14	.....	4,697	35	4,746
Yemen	144	38	5,607	108	5,897
Other Countries	37	22	3,056	17	3,132
Africa	7	3	612	74	696
United States	27	8	105	82	222
Australia	.....	.....	129	.....	129
Mauritius	.....	.....	48	.....	48
Unclassified and Stateless	147	.....	1,060	40	1,257
Particulars missing	3,023	846	7,279	812	12,860
Total	19,139	8,422	54,109	11,694	93,364

The desperate efforts made to rescue Jewish children from the countries of enemy occupation continued uninterruptedly throughout the years of the War. The number of certificates granted in accordance with the schedules was:

Certificates in the “Students” category – 1939-1943	6,373*
Certificates in the “Students” category – 1944-1946	<u>10,244</u>
	16,617

#### YOUTH ALIYA – 1939-1946

In the course of time the Palestine Government agreed to grant schedules for youth immigration from enemy countries. 5,000 certificates were granted for children from Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary via Turkey; 1,000 to children from France; and 2,500 were allocated to other enemy occupied countries. Actually not all these certificates were utilized during the schedule period because of the difficulties of exit from enemy territory and thus part of them was included in the immigration after the end of the war.\*\*

#### NUMBER OF CHILDREN (UP TO 17 YEARS) IMMIGRATING TO PALESTINE, 1939-1946

		Number
1939-40	...	976
1940-41	...	1,486
1941-42	...	605
1942-43	...	2,028
1943-44	...	2,035
1944-45	...	4,047
1945-46	...	<u>4,162</u>
	Total	15,329

These children and young people came mainly from countries under enemy occupation and it was only after indescribable efforts and difficulties that we succeeded in extricating them from the terrible fate which had overtaken Jewish children in those territories. The children thus saved were: from Germany and Austria, 6,766 (33%); from Poland 2,608 (10%); from Rumania 2,841 (11%); from Hungary 670 (3.5%); from Turkey 1,060 (4.5%); from Czechoslovakia 1,267 (5%); the remainder came from other countries of Europe, Asia and Africa. The total number of young people arriving in Palestine during the above mentioned period was 20,341.

All the children and young people arriving under the Youth Aliyah Scheme receive training in Workers’ agricultural settlements (Kibbutzim, Kvutzot, Smallholders Settlements) for a period of two years or in educational institutions (such as Bnei Shimon, Ahava, Vocational Training Schools, etc.). At the end of 1945 there were about 6,700 young people in training under the supervision of the Youth Aliyah Department. The number of Youth Aliyah member in training in September 1946 was 8,340. Of these

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\* Of this number 1,625 arrived according to the request of immigrant families whose children had remained abroad. The remainder came under the Youth Aliyah.

\*\* For further details in regard to the immigration of children, see report of the Youth Immigration Department.



4,057 (55%) were in Histadrut labor settlements; 1,466 (17%) were in Mizrahi settlements and institutions; 567 (6.5%) were in Agudath Israel institutions; 443 (5%) were in traditional Jewish institutions and settlements; 652 (6.5%) were in women settlements, WIZO institutions, etc.; 25 (0.33%) were in Betar institutions while 220 (3%) were settled individually in the towns and with families.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRATION CERTIFICATES

The distribution of Immigration Certificates during the war was made in installments and throughout the period strenuous negotiation with the Government took place regarding the number of certificates allocated and the conditions and restrictions imposed on every schedule at the disposal of the Jewish Agency.

#### ALLOCATION OF IMMIGRATION CERTIFICATES DURING THE WAR

April 1939	...	...	...	1,200
May to September 1939	...	...	...	7,850
October 1939 to March 1940	...	...	...	.....
April to September 1940	...	...	...	9,050
October 1940 to March 1941	...	...	...	.....
April to September 1941	...	...	...	750
October 1941 to March 1942	...	...	...	1,250
April to September 1942	...	...	...	2,500
October 1942 to March 1943	...	...	...	3,400
January 1943	....	...	...	5,000
April to June 1943	...	...	...	1,000
April to June, 1943	...	...	...	12,000
July to September 1943	...	...	...	1,350
October to December 1943	...	...	...	1,350
January to March 1944	...	...	...	900
April to July 1944	...	...	...	600
October 1944	...	...	...	10,300
May 1945	...	...	...	<u>3,000</u>
Total				62,000

Since the completion of the schedule of 75,000 certificates under the White Paper a monthly quota of 1,500 certificates, from which the Government has not deviated, was fixed. The monthly accounts are kept with the utmost rigidity: About 1,200 "illegal" immigrants are liberated monthly from the Atlit Detention Camp while the remaining certificates are allocated by the government Department of Immigration to extraordinary cases. Since December 1945 when this system first came into force, ten monthly schedules of 1,500 have been granted and distributed as follows:

## IMMIGRATION CERTIFICATES FOR THE PERIOD

15.12.1945 TO 15.9.1946

"Illegal" immigrants apprehended in Palestine	8,192*
Immigrants arriving on the "Dov Hos" and "Eliahu Golomb"	1,104
Immigrants arriving on formerly invalidated Certificates	784
Certificates to relatives granted by Government	3,539
Certificates granted to the Jewish Agency	<u>1,471</u>
Total	15,000

Since April 1946 the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency has had no Immigration certificates at its disposal.

## ABSORPTION OF IMMIGRATION

### *Reception of Immigrants*

The problem of the absorption of immigrants, of whom the majority arrived destitute, their property having been looted or destroyed in the countries of enemy occupation, was one of the principal problems facing the Immigration Department. *Haifa* was, throughout the War, the port of arrival of all immigrants to Palestine and all the work of supervision and reception of these immigrants was concentrated in the Immigration Office in that city, while the port of Tel Aviv was closed to passenger traffic by order of the Military authorities. After Italy entered the war almost all passenger traffic came to a standstill in the Mediterranean so that when immigrants arrived at Istanbul they were transferred overland by rail through Syria. Officials of the Haifa Immigration Office would go out to Ras-el-Naqura frontier station in order to meet the immigrants, assist them through the frontier control and bring them over to Palestine. At Atlit, near Haifa, the Government set up a large camp to which the immigrants were brought for examination by the Security authorities. The supervision and arrangements within the camp were left to the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency, whose officials, according to a prearranged plan, saw to the maintenance, welfare and medical aid of the immigrants as well as to their cultural needs and future employment.

Apart from the Immigrants Hostels established by the Immigration Offices in Haifa and Tel Aviv, immigrants' camps were set up in various settlements in the Country which provided temporary shelter for the immigrants during the first period of their arrival until they found work either in town or country. When the immigrants went out to work they received assistance for the purchase of primary necessities until permanent settlement.

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\* It must be noted that "illegal" immigrants are not legalized in Palestine despite the fact that the Government deducts the number of certificates from the monthly quota. "The Government even deducts 20,000 certificates granted under the White Paper on account of "illegal" immigrants to whom no legal status had been accorded). All the efforts to grant these "illegal" immigrants a legal status on the basis of the certificates deducted on their account have proved unsuccessful.

The number of immigrants lodged at the Immigrants' Hostels in Tel Aviv and Haifa during the war is as follows:

NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS PASSING THROUGH THE JEWISH AGENCY'S  
IMMIGRANTS' HOSTELS DURING THE YEARS 1939 TO 1945

<i>Year</i>	<i>Tel Aviv</i>	<i>Haifa</i>	
1939	4,806	7,565	
1940	623	2,316	
1941	608	2,956	
1942	471	591	
1943	923	1,631	
1944	2,741	1,452	
1945	<u>1,799</u>	<u>3,603</u>	
	11,951	21,114	
	Total		33,065

ABSORPTION BRANCH

In November 1945 a special Section was set up by the Immigration Department in order to organize the activities connected with the absorption of immigrants (the Immigrants' Care Section was set up in the previous year by the Immigration Offices in Haifa and Tel Aviv).

The duties of the Absorption Branch are:

1. Initial settlement of immigrants, their classification and supervision of immigrants' hostels.
2. Arrangement of equipment, clothing and sick fund insurance.
3. Finding employment and housing for immigrants.
4. Granting of constructive loans (for tools and vocational training).
5. Social welfare where required.
6. Instruction in Hebrew and cultural activities.

Officials of this section meet immigrants at the boat or at the camps and fix their places of future employment and absorption.

The immigrants receiving the attention of the Branch in the year 1945-46 were directed to the following places:

	<i>No. of Immigrants</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Aliyat Hanoar	2,987	17%
Labor Settlements	5,009	28%
Colonies	1,090	11%
Immigrants' hostels	2,340	13%
Relatives	3,387	20%
Miscellaneous	<u>1,749</u>	<u>11%</u>
	17,452	100%

New immigrants whose immediate employment or housing entailed difficulties are lodged at the Immigrants' Hostels of the Jewish Agency. In addition to the hostels at Haifa and Tel Aviv another two hostels were opened at Kiryat Shmuel (near Haifa) and at Hadera. The sum of £P.18, 000 was invested in repair and improvement of kindergartens, nurseries, kitchens, etc., at the two immigrants' hostels at Haifa and Tel Aviv.

The accommodation of the immigrants' hostels is:

Tel Aviv	...	...	300
Haifa	...	...	250
Hadera	...	...	550
Kiryat Shmuel	...	...	<u>650</u>
Total			1,750

An Rehovot, Pardess Rosenblum, Kfar Azar and Nathanya, five new immigrants' camps are now being erected each of which will accommodate about 600 immigrants (300 in houses and 300 in tents) so that when the work of building is completed there will be room for 4,750 immigrants.

#### *Equipment of Immigrants*

Every immigrant in need of equipment receives from the Jewish Agency a bed, a mattress, a blanket and clothing (to the value of about £P.15) as well as assistance in cash according to the needs and according to the prospects of the immigrant receiving employment or means of livelihood. The various settlements taking in immigrants receive on the average about £P.20 or £P.22 in equipment and cash, (in the year 1945-46 22 % of all immigrants went to the agricultural labor settlements).

#### CONSTRUCTIVE AID – SOCIAL WELFARE

The following rules were laid down in regard to the absorption of immigrants on the labor market:

- a) All new immigrants are entitled to priority in employment from the General Labor Exchanges during the first two months of their arrival. After two months new immigrants are granted the same rights as other workers registered with the Labor Exchanges. Special officials deal with the employment of new immigrants at these Exchanges.
- b) Vocational Courses for new immigrants are conducted in building, weaving, etc. During the progress of the course immigrants receive a loan for their maintenance. The courses are designed particularly for heads of families to enable them to learn a trade to support their families. Courses, such as child nursing, domestic service, agricultural training, are also arranged by women's organizations for the vocational training of women immigrants. The women immigrants are supported by the Jewish Agency throughout the time of their training.

### *Housing*

For the last two years housing has been the main problem connected with the absorption of immigrants owing to the small scale of the private building. The Jewish Agency has dealt with the problem in the following ways:

- (i) During the past two years the Housing Section of the Jewish agency has erected one roomed housing units in seven settlements and suburbs near Tel Aviv and Haifa. Wooden buildings are also being erected at present in several Tel Aviv suburbs.
- (ii) The Jewish Agency participates in several public housing companies by granting mortgages and loans. These companies ("Shikun Amami", "Moan Hadar Hacarmel", "Rassco" and "Ezra U' Bizaron", affiliated with the Tel Aviv Municipality are now erecting about 1,100 flats for new immigrants.
- (iii) The Jewish Agency has granted loans to housing companies of the local councils for the erection of flats for new immigrants in the settlements. About 400 loans for flats have already been given for the purpose, apart from loans for the erection of 230 flats in concrete block hutments in the settlements.
- (iv) The immigrants receive loans for the renting of rooms in towns and villages. Similarly, loans are given to private house owners for the erection of additional rooms for immigrants. In such cases rents are fixed by the Jewish Agency.
- (v) In the labor settlement loans are granted at the rate of £P.100 per room for the housing of immigrants.

### *Construction Loans*

The Jewish Agency grants immigrants loans for the acquisition of tools, furniture, etc. These loans, to the extent of £P.60 to £P. 250, are granted to immigrants through the "Idud" Company. In addition a special fund has been set up by the Anglo-Palestine and the Halvaa Vehisachon Banks for setting up of workshops for immigrants, etc.

### *Welfare Social*

Among the arrivals from the refugee camps are invalids or otherwise incapacitate persons who cannot find employment in the ordinary way. The Absorption Branch takes special care of these immigrants and for that purpose has set up an immigrants' undertakings company with the cooperation of the Department for Artisans and Small Trade and the "Hatzarchan"\* Company. The invalids are enabled to earn a livelihood by

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\* See Report of Department for Artisans and Small Trade

these undertakings. Another difficult problem is the settlement of aged immigrants who have neither family nor relatives in the country.

## IMMIGRATION - MEDICAL CARE

Kindergartens have been set up in the new immigrants' quarters so as to enable parents to find employment or other means of livelihood. These kindergartens are conducted by women's organizations (WIZO and the Working Mothers Organization) and the Jewish Agency participates in the cost of their equipment and maintenance. There are now 16 institutions of this kind for immigrants' children.

### *Hebrew*

With the assistance of the cultural department of the Vaad Leumi evening courses have been arranged for the teaching of Hebrew to new immigrants. Evening courses are given in all immigrant hostels and immigrant housing centers.

### *Medical Services for Immigrants*

The duties of the medical section of the Immigration Department are the medical care of immigrants during the first year of their arrival in Palestine, the supervision of immigrants' hostels and camp kitchens, and assistance to the sick and ailing through the medical institutions in the country – Hadassah, the Workers' Sick Fund and the Tel Aviv Municipal Hospitals. Every immigrant receiving assistance from the Department of Immigration is insured with the sick funds during the first few months of his arrival until he finds employment.

In December 1944 the medical services to immigrants was extended under the direction of Dr. H. Gruschka and in constant consultation with a special committee composed of representatives of the Jewish Agency, the Vaad Leumi, the Hadassah Medical Organization and the Workers' Sick Fund. Activities were reorganized on a new basis in order to meet the growing needs and the special character of immigration during the last two years – an immigration of the survivors of the horrors of Nazi occupation and the underground.

Apart from medical insurance with the sick funds during the first few months, medical assistance to immigrants was granted in various other forms, such as treatment in sanatoria, hospitals, institutions for consumptive and mental asylums. Treatment is also extended to pregnant women and babies. Medical examinations include X-Ray services, laboratory service, and examination by specialists. Immigrants are also given special electrical and ray treatment, etc.

During the period October 1939 to August 1946 the Jewish Agency expended the sum of over £P.125, 000 on medical assistance to immigrants and their insurance with the sick funds. Of this the sum £P.36, 179 (including the allocation of £P.10, 000 for the

erection of a sanatorium "Maabarim" at Magdiel) was spent in the year 1944-45, while in the year 1945-46 (until the end of August 1946) the expenditure amounted to £P.67, 371.

In recent months an agreement has been reached with the Hadassah Medical Organization whereby, beginning from October 1946, the latter has undertaken the medical services, and will be responsible for the supply of all medical requirements to the immigrants' hostels and transit camps, as well as the extension of medical aid to immigrants, hospitalization, medical appliances, etc. The supervision of the "Immigrants" Medical Service" and its budget are joint responsibilities of the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency and Hadassah.

#### E. ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS ATTACHED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION

##### THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TIES WITH U.S.S.R. JEWRY\*

In the endeavors to find ways and means to reestablish contact with Russian Jewry, a "Committee for Establishment of Ties With the U.S.S.R.", attached to the Department of Immigration, and composed of representatives of the Jewish National institutions and of the Yeshuv in Palestine was set up in 1940. It was the aim of this committee to renew ties with the Jews in Russia and Russian-occupied territories, and to establish contact with the authorities and institutions in the Soviet Union.

##### *Information Activities in Russian*

Russia was at that time a closed territory, and the committee was faced with the difficulty of finding ways and means of bringing the truth about Palestine in an open and authoritative manner to the notice of Russian Jewry, which has for twenty years now been cut off from Jewry in other countries. For the achievement of this aim, a number of books and pamphlets on Palestine in the Russian language were experimentally published during the war. For purposes of economic information and the renewal of regular commercial relations between Palestine and the Soviet Union, the committee published a leaflet entitled "The Palestine Economy,"\*\* which was sent to 160 economic, commercial and scientific institutions in Russia.

In the course of time pamphlets entitled "To Arms and To the Land," "The Paltor Press Bulletin" and "The Palestine Economic Handbook" were published in Russian, and favorably received by Government institutions, libraries and the press throughout Russia. This material in Russian was also dispatched to countries where Russian-speaking Jews are concentrated (Shanghai, Teheran, etc.), thus bringing news of Palestine and its problems of far-flung Jewish groups.

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\* For contacts with refugees in the U.S.S.R, see report of the Relatives' Search Bureau.

\*\* X (cannot translate)

### *Renewal of Contacts with Russian Jewry*

With the first victories of the German Armies and their entry into Russian zones inhabited by Jews, Jewish leaders in Moscow were seized with fear for their fate and addressed a moving pamphlet entitled "To the Jewish People" appealing for aid to Soviet Russia in her war against Nazism.

The hand stretched out by brothers in distress was readily grasped by all classes of the Yishuv, and brotherly greetings were broadcast to them over the Palestine Broadcasting Service. In this way contacts were renewed with this branch of Jewry. "The Jewish Anti-Fascist League" at Kuibyshev described the Jewish Agency's reply as an event of historic importance and as a significant factor in the rapprochement between these two parts of the nation that had been so far apart for twenty years.

### *Relief Activities by the Dispatch of Parcels*

When Eastern Europe was occupied by the Nazis and the Jewish masses fled for their lives to the Soviet Union, and from there wandered to the Far North and to Siberia, destitute and under terrible conditions, the Jewish Agency and the Relief Committee sought ways and means of sending urgent assistance to these refugees to save them from hunger and cold. Activities were organized by the Department of Immigration of the Jewish Agency with the collaboration of various settlers' organization in Palestine.

The relief scheme was put into execution by the Palestine Office in Teheran, while the J.D.C. in Palestine participated in the scheme to an amount equal to that collected by the Yishuv and its institutions. Individuals in Palestine defrayed the cost of parcels dispatched to their relatives, while parcels to refugees who had no relatives in Palestine, or whose relatives were unable to defray the cost, were paid for out of public funds.

### *Brotherly Relief*

In extending assistance to the masses of Jewish refugees, the Jewish Agency felt that its action, in addition its humanitarian significance, was one of great moral importance, as it brought encouragement to the refugees in their loneliness and helped them to keep up their spirits in a time of stress. In particular, the Jewish Agency regarded it as its duty to afford assistance to Jewish and Zionist workers and to the numerous pioneers among the refugees, as well as to Rabbis and Yeshivah students.

### *The Collaboration of the American Joint Distribution Committee*

The orders, both from Palestine and abroad for the dispatch of parcels to the Soviet Union grew in number from month to month. In June 1943 an agreement was reached between the Jewish Agency and the J.D.C. in regard to the establishment of a joint committee for the direction of the scheme, to consist of representatives of the Jewish



Agency, the J.D.C. and the various settlers' organizations. The J.D.C. also opened a separate office in Teheran to carry out the work. The Jewish Agency continued to receive orders for parcels, and collected funds and addresses of refugees in Russia in contact with residents in Palestine, while the practical activities in connection with the purchase of stocks, the dispatch of parcels and the receiving of orders from abroad were handed over entirely to the J.D.C. and its office at Teheran. The number of addresses filed by the Palestine Office in Teheran reached 30,000 embracing about 100,000 souls. In addition, the J.D.C. office collected another 27,000 addresses for the dispatch of parcels.

Relief activities for refugees increased as time went on, and a total of nearly 220,000 parcels was dispatched. Of this number the Jewish Agency dispatched upwards of 100,000 parcels, the rest being sent by the J.D.C. to the addresses it had collected itself. About 10,000 parcels were dispatched by the J.D.C. at the instance of the Jewish Agency to Jewish Community Councils in zones liberated and ceded to the Soviet Union (Lithuania, Latvia, regions in Poland, Bukovina, Bessarabia) for Jewish survivors in those territories.

#### No. OF PARCELS DISPATCHED TO ADDRESSES IN RUSSIA COLLECTED BY THE JEWISH AGENCY

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Parcels</i>	<i>Cost</i>
1943	12,611	LP. 36,597,540
1944	21,322	52,375,425
1945	24,814	66,804,385
January-March 1946	2,451	10,124,825
Additional Parcels Dispatched by J.D.C. according to addresses Of Jewish Agency	40,000	
	<u>101,098</u>	<u>LP. 165,902,175</u>

The parcels included commodities which were very difficult to obtain during the war, such as food, clothing, boots, medicines and vitamins. The Soviet customs duties were paid in advance for each parcel so that recipients in Russia were not required to make any additional payment.

In tens of thousands of letters received from the refugees, thanks were expressed for this encouragement and relief, which saved thousands from physical destruction and spiritual collapse. Reports of the assistance provided by Palestine were carried far and wide, and the ties with the Yishuv were thus strengthened.\*

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\* When the repatriation of Polish refugees, who constituted the majority of recipients of these parcels, began, the J.D.C. discontinued the dispatch of parcels sent to individual addresses in Soviet territory.

### *Parcels to Jewish Survivors in Europe*

At the end of the war in Europe, the Jewish Agency directed its attention to sending assistance to the survivors in Europe who had been saved from Nazi destruction. The Department of Immigration contacted the office of the World Jewish Congress in Stockholm, which on the instructions of the Immigration Department, began dispatching food parcels from Sweden to European countries such as Poland, Germany, France, Czechoslovakia and others. From August 1945 to the end of August 1946, 18,221 parcels to the value of LP. 40,195 were dispatched via Stockholm (generally ordered and paid for by relatives in Palestine).

#### NUMBER OF PARCELS DISPATCHED TO REFUGEES IN EUROPE

<i>Country</i>	<i>No. of Parcels</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Poland	6,373	LP. 14,686
Czechoslovakia	4,698	9,943
Austria	1,878	4,022
Germany	1,766	3,407
France	1,347	3,460
Hungary	1,053	2,125
Holland	764	1,616
Belgium	208	465
Great Britain	142	464
	<u>18,229</u>	<u>LP. 40,188</u>

The Relief Committee defrayed part of the cost of this assistance.

#### F. BUDGET AND ORGANIZATION

Throughout the period of the war continuous changes in the state of immigration took place which required constant adaptation in the field of organization and budgeting. The difficulties and restrictions of the immigration laws, the exit of immigrants from their countries and their absorption into Palestine brought about a constant rise in annual budgets.\*

The Department of Immigration directed its activities along the following lines:

1. It maintained unbroken connection with the Diaspora by a network of relief and immigration centers both during and after the war.
2. It collaborated with relief organization, particularly with the American Joint Distribution Committee, in extending assistance to immigrants while still abroad

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\* Details regarding budget over all items of income and expenditure for the period under review are given in the report of the Financial Department of the Jewish Agency, under the heading 'Immigration Department.' Only general summaries are given here.

and in their traveling expenses to Palestine. (The J.D.C.'s participation in the cost of immigration during the years 1939-1946 amounted to £70,000 apart from the cost of training and relief of refugees abroad.)

3. The extension of training in liberated countries and the preparation of immigrants in their study of Hebrew language and culture prior to their immigration to Palestine.
4. The improvement of conditions for the absorption of immigrants in Palestine, their housing, employment, health services and social relief.

In the years 1939-1942 the expenditure incurred in immigration dropped from year to year for two reasons: Cost of transportation of immigrants was defrayed by relief organizations abroad, while rescue work could no longer be carried on on organized lines. In 1943, however, expenditure rose as a result of increased opportunities in the spheres of training, rescue and immigration from European countries and the absorption of immigrants in Palestine.

### GROWING BUDGET 1939-1946

#### EXPENDITURE

<i>Budget Year</i>	<i>Rescue, relief and training of refugees</i>	<i>Immigrants travel costs</i>	<i>Participation in Youth Aliya</i>	<i>Maintenance of immigrants</i>	<i>Administrative expenses in Palestine and abroad Pal. Office</i>	<i>Contact with Diaspora, relief teams, parcels, etc.</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>LP.</i>	<i>LP.</i>	<i>LP.</i>	<i>LP.</i>	<i>LP.</i>	<i>LP.</i>	<i>LP.</i>
1939/40	6,359	50,930	.....	25,362	19,660	.....	102,312
1940/41	2,391	31,582	.....	24,196	17,926	.....	76,096
1941/42	4,678	3,174	.....	17,355	13,699	.....	38,907
1942/43	172,922	21,795	25,000	18,770	19,636	20,612	278,737
1943/44	880,024	108,145	22,066	140,703	35,849	19,050	1,205,838
1944/45	403,274	147,446	20,447	293,662	54,453	110,847	1,030,131
1945/46	640,372	63,187	315,441	443,571	53,341	55,728	1,471,643

#### INCOME\*

<i>Budget Year</i>	<i>War Needs &amp; Rescue Fund</i>	<i>J.D.C. for Immigration and rescue</i>	<i>Other Income</i>	<i>Income of Immigration Dept.</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>LP.</i>	<i>LP.</i>	<i>LP.</i>	<i>LP.</i>	<i>LP.</i>
1939/40	.....	.....	.....	44,492	44,492
1940/41	.....	.....	6,200	1,104	7,305
1941/42	.....	17,057	18,026	2,876	37,959
1942/43	105,210	74,829	5,996	7,086	193,122
1943/44	2996,889	338,950	112,348	9,368	757,556
1944/45	150,000	181,748	74,807	109,240	515,705

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\* To 31st August, 1946

1945/46	110,000	121,000	40,519	31,370	302,889
Total	662,099	733,584	257,896	205,537	1,859,118

During the period 1939 to 1942, expenditure on immigration decreased annually, for two reasons: Firstly, the costs of transporting immigrants were undertaken by Relief organizations abroad, and, secondly, rescue work was not yet possible. Expenditure rose from 1943 onwards as training, rescue, immigration and absorption activities became possible.

The figures given here do not include the outlays made abroad directly no account of relief of immigrants, the rescue work of refugees and traveling expenses to Palestine. The sums spent abroad by the offices of the Immigration Department at Geneva, Istanbul and other places were defrayed by relief organizations, particularly by the J. D. C. and were not charge on the budget of the Immigration Department in Jerusalem.

### IMMIGRATION – OFFICES ABROAD

The principal items of *expenditure* of immigration during this period were as follows:

(i)	<i>Maintenance of immigrants in Palestine:</i>	LP.
	Assistance towards initial settlement	749,636,320
	Medical service	124,700,373
	Social Relief	41,504,327
	Constructive Assistance	40,784,759
	Assistance to immigration institutions	<u>6,996,795</u>
		963,622,374
(ii)	<i>Participation in Youth Aliya</i>	382,954,899
(iii)	<i>Administration</i>	
	Immigration Department and Offices in Palestine	172,147,719
	Palestine offices abroad*	<u>37,649,794</u>
		LP.1,556,374,786

Our rescue activities form a chapter in themselves and do not belong to the framework of this report

### *Organization*

The Organization of the Immigration Department was extended in recent years with the expansion of activities both in Palestine and abroad, and with the necessity of maintaining constant and direct contact between the Immigration Department and its various institutions.

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\* Apart from expenditure incurred by delegates and relief teams attached to UNRRA, etc.

The Palestine Offices abroad are still in the process of administrative organization. The Palestine offices in Rome, Prague, Bratislava, Budapest, Stockholm and other places have trained a staff of workers fully competent to carry out their tasks. About 200 delegates are active on behalf of the Immigration Department in all countries of Europe, America and the East – in refugee camps, training centers and throughout the Diaspora.

It is essential to build up the Immigration Institutions in all countries to accord with circumstances and the important tasks which will be imposed upon them when immigration is renewed in the near future.

### THE ECONOMY OF PALESTINE 1939-1946

The period preceding World War II saw a retarding of the pace of economic life in Palestine. The two main factors in the country's economic development – immigration and the influx of capital – had contracted considerably even before then in consequence of the disturbances and their attendant immigration restrictions. Economic depression could be measured mainly in the slowing up of expansion. The drop in investments reached 50% and more as compared with the preceding period of economic prosperity. According to well-informed estimates, the investment market at the end of the period of prosperity made up from a fourth to a third of prosperity made up from a fourth to a third of Palestine's economy. It can be seen therefore that the violent contraction in this field had its effect on the economic sector dealing with the Yishuv's consumption of goods, for the ordinary and the dynamic sectors are not distinct economic units, and the import of capital and immigration are decisive factors in the shaping of economic conditions of the country generally.

This condition was accompanied by a great deal of distress. An economy designed for the rapid expansion of settlement and markets had to adjust itself to conditions of a slower pace of development. The construction industry suffered the most violent slump and the condition of this industry, which is a branch most characteristic of the investment economy, considerably influenced purchasing power in the country. Up to the time of the contraction in building, laborers were receiving a high wage rate; then, with the drop in wages, their standard of living dropped with a corresponding effect on the standard of living generally. The absence of social services on the standard of living generally. The absence of social services increased the distress of the unemployed.

The disturbances brought into being a new economy, very similar to a war economy. Many were absorbed into the security forces; the scope of public works for security needs increased and special institutions were set up to finance them. The work thus created helped the country to tide over the difficult period.

The characteristic line in the new adjustment stood out in the Yishuv's occupational structure, especially in the transfer from those paying high wages to those where wages were much lower. The number of building laborers dropped while Jewish agriculture absorbed a larger number of workers.

The second important change occurred in investments and their composition. Investment capital in building decreased rapidly but a new trend – of indirect investment – developed through the purchase of securities, and for the first time a market for Palestinian stocks and shares was created.

Another trend which crystallized on the eve of war was an increasing public economic activity which quickly supplanted private initiative when comparatively large sums of capital – public and semipublic – came into play for the regulation and encouragement of the economic life of the country.

In addition, a fundamental change took place in the economic structure of Palestine; it now became a producer country with a vital interest in disposing of its products, pushing the investor, importer and consumer into second place. As a result of this transition to a period of profitable investments the face of Palestine's export trade underwent a change.

At the expense of citrus which formerly had constituted four-fifths of Palestine's exports, the number of other manufacturers for export grew. Such deep structural changes altered the face of Palestinian economy, as had been foreshadowed by those who understood that a form of capital investment, which would later bear fruit, was contained in Palestine's heavy imports and in its negative trade balance. The weakening economic conditions made imperative the adoption of a policy designed to stop the rot and to secure, despite negative factors, as full employment as possible.

The economic difficulties of that period were tied up, first and foremost, with the marketing problem which, in turn, involved problems of employment. This was during a period when economic regulations and restrictions, bilateral trade agreements, currency restrictions, compensation systems, etc., held sway throughout the world.

Palestine's position as determined by Article 18 of the Mandate, which forbids discrimination in economic matters between various countries, exposed it to the direct consequences of the world economic depression and rendered it defenseless against other countries practicing dumping, that is, disposing of their goods in the country's markets at prices lower than those obtaining on the home market.

While immigration made it imperative to create the maximum opportunity for employment, the import of products enjoying export subsidies and other facilities not only prevented the Palestinian product from competing with these imports in foreign markets, but further made these products serious competitors on the home market, and thus prevented the expansion of the Palestine production and its suitable exploitation both in agriculture and in industry.

## FINANCE – BANKS – MONEY IN CIRCULATION

### II. THE WAR PERIOD

World War II brought about far-reaching changes in Palestine's economy. The transition to a war economy began gradually but was fully completed by 1941.

Economic development during the war was determined by four basic factors:

- (1) The full employment of men and machinery;
- (2) Inflationary trends accompanied by an increase in national income, a rise in purchasing power, and more positive balance of payments;
- (3) Increased autarkic tendencies due to the cutting off of the country from supply sources, the restriction of shipping space, and increased transport rates;
- (4) Increased Government intervention and the growth in influence of the State economy.

These factors altered the country's economic structure, at times fundamentally. Because of the great demand by the armed forces and increased purchasing power, the country was cut away from the influence of stable economic conditions; the fundamental factors of payability, competition, prices and profits were weakened and supplanted by the consumption factor alone. Economy passed from profit and loss to men and materials.

Certain branches expanded out of all proportion to a stable economy; others contracted in similar degree.

### FINANCE

All these trends and phenomena are reflected first and foremost in the field of finance, which covers all branches of economy and is most sensitive to anything that happened in that field.

The transition to war economy made the expansion of credit in its early stages imperative. In Palestine too it was necessary to broaden the credit basis in order to finance the increased orders which demanded a larger reserve stock, additional investments in the increase of agricultural production, and the founding of new industrial projects to increase the measure of autarky. The general rise in prices likewise demanded the employment of larger sums of money in circulation.

The changes in the banks' positions, however, reacted adversely to economic requirements. In July 1939 deposits reached the peak of £P.20, 000,000 and more. But

the rush on the banks on the outbreak of war and on the eve of the war with Italy necessarily brought about a restriction in credits, and since Palestine has no central rediscounts bank, the banks were forced to safeguard their liquidity.

But the scare was only a passing phase, and after a while deposits began to flow back to the banks. But the expansion of bank credits did not keep pace with the movement of deposits, which began to mount considerably, even though the banks were able and willing to expand their credits.

The fact that credits lag in relation to the growth of deposits may be explained by the restriction on the scope of transactions in some branches of economy and, principally, the contraction of imports, the swift and sharp transfer of some branches of economy from a credit basis to a system of cash payment, the vast liquidity in the country due to the very favorable balance of payments, the flow of Government and Army monies and the state financing of raw materials and imports.

At any rate expansionist trends, following the freeze at the beginning of the war, increased in financial economy. The sum of deposits and money in circulation was during the war as follows”

In July 1939 credits stood at the rate of 69% of bank deposits; in September 1942, only 39%, and in September 1944 dropped to 24%. In September 1945 they rose slightly to 28%.

## GOVERNMENT FINANCES

In every country at war Government finances have a decisive value and weight. This decisiveness lies in the fact that Government expenditure in most countries constitutes in war-time one half, sometimes two-thirds and more, of the national income. In this respect the situation in Palestine is different, for such expenditure before the war was only 20% and during the war even dropped to 12% to 15%. But even in Palestine expenditure in connection with the war constituted a considerable part of Government expenditure especially during the last two years of the war. This expenditure included subsidies to help reduce the prices of vital foodstuffs, cost of living allowances for Government officials and partly for the defense of the country. The item “Defense and war Services” claimed 41% of Government’s general expenditure in the fiscal year 1943/4 and 44% in 1944/5.

The following table shows Government revenue and expenditure during the war:

### GOVERNMENT REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE DURING THE WAR

<i>Fiscal Years</i>	<i>Total Revenue</i>		<i>Local Revenue</i>		<i>Expenditure</i>	
	<i>In LP. 1,000's</i>	<i>Index</i>	<i>In LP. 1,000's</i>	<i>Index</i>	<i>In LP. 1,000's</i>	<i>Index</i>
1938/39	5,937	100	4,235	100	5,693	100
1939/40	6,768	114	4,635	109	6,005	105
1940/41	8,442	142	5,178	122	7,450	131
1941/42	8,326	140	6,226	147	7,464	131
1942/43	8,852	149	8,260	195	10,253	180



1943/44	11,514	194	11,441	270	14,819	260
1944/45	17,497	295	15,257	360	18,197	320

## GOVERNMENT REVENUE- ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL

Government income, then, rose during the war by 195% and expenditure by 220%. In other countries, such as Great Britain, the United States and Canada, this increase was, of course, higher. The table further shows that local revenue rose more than general income because of the decrease in the British Government's subsidy which dropped to 6.7% of total revenue in 1942/43 and to 0.6% in 1943/44, as against 28.7% in 1938/39. In 1944/45 the British Government subsidy again rose to 12.8%.

The Jewish share in Government revenue in 1944/45 is estimated at 65% whereas Jews constitute only 32% of the total population. Hence the Jewish contribution to Government income is four times per head greater than that of the rest of the population.

During the war a new tax – the income tax – was introduced and the Jewish share in direct taxes in local revenue rose from 19% in 1938/39 to 42% in 1944/45. Jewish share in the income tax in 1944/45 was 67%, or 73% if foreign companies are excluded from the reckoning.

## ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL

The development of the country has always been made possible through the vast import of Jewish capital which, during the period between the two wars aggregated about £P.110, 000,000. The country's unfavorable balance of trade was covered to a great extent by Jewish capital import which was always accompanied by a wide import of goods for the use of and expansion of investments.

During the war, Jewish capital imports, which during that period totaled about £P44, 000,000, did not cease. But the very favorable balance of payments was not due to the import alone, but to Government expenditure which to a great extent took the form of payment for goods and services to the military forces stationed in the country and to a lesser extent in the form of British Government subsidies to the Palestine Government's treasury. Military expenditure in Palestine during the war is estimated at about £P.100,000,000. Yet this import of capital was not accompanied by a correspondingly suitable import of goods because of the lack of shipping, imports control and the world-wide dearth of certain materials. Hence considerable capital reserves to the country's credit piled up. The surpluses and Palestine bank deposits abroad rose from £P.8,500,000 in July 1939 to £P.66,000,000 in September 1945. Money in circulation during that period increased from £P.6,300,000 to £P.47,000,000. If we include privately-held surpluses abroad the total of surpluses and investments of this country abroad during the war rose to an amount exceeding £P.100,000,000.

This accumulation of capital and investments abroad had to help make good the large in consumption and investments created during the war. This task was the renewal of the industrial mechanism, the replacement of old agricultural machinery, the expansion of the almost derelict building industry, and the renewal and increase where needed of means of communication.

## PALESTINE ECONOMY – SUPPLY AND HIGH PRICES

### SUPPLY AND HIGH PRICES

The difficulties of communication and the lack of shipping space brought about, as has been noted, a great drop in imports, the importance of which is decisive in the economic life of a country in the course of development. This drop in imports and the sale of a sizeable portion of local produce to the army caused a diminution in the amount of goods just at the time when there was a considerable rise in spending power, thus bringing about an exaggerated rise of prices. Spending power increased four and a half times and more during the war, while imports in most years of the war did not reach half the 1939 figure.

It is estimated that the low import capacity during 1943 (41% that of 1939) brought about a decrease in the amount of goods on the civilian market by about 20% as compared with the situation before the war, despite the expansion of agricultural and industrial production, since a sizeable part of industrial production was sold to the military.

### COST OF LIVING – IMPORTS OF FOODSTUFFS

Up to 1942 the country did not have a planned system for the arrangement of consumption by means of quotas and rationing, so that the drop in consumption which had to follow the restrictions placed on the amount of goods reaching this country, was adjusted by the rise in prices. In February 1942 rationing of dealers was first introduced and by the end of 1942 a general rationing system on a points basis was fixed for the towns. Standard bread too was introduced and the Government introduced a system of financial subsidies for a number of vital commodities (bread, meat) in order to hold down the cost of living, which bore hardly on salary and wage earners. Government set up a supply machinery and appointed controllers; commodities control laws were drafted and Price Control law was enacted. Government also took over the import of a number of commodities. Despite the fact that this control was not totally effective there is no denying its salutary influence on the increase of prices. The pace was slowed up from the end of 1942 and onward. The index of wholesale prices rose, from August 1939 to September 1942, by 187%, but from September 1942 to September 1945 by 21% only. The cost of living index which by September 1942 had risen to 202 rose only to 258 by September 1945. It is clear that these indices do not reflect the entire range of the high cost of living, based as they are on official prices which, in their time, were much lower than those on the open market. Hence, the main factor in reducing the high cost of living

is to be seen in the expansion of local production, especially in mixed farming, which expanded greatly during the last years of the war. High import prices too were an important factor in the rise of prices according to Government statistics, the main imports prices index in 1943 rose to 325 as opposed to 100 in 1939, and during the first half of 1945 stood at 358. The scale of import prices may be explained by the change that took place in supply countries during the war. The share of imports coming from countries with a high price level (Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, British India, Cyprus and Transjordan) rose from 22% in 1939 to 52% in 1943 and 54% in 1944.

The share taken by imports in food supply was felt in peace time, especially by the urban Jewish consumer who was dependent upon them for the supply of his provisions. Before the war, all the sugar and rice, 90% of the wheat, 80% of the butter, 80% of the meat, 90% of the fish and 55% of the eggs were imported for consumption by the Jewish population. This dependence upon sources abroad brought about a material deterioration in nutrition during the war when the import of meat dropped to 50% of the peace time supply and when the import of eggs, butter potatoes, cheese and skim milk dropped perceptibly or virtually ceased.

#### FARM PRODUCTION

Before the war 27% of the total food supply for the Jewish urban population came from Jewish farms and this supply rose to 48% during the war.

Thus it is thanks to the Jewish farm, which expanded its production and marketing by 75%, that this change took place in the sources of supply of the Jewish consumer and the rise of the nutritive value of provisions in the last years of the war.

#### *Mixed Farming*

Jewish mixed farm production almost doubled during the war, as may be seen from the following table:

#### RISE OF JEWISH MIXED FARM PRODUCTION DURING THE WAR

*(For Human Consumption Only)*

<i>Commodity</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>1938/39</i>	<i>1944/45</i>	<i>Rise %</i>
Cows milk	1,000 liters	35,000	67,100	+ 92%
Goats milk	“” “”	280	3,500	+1150%
Meat	Tons	1,030	2,000	+ 94%
Eggs	1,000 units	60,000	83,000	+ 38%
Poultry	Tons	1,400	1,925	+ 37%
Vegetables	“”	15,000	18,000	+ 20%
Potatoes	“”	8,000	22,000	+ 633%
Table grapes	“”	3,000	3,400	+ 13%
Bananas	“”	2,200	4,000	+ 82%
Deciduous fruits	“”	600	3,750	+ 650%
Wheat	“”	10,000	13,000	+ 30%
Fish	“”	60	1,800	+ 2900%
Value according to peace-time prices		£P.1,037,000	1,990,000	+ 92%
Produce not included above		63,000	130,000	
Total		£P.1,100,000	2,120,000	+ 93%

The vast expansion of areas under irrigation greatly helped in this increase of agricultural production. While the area of cultivated land in Jewish mixed farming rose by 74% since 1936 – when the last pre-war census was taken – the area of fodder and vegetables under irrigation (physical area) expanded from 21,000 dunams in 1936 to 77,000 dunams in 1944/45, that is, by over three and a half.

The growth of dairy farming indicates a general economic development, since this branch is the mainstay of the Jewish farmstead and provides 40% of the gross income. An expansion in the cultivation of seed, especially fodder seed, also took place. Grain production increased only to a small extent and its development during the war is expressed mainly in the introduction of two new types of wheat (Moroccan and Australian) which already cover 40% of the total grain area. This development demonstrates adaptability to the demands of the market and to the needs of the Jewish population which prefers these types to local wheat. The expansion of fodder areas, irrigated and un-irrigated, has created a means of doubling milk production during the war. So, while there is still a certain measure of dependence on fodder supplies from abroad, the profits of this branch rose, thanks to the increased demand on the home market for milk production, the import of which has contracted or ceased altogether. The number of pedigreed cows on Jewish farms rose from 10,250 in July 1939 to 17,500 in October 1945. The average milk yield rose in the last year of the war (1944/45) to 3,900 liters per cow.

#### *Poultry – Vegetables – Fish Ponds*

Poultry farming did not develop at all in the early years of the war and only in 1942/3 did a slow growth commence. In the last year of the war, with the abolition of control of marketing and prices of eggs, profits mounted and more rapid development set in. Slow development during the war is to be explained by the dependence of the branch on supplies from abroad and the increased price of fodder. A certain amount of fodder was distributed to the farms by Government as from the autumn of 1943 and fodder seed from April 1944. This distribution was geared to the delivery of eggs from the farms. Official prices for eggs were introduced in October 1942.

Due to a shortage of labor and the fixing of official prices, both of which did not permit the high wages obtaining in other branches, the production of vegetables was forced off the record position it had held in 1941/2. But potato cultivation, on the other hand, increased seven times and more during the war as less labor is required, and because of the smaller risk, as this vegetable can be stored. Deciduous fruit tree cultivation also expanded greatly and production rose seven and a half times. Sub-tropical fruits, whose cultivation was introduced during the war, also found an ever increasing market.

A new branch of Jewish economy developed during the war – pond fishing. Fish ponds covered an area of 7,350 dunams in 1944/5. The Jewish catch in 1944/5

constituted 43% of the total catch in Palestine as against a negligible percentage before the war. The main part of this development is to be attributed to the ponds whose catch constituted 64% of the Jewish total. Sea and lake fishing also developed well. The payability of this branch was very high.

1938/9 was a year of economic crisis in Palestine and the daily wage earned in Jewish agriculture was so low as to meet only a modest standard of living. Most of the profits realized during the war were invested in farm expansion which at times also swallowed up additional credits. The rise in average wages for a day's work – from 275 mils at the beginning of the war to £P.1,200 in 1944/45 – was generally necessary to meet the cost of living which grew with the increase of the child population, especially in the communal settlements, as well as to improve living conditions.

## PALESTINE ECONOMY – CITRUS – INDUSTRY

### *Citrus*

Jewish citrus economy was a source of steady work for 10,000 Jewish breadwinners, 8,500 of whom were hired laborers. During the picking season the number rose to 22,000 and more, this including a number of Arabs, and concomitantly a further number of workers were engaged in transport, marketing, etc. The area owned by Jews before the war was about 155,000 dunams, or more than 50% of the total citrus area; the crop was about 10,000,000 boxed, 8,500,000 of which were for export, and in the 1938/39 season it reached 15,300,000 boxes valued at £P.4,400,000. Citrus exports in the last years before the war accounted for 75% of the country's total exports.

During the war, exports dropped steeply to 170,000 boxes in the 1940/1 season. In the last season before the war it again reached 2,700,000 cases. About 35,000 dunams of the Jewish area were neglected or uprooted because of marketing difficulties and other areas were but little cultivated. This situation threw a great part of the laborers out of work- one of the main reasons of the great unemployment situation at the beginning of the war. The growers suffered considerable losses and Government came to the industry's assistance with loans which, during the war, aggregated £P3,000,000. The area assisted by these loans was 150,000 dunams, over half of which were Jewish.

### *Industry*

The war exerted a very strong influence on industry. The following table indicates industrial development during the war:

## THE RISE IN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

The rise in production is reflected mainly in the index of man days which shows the doubling of the amount of industrial production during the war. A comparison also of the Jewish Agency census of Jewish industry shows the same development: the number of employed rose since the last pre-war census (1943) from 21,964 to 45,049, i.e. by

105%. The man day wage rose together with the rise in the cost of living, which in September 1945 reached 258.

This rise in industrial production came as a result of the increased demand by the home market, following the sharp decline in the import of industrial products. The demand of foreign markets for locally made products and military orders, which during the war totaled £P.30,000,000, contributed to increased industrial production. Industry reached the peak of employment in 1943 when the number of employed on army orders reached 15,000. Hand in Hand with industrial expansion came the variety in production. During the war new sorts of products were developed, especially industrial equipment, such as mechanical looms, diamond polishing factory equipment, diesel engines, agricultural machinery, all sorts of agricultural implements, electrometers, medicines and pharmaceuticals, glassware, etc.

The structure of industry underwent a change in the period between the above mentioned censuses. Those branches connected with the war effort expanded rapidly while those connected with building construction dropped. If we take the number of unemployed as a yardstick of the changes in various industrial branches, we shall note that food, the greatest, dropped only from 18% to 16.4%; textiles rose from 7% o 12.5%; metal and machinery together went up from 14% to 22%. In 1943 the diamond industry, which employed 8% of the total employed in industry, put in an appearance. Stone and cement dropped from 15% to 4.4% and wood from 10% to 4%. The following table reflects the composition up to the last census (1943) taken by the Jewish Agency Department of Statistics:

**JEWISH INDUSTRY IN 1943 (1942 PRODUCTION)**  
(*Excluding Handicrafts*)

	<i>No. of Enterprises</i>	<i>No. of Employed*</i>	<i>1942 Production LP.</i>	<i>Capital LP.</i>
1. Food	383	7,377	10,253,000	3,152,000
2. Textiles	247	5,632	3,944,000	1,678,000
3. Clothing	184	2,802	1,786,000	517,000
4. Metals	191	5,716	3,371,000	1,096,000
5. Machines	208	4,058	2,112,000	971,000
6. Timber	180	1,644	1,412,000	547,000
7. Hides	124	1,806	1,831,000	457,000
8. Printing and Paper	193	2,226	1,218,000	866,000
9. Chemicals (including edible oils)	180	4,795	5,395,000	3,309,000
10. Stone and Cement	72	1,966	1,547,000	1,422,000
11. Diamonds	32	3,571	1,283,000	678,000
12. Electric products and power stations	54	2,146	1,422,000	5,494,000
13. Miscellaneous	72	1,310	713,000	336,000
Total	2,120	45,049	36,287,000	20,523,000

\* Includes owners, clerks and laborers on the day of census, 1943.

## INDUSTRIAL EXPORT

With the decline of military orders in the last two years of the war, the composition of Jewish industry again underwent a change. The metal and machinery branches, for example, whose main products were for the military, declined, and in their stead, came an additional expansion in textiles and diamonds.

The value of Jewish industrial production (excluding handicrafts) was estimated in 1945 at LP.55,000,000 to LP.600,000,000 but the rise in the value of production for 1942 (LP.36,300,000, according to the census) is in great part to be attributed to the rise in prices.

Profits were high in most industrial branches during the war, following the increased demand for products on the home market, and on those of the neighboring countries. Considerable profits accumulated in industry, serving in part to account for a very high rate of amortization. The amortization period was brief because the increase in industrial machinery was in many cases effected at high cost, and because some of the branches extended their production capacity for the military far beyond the country's rate of consumption. In this manner considerable reserves were created which, at the end of the war, were placed at industry's disposal to overhaul plant after the import of machinery had dropped.

The development of industrial production depends particularly on the supply of raw materials and semi-manufactured goods from abroad. It was difficult to procure these during the war, and Government took over the control of various raw materials and also introduced standard production for the civilian market, such as Utility shoes and clothing. The military authorities themselves undertook the supply of the bulk of the material for army orders.

Industrial export was hard hit at the beginning of the war owing to communication difficulties and the ban on the export of a number of products. But it quickly adjusted itself to the new conditions and (almost 100% Jewish) ran high during the war, rising from LP.1,000,000 before the war (1937/9 average) to LP.11,075,000 in 1945, when industrial production accounted for 80% of Palestine's total exports (not including oil) as against 19% before the war. The export of polished diamonds alone – an industry which developed only during the war – reached LP.5,909,000 or 43% of the total exports (not including oil). The export of Dead Sea products came to LP.905,000. The following table shows the development of some important industries.

### EXPORTS OF A NUMBER OF JEWISH INDUSTRIES

	1945	1939
	LP.	LP.
Fashions	309,242	23,413
Furs	69,469	49
Clothing	831,328	46,873

## EXPORTS (CON'T)

	1945 LP	1939 LP.
Optical & Medical		
Instruments	19,889	2,207
Polished Diamonds	5,909,297	2,441
Medicines	186,875	603
Concentrated Oils	68,629	5,974
Potash & Bromine	904,953	427,690
Chemicals (ex).		
Potash & Bromine)	533,539	10,148
Glass & Glassware	289,575	498
Shoes, Slippers, etc.	175,685	27

Any comparison of figures for 1945 with pre-war figures must take account the great rise in prices. The index of wholesale prices in 1945 was 319 (average) as compared with 100 in 1939.

## BUILDING

Building was hardest hit during the war. In 1943, the record year of war employment, the total of building permits issued was only 3.4% of the annual average in the four large towns for the seven years 1932/8. In the last year of the war it picked up somewhat and for the first three quarters of 1945 building permits were granted at the rate of 30% of the average for 1932/8, and reached that of 1939 which was also a depression year in this branch.

The lack of building materials during the war was caused mainly by the lack of building materials and, in later period of the war, by a lack of labor as well. The cost of building rose considerably and at the end of the war was about four times the cost of building before the war. It is clear that this great restriction on building, in view of a growing population, has caused a serious lack of housing and, with that, a rise in rents. Even the promulgation of the Rent Control regulations has not stopped it altogether.

Congestion grew. The average congestion in Tel Aviv in March 1944 was 2.41 persons per room, while average congestion in the Yishuv before the war was two persons per room. It has been estimated that the Yishuv needed at least 100,000 more rooms at the end of the war and this estimate has also taken into account the need to improve living conditions to some extent. It is clear that with increased immigration the demand for additional homes will also grow.



## FOREIGN TRADE

The following table shows Palestine's imports and exports and its unfavorable balance during the war. This unfavorable balance persists even after the deduction of oil imports and exports, since the Haifa Refineries belong to a foreign company and the import and export of oil is only a transit trade – if one excludes the home consumption of oil and the wage paid to Palestinians employed at the refineries.

### DEVELOPMENT OF IMPORT, EXPORT AND UNFAVORABLE BALANCE OF TRADE DURING THE WAR

<i>Year</i>	<i>Import</i>	<i>Export</i>	<i>Unfavorable Trade Balance (Returning Export excluded) (In LP.1,000's)</i>	<i>Unfavorable Trade Balance with Oil Trade deducted (In LP.1,000's)</i>
1939	14,633	5,118	9,166	.....
1940	12,561	4,073	8,305	.....
1941	13,325	4,216	8,447	.....
1942	21,375	8,676	12,119	15,454
1943	27,203	12,752	13,958	12,400
1944	36,224	14,638	20,622	14,271*

There was a relative drop in the unfavorable trade balance during the war. It reached 63% of the 1939 imports and only in 1945 did it reach 48% (with the deduction of the oil trade and the Petroleum Company imports its rate was 51% in 1945).

There was a heavy drop in exports in the early years of the war owing to the defection of the citrus markets which, before the war, absorbed three fourths of the country's total exports. In the last years of the war, industrial export rose together with an appreciable rise in imports generally. It is estimated, however, that 1945 total exports were also quite low in relation to pre-war export prices in 1939 (with the exception of oil products).

Indeed, during the war the importance of the adverse trade balance dwindled in view of the large sums at the country's disposal in balances for payments.

## LABOR AND WAGES

There was a considerable rise in unemployment at the outbreak of war. The main sufferers were building and citrus, each of which had employed 15% of labor before the war. In the middle of 1940 unemployment reached its peak when 12,000 men or 12% of the total number of Jewish workers in the country, were out of work for 17 days and more out of the month. The unemployed and their families in need of assistance were estimated that year at about 40,000.

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\* In 1945 the import of the Iraq Petroleum Company and the Haifa Refineries was also deducted.

From the end of 1940 unemployment dropped rapidly. In 1943 there were on an average only 550 unemployed (17 days or more out of a month); in 1944 there were 840 and in January-September 1943, 650. The existing unemployment in later years may be considered the "hard nut" which persists even in periods of prosperity. The rise in industrial production, full employment, agriculture, communications, public works, and enlistment in the fighting forces absorbed the unemployed and ultimately brought about a labor shortage. The lack of hands made for the mobilization of new labor strength, especially women, and the proportion of breadwinners in the Yishuv rose.

## WAR TIME EXPANSION

The rise in prices during the war spurred on the demand to adapt wages to the cost of living. The wage standard of the Jewish laborer was low even at the beginning of the war because of the difficult economic situation they obtaining in the country. According to the Government index of daily wages, (Jewish) wages dropped by 11% to the 1936 – September 1939 figure. Real wages still continued to drop during the first years of the war. Cost of living allowances for industrial workers, based on the cost of living index, were introduced in 1942 and in other trades in 1943.

Industrial wages overtook the rising cost of living only at the end of 1943. Since then the real wage has begun to rise. In the first three-quarters of 1944 it was 20% higher than that of 1939. The real wage also rose in other branches in the last years of the war. But the salaries of clerks in public institutions and Government service overtook the rising prices only at the end of the war.

## THE WAR EFFORT

The Yishuv's contribution to the war effort covers the whole development of the country's economy during the war. The transition to full employment, the full exploitation of production strength and the expansion of the production apparatus through the mobilization of fresh labor forces effected a great rise in production. Increased production in this country released shipping space for the transport of arms and supplies for the fighting forces, and, thanks to the fact that local production supplied the army and the home market with goods and services which had hitherto been brought from abroad, the demands on the labor forces of other nations diminished. Military orders with Jewish industry rose, as has been noted, to over £P.30,000,000.

The rise in mixed farm production was made possible through the increase in irrigated areas from 25,000 dunams (physical area), before the war (1936/37) to 106,000 dunams in 1945.

In addition to the expansion of existing farms during the war 52 new settlements were founded. Jewish mixed farm production rose by 93% as against the 20% on Arab farms.

Palestine's industry, 85% of which is Jewish, also expanded to meet the needs of war. Its production rose by more than 100% and the greatest rise took place in the important industries connected with the war effort. Over 600 new enterprises were founded during the war. With the help of scientific experts, new products were created and new methods introduced into production, the importance of which is great for the industrial future of the country.

Jewish experts also served the war effort by building roads, camps, airfields; Jewish transport too made its contribution to the war effort. All this was achieved after 26,000 men and women, thousands of whom were high grade skilled laborers, had enlisted in the fighting forces.

## THE TRANSITION TO PEACE

### III. THE TRANSITION PERIOD

Palestine economy now stands at a decisive period of transition from a war to a peace time footing. It is a period of shock and tremor in the life of world economy; how much more so in one which has been accommodated to the needs of war and the reversal of which to its former milieu is fraught with grave difficulties.

Palestine's industrial production is still being almost fully exploited in spite of the decrease in Government and Military orders, and there is no sign of recession. There has been some contraction in some of the branches along with a compensating expansion in others. The great demand which accumulated during the war period and has not been satisfied owing to the lack of goods on the world market, the difficulties encountered by the import trade and the appreciable purchasing power which has surpassed the demand, have had a salutary effect on the labor situation.

An appreciation of the country's economic position must take into account first and foremost the extent to which our economy is dependent on world markets and its approach to sources of supply. The range of imports and their composition had been a decisive factor for this country even in peace-time and their importance has risen today since the price level, production and expansion. And indirectly, the labor situation is appreciably conditioned by them. The very outstanding differences in the price on the one hand, and of Palestine and the Middle East on the other, will stand out more clearly only after the resumption of contacts with world markets, i.e. when import restrictions drop to a minimum and the conditions of sea transport improve. This trend in fact is being realized, for import space in the first half of 1946 already stands at 88% of the 1939 norm.

The need to readjust the country's price level to that of the world markets gives the country's economic position in the world economy weight and importance. Inflation problems, the price level, production costs, capital accumulation and financing are all connected with this central problem.

The causes and factors leading to inflation have already been described. Military spending in the country did not cease at the end of the war and the influx of Jewish capital has continued, as may be seen from the following table:

#### JEWISH CAPITAL IMPORT INTO PALESTINE

Year	LP.
1940	5,200,000
1941	4,350,000
1942	5,500,000
1943	8,350,000
1944	10,000,000
1945 (Jan.- August)	7,780,000
1946 “ “	8,735,000

#### STERLING AND DOLLAR BALANCES

Noticeable fluctuations took place in the composition of this capital during the war. While in the pre-war period only 11 ½ % came from public and semi-public sources, public and semi-public capital in 1940/5 accounted for not less than 37% of the total capital influx.

At any rate, the growth of purchasing power continued even after the end of the war even though its rate of growth slackened and its influence on prices diminished. The fluctuations of this trend which to a certain extent could already be noted after the peak period of war development, are reflected in the table below:

#### RATE OF RISE OR DECLINE JANUARY – MAY (%)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Money in circulation</i>	<i>Deposits in Banks and Cooperative Societies</i>	<i>Total Money in Circulation and Bank Deposits</i>	<i>Wholesale Prices Index</i>	<i>Cost of Living Index</i>
1940	25.7	2.4	7.0	0.5	1.8
1941	25.5	0.6	10.3	9.4	3.4
1942	18.7	5.1	10.1	6.3	5.1
1943	13.1	14.6	14.0	2.6	11.6
1944	4.1	9.9	7.7	1.0	0.4
1945	7.9	3.3	5.0	2.6	1.2
1946	0.8	3.2	2.4	1.5	0.4

There is, then, a certain slowing up of the inflationary trend and there may also be noted a certain measure of stability. World market prices are rising to a certain degree and this makes it easier to adapt Palestine to world market conditions. On the other hand, the world shortage of goods prevents a rapid fall in living costs in Palestine.

Today, just as in the period before the war, large-scale immigration is a pre-condition for the full operation of the country's economy. It is clear that post-war

immigration will not be accompanied by an influx of private capital to the same extent as in former waves of immigration. Therefore the introduction of public and semi-public capital, prepared to take risks where private capital would stand aside and which will be ready to invest even in times of emergency and crisis, is most important.

Another vastly important factor is the Sterling balances in England which can finance part of the financial-economic operations in Palestine. These balances exceed £P.110,000,000 and in greater part are Jewish capital.

Palestine's dollar revenue also opens before it a number of possibilities in the economic field not open to other countries, via the opportunity of obtaining raw materials and basic equipment. These are vital to the country's development. The sum of 40-50 million dollars a year comes into the country mainly as payment for diamond exports and as the income of the national institutions. This dollar income is greater than the total dollar income of all Middle Eastern countries together.

## INVESTMENTS

These financial conditions can facilitate the revival of investments in Palestine's economy, which is calculated to fulfill the same function fulfilled by the war economy in ensuring full employment and exploitation of production capacity.

Building is the most important factor in the field of investment. About one-half of all the investments in the '30's came via that industry. Today building, in view of the acute housing shortage, can become a decisive factor in supplanting war economy. In fact, it is already showing signs of revival. It is estimated that since the end of the war in 1945, from 16,000 to 17,000 new rooms have been built in the Jewish sector of the country.

Increased investment leaves its mark on finances too. The following diagram reflects the revival of investments after the war.

## SUMMARY

All indications, such as the import of machinery, increase of company capital, expansion of bank credits, new share issues and the rise in building activity, show that the investment market is expanding and is gradually taking the place of war economy.

Palestine's economy, like that of other countries, has a vital interest in maintaining full employment. The political situation too and the approach to the problem of immigration are influenced by the labor situation. The expansion of the investment field is thus to be seen as parallel to the trend of the contracting war economy.

During the war the number of breadwinners in Jewish economy was about 53,000, i.e., an increase of 28%, while the Yishuv increased only by 21%. This shows what a great number of people have been attracted by the productive trades; 37,000 new

immigrants and thousands of young women who never worked before have joined the labor force.

At the end of the war, with the release of men from the army and continued immigration, Palestine economy was confronted with the question whether the newly-freed labor would not exceed the rate of absorption in the investments field of our economy. The figures for employment and unemployment in private enterprise in Palestine are an answer to the question.

	<i>Jewish Unemployed 17 days or more per month</i>	<i>Government Employment Index Employed in Private Enterprise</i>
April, 1945	569	100.0
July, 1945	722	99.8
October, 1945	667	104.1
January, 1946	1,033	102.9
April, 1946	625	103.0
July, 1946	1,056	101.7

At present there is no noticeable unemployment and the labor force released by the war economy is being absorbed in agriculture and industry for the local market.

Continued Jewish agricultural growth may be seen from the following figures:

	Milk Production 1,000 Liters	Egg Production 1,000 Units
1944	61,486	73,848
1945	69,186	89,677
1945 (January-April)	23,217	28,809
1946 (January-April)	27,601	32,024

#### *Milk Reception "Tnuva"*

January-August 1945	19,215,000
January-August 1946	22,456,000

The stability of Jewish industrial production is proved by the following diagram:

The comeback of the citrus industry constitutes an additionally important factor also from the point of view of export. In the 1945/6 season it again rose to 8-8 ½ million boxes, 5.2 million of which are for export. The next season's crop is estimated at 10-12 million boxes and an export of 8-8 ½ million is ensured.

It must be noted that the recent political and military events have had a very limited influence on our economic life. The country's economy has stood firm in the face of the difficulties inherent in the political situation and has proved how resilient it is. Employment is at full blast and there is a shortage of labor. Production generally did not drop; in some branches it even rose. Total exports have increased; the building trade has expanded. The rate of investments is high and the investment field is expanding. The

transition from war to peace economy is progressing. The dynamic factor of capital influx and the rise in investments and building determine the tempo of Palestine's economic life. It is these that create a sector independent of the operations of economic powers interested in their own well-being and it is these that determine the resilient and dynamic equilibrium as a characteristic feature of this country.

Equilibrium in the economic life of a growing Yishuv as the result of the work of external forces will hold sway till the land is completely developed. An analysis of Palestine's economic problems leads to one central consideration; an expansion of investments, i.e. an economic policy of development through immigration and capital import. A large-scale dynamic and long-term development will overcome all difficulties and will create a dynamic balance on a higher and more comprehensive plane.

## THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

### INTRODUCTION

When the war broke out and citrus exports were brought to a standstill, thousands of laborers in the settlements became unemployed, and the economic stability of the citrus growers was weakened. Also in the building trade and in public works, in which before the war about 13,000 Jewish laborers had been employed, work was considerably reduced, firstly because of the absence of economic stability in Palestine during that period, and secondly because of the strict control imposed by Government on building materials in private hands.

The Labor Department of the Jewish Agency did its best to alleviate the conditions of the rural workers by creating work in the settlements, and in regard to urban workers, by arranging public works. But in spite of all these activities, the Jewish Agency was forced to allocate appreciable sums for relief purposes. This scheme had the cooperation of the Unemployment Fund of the General Federation of Jewish Labor and the Executive of the Vaad Leumi. The Palestine Government also extended its assistance, realizing that the principal factors causing this unemployment were the war conditions in Palestine.

Conditions improved, beginning from the second half of 1941, when the British Army in Palestine and neighboring countries commenced construction schemes, and the Yishuv in Palestine received contracts for the supply of living quarters for the Army, food, clothing and war material.

In the course of the war tens of thousands of Jewish men and women enlisted in the British Army, and of the remainder, all able-bodied persons and all new immigrants who had arrived at the outbreak of the war were speedily absorbed in those branches of work where a serious labor shortage was felt. Studies in secondary schools were cut short during the summer, and young students were sent to work in the villages to assist the agricultural settlements and so maintain the supply of agricultural produce for the

Yishuv and the Army. Particular anxiety was created by conditions in the citrus industry, which was the most backward as far as wages were concerned, and the Jewish laborers did not return to it after having left at the beginning of the war when citrus exports were stopped. Large numbers of foreign laborers entered Palestine from Egypt, Syria and Transjordan, and even today there are many foreign laborers engaged in Jewish settlements, particularly in the older ones. Such conditions are disquieting, both from economic and security points of view. In a special chapter devoted to our activities in the settlements, we shall describe the various steps taken to help both workers and farmers, as well as our efforts to consolidate Jewish agricultural labor. We shall only mention here that of the immigrants arriving in Palestine in recent years, about 4,000 individuals coming from Yemen were diverted to the settlements, and everything was done to ease their adaptation to agricultural work.

The General Labor Exchanges played an important role in the allocation of work during the first years of the war, and in the supply of labors for hired work during the labor shortage in Palestine. These Labor Offices, the details of whose activities will be fully described in the course of this report, were established at the beginning of the year 1930-40, after representatives of the General Federation of Jewish Labor and the Minority Organizations on the one part, and the representatives of the employers on the other, had recognized the necessity of establishing General Exchanges to replace the Labor Offices maintained by the various labor organizations. The General Labor Exchanges are supervised by the Labor Department, and through them all Jewish workers in need of employment receive work with out regard to their party affiliations. The existence of these Labor Exchanges has obviated many disputes of the kind which used so often to arise between labor organizations regarding the allocation of work. With the renewal of immigration, these Labor Exchanges play a leading part in the absorption of the new immigrants.

At the end of the war when signs of a return to peace-time conditions became apparent, the Labor Department played an active part in the vocational training of laborers for those branches in need of skilled labor. As we have already mentioned, building activities for civilian purposes were brought almost to a complete standstill during the war, and when building was renewed there arose the necessity of training large numbers of laborers in this trade. This training is given to many new immigrants and discharged soldiers. The Labor Department also found it necessary, with the renewal of citrus exports, to open courses for packers to make possible the export of citrus fruit to foreign markets.

The Labor Department was also required to mediate in disputes which arose between employers and workers. The Department used to devote much attention to this matter in ordinary times, but in recent years, and particularly during the war, the number of industrial undertakings in Palestine has grown – and with them the number of workers engaged in industry – so that the problem has become aggravated. The usual disputes between employers, and workers to be found everywhere were supplemented by specific disputes caused by the times and arising from a rise of prices and a drop in the real value of wages. The Labor Department made many efforts to bring the parties to agreement



and to avoid strikes, or to put an end to those which had broken out. During the first period of the war, the Labor Department succeeded in bring about a general agreement with the Manufacturers Association, and the Jewish Agency played an important role in smoothing over the differences of opinion arising out of this agreement. When war conditions became aggravated and the cost of living rose, the number of strikes increased, but the Labor Department did its best to avert economic damage arising to the Yishuv as a whole.

We have here enumerated the principal activities in which the Labor Department was engaged during the war and during the difficult period succeeding it. We shall now give details of the various branches of activity.

#### A. ACTIVITIES IN THE SETTLEMENTS

##### *Loans to Citrus Growers and Rural Labor*

The citrus growing settlements were particularly hard hit during the war when citrus exports came to a stop, and 17,000 workers became unemployed and their employers without means of sustenance. The Executive of the Jewish Agency requested the Government to allocate grants for the cultivation of citrus groves, and until this request was granted, the Executive extended its financial assistance to the growers most in need for it. In practice even the loans granted by Government could not meet the many needs of the growers, and the Jewish Agency granted additional loans to those growers who were employing Jewish labor. During the period covered by this report the Labor Department granted loans to a total of £P.73,708 to 2,460 growers.

During this same period the Labor Department extended constructive economic assistance to laborers engaged in citriculture. Through the Loan Fund for auxiliary holdings of the Audit Union (Agricultural Laborers Credit Society) loans to the sum of LP.35,245 were granted for auxiliary holdings of 2,500 workers' families in the settlements, thus making possible the supply of food to thousands of workers' families during the years in which high food prices prevailed. These loans have been satisfactorily repaid, so much so that the Department has been able to embark on a new series of loans with the funds made available from repayment.

Two hundred and twenty-five loans to a total of LP.43,703 were allocated during the period covered by this report for auxiliary farms in the Kibbutzim through the Kibbutz Auxiliary Farms Fund, in collaboration with the management of the Workers' Bank, and these assisted in alleviating the economic situation of the kibbutzim during the period of their stay in the colonies until their departure for points of permanent settlement.

The kibbutzim brought with them to their new settlements milk cows and work animals, which they acquired and bred in the settlements, as well as agricultural machinery which they acquired while engaged in hired labor in and around the villages. During the seven years covered by this report 58 kibbutzim, Kvutzot and groups have left

for permanent settlement from their communal labor camps. The value of the livestock and other assets transferred from the villages to the new points of settlements is estimated at LP.175,000. The kibbutzim which left for permanent settlement were replaced by fresh groups of immigrants and young people from the Youth Aliyah.

The Department of Labor also assisted Labor groups in the settlements to develop various handicrafts so as to provide employment for their members during the shortage of work in the citrus industry. For that purpose the "Loan Fund for Handicrafts in the Kibbutzim" was established with the financial cooperation of the Department of Labor (to the extent of LP.3,450) and the economic institutions of the General Federation of Jewish Labor and Hapoel Hamizrahi.

#### TRANSFER OF WORKERS FROM THE VILLAGES TO THE KIBBUTZIM

In addition to these activities, the Labor Department helped the workers in the settlements during the first years of the war when there was general unemployment there, and transferred close on 1,000 people from the villages to the kibbutzim. Considerable importance attached to this activity since it gave encouragement to the workers during the period of unemployment and helped them to settle down to permanent work in agriculture.

#### HOUSING ACTIVITIES IN THE SETTLEMENTS

During the period covered by this report the Labor Department erected 92 houses in the camps of the labor groups attached to the villages for the housing of the immigrants and youth groups absorbed in them. In addition to this, the kibbutzim were assisted by loans from the fund established jointly by the Jewish agency and the Palestine economic Corporation for the erection of buildings and hutments for 3,000 people, to the sum of LP.84,000. At present about 5,000 people are living in these labor groups, assisted in their housing by the Labor Department.

The Labor Department set up special quarters for hired agricultural workers, particularly in plantation villages to contain a house for every family with a one dunam plot each as an auxiliary holding. At the beginning of the war, the Labor Department spent LP.12,558 for the erection of workers quarters, the preparation of which had begun before the war.. Ninety houses for agricultural laborers were erected in cooperation with the Palestine Mortgage and Credit Bank, and other companies, at Rehovot, New Ziona and Yavniel. The sum of LP.4,500 was invested in this by the Labor Department. The Department has completed its collaboration with "Nir Ltd." in the erection of 336 houses in workers' quarters near Petah Tikva, Kfar Saba, Hedera and Rehovot, representing a total investment of LP.8,000 in addition to the sums invested before the period covered by this report.

In 1941 housing activities were brought to a standstill by the shortage of building materials in Palestine and the rise in building costs. When immigration was renewed in 1945, the Labor Department resumed its building activities for new immigrants who were

sent to work in the villages. A particularly difficult point was the question of housing immigrants from the Yemen who arrived in Palestine with their families and who were temporarily living in tents. The conditions under which they were living were well nigh unbearable, particularly during the rainy season, and at the end of the year 1944-46 the Department, with the assistance of the Housing Section of the Jewish Agency, erected housing units for 514 Yemenite families in special quarters near the villages and in the Haifa Bay area. Each family received about one dunam of land for an auxiliary holding to include a vegetable garden, a chicken coop, and a goat pen. With the assistance of the WIZO Training Department the Yemenite settlers have already begun the laying out of their plots. The Executive of the Jewish Agency invested the sum of LP.151,000 in the erection of the 514 flats, which consist of one room and a kitchen, and in the laying down of drainage installations. In the Yemenite quarters near Rishon Le Zion the Montefiore Fund also participated to the sum of LP.14,000, and the Shikun Company to the extent of LP.5,500. The Yemenite quarters near Kfar Yona had the assistance of the Fund named after the late Jean Fisher to a total of LP.5,250.

Recently the Labor Department has contacted the Mortgage and Credit Bank, founded by the Palestine Economic Corporation, in regard to the joint erection of 160 houses for Yemenite laborers at Karkur, Hadera and Hadar, and preparatory work and the laying down of water installations have already begun on the areas set aside for these quarters.

The General Federation of Jewish Labor took the initiative in the establishment of a company for the erection of houses for veteran rural laborers. The Jewish Agency cooperates in this "Nveh Oved" company to the sum of LP.25,000. According to an agreement with this company, 50% of the increased capital of LP.100,000 will be invested by the Jewish agency. Recently the erection of 200 houses has begun in special quarters near the villages.

## THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF CONTRACTING ACTIVITIES IN CITRICULTURE

### *Citrus Contracting*

Owing to wages in citriculture being very much lower than those obtaining in other branches of Jewish economy, and in view of the better paying work in other branches, only a small portion remaining permanently attached to citriculture. Difficulties have consequently arisen in the cultivation of the orange groves, which a number of the farmers are endeavoring to sidestep by employing non-Jewish labor. Despite everything, however, citriculture still remains a very important field of employment, and tens of thousands of new immigrants have been absorbed into this branch. The Labor department has endeavored to find ways and means of ensuring Jewish labor. In order to enable growers to carry out their essential work with Jewish labor at moderate cost, contracting offices were established on the initiative of the Agriculture Center of the General Federation of Jewish Labor with the assistance of the Labor Department and began activities – particularly in the large settlements. During the

period of their existence – 1936 to 1941 – these Contracting Offices carried out work to the value of LP.247,236, providing workers, particularly new immigrants with 1,110,061 days of work.

### “HAKAL” CO. – WORKERS TRAINING

In permanent agricultural work the wages of laborers attached to these Contracting Offices were higher than those obtaining in the private agricultural market, and in the work of picking, in which immigrants were chiefly employed, wages reached almost the level of those obtaining in the private agricultural market. It will be seen from the large volume of work provided to workers – new immigrants, as has been said – that the activities of the Contracting Offices were of great importance in the field of capturing labor markets. However, in order to free the industrial worker from contributions to the organizational expenses of the Central Contracting Office, the Department of Labor participated in these costs to the sum of LP.10,475, which constitutes 10 mils for every man day. The Unemployed Fund of the General Fund of the General Federation of Jewish Labor also bore part of the cost of organizing the Contracting Office.

During the war, the cultivation of citrus groves was greatly reduced as has already been said, bringing about a reduction in contracting activities. Only in 1945, when citrus export routes were once more opened, were arrangements for the cultivation of citrus groves on a contracting basis resumed. For this purpose a central company “Hakal” (*Hevra Kablanit Lehakalaut*) was established jointly by the Agricultural Workers Organization and the Jewish Agency, and took under its aegis the agricultural contracting Offices in the various localities. The Labor Organization and the Jewish Agency participated equally in the foundation capital of the company (LP.100,000) to enable it to acquire the necessary machinery for the cultivation of groves in the settlements and to finance the activities of the local Contracting Offices. Since the difference between wages in agriculture and those in other fields is much greater than before the war, the company is encountering many difficulties. Nevertheless, the Labor Department regarded it as its duty to undertake the task of consolidating Jewish labor in citriculture, both from the point of view of creating places of work for new immigrants and on account of the urgent necessity of safeguarding the Jewish character of the settlements and their security. For the time being our Department has invested the sum of LP.25,000 on account of current capital, the General Federation of Jewish Labor participating with an equal sum.

### *Workers Training*

We have already mentioned the objective difficulties in the cultivation of groves by Jewish labor, and we have stressed the fact that the economic difficulties arising from the difference between the wages of the agricultural laborer and those of workers in other fields lead to a flight from citriculture. To meet the labor shortage in citriculture, the Labor department directs new immigrants to the colonies. It follows therefore, that new workers are sent from time to time to the citrus groves, and a certain period must pass before they become used to the work and reach a minimum standard of production. It is

clear that growers are neither willing nor able to bear the costs entailed in this constant change of workers. A good deal of hardship, too, falls to the workers until they become used to their work. To ease their adaptation to citriculture, and make it easier for growers to employ these new laborers, the Department has introduced a system of training workers during the first period of their work. Every group of 15 to 20 men is accompanied by an instructor of long experience in citriculture who trains the laborers and increases their production. The Labor Department devotes special attention to this training, and during the period 1939 to 1946 spent on it the sum of LP.25,108.

Packing is an essential job in citriculture and has considerable bearing on the preservation of the fruit enroute. After the work, when citrus exports were resumed, it became evident that new people would have to be trained in the various branches of packing, such as grading, wrapping, box-making and actual packing. For this purpose the Labor Department, in collaboration with the Packing Workers Union, has organized special training courses. During the years 1944-45 to 1945-46, 1,067 workers took these courses.

During the war the citrus trees deteriorated as a result of insufficient cultivation, and their productivity was reduced to such an extent that it was necessary to search for the fruit between the leaves. As a result, the cost of picking increased, and special care had to be taken in grading the fruit so as to supply the required sizes for export. Add to this the fact that fruit can be picked in winter only, between rainfalls, and it will become clear why picking entails so many difficulties. Also the wages paid by growers for picking are small, it being in keeping with the price received by farmers for their fruit on markets abroad. Having regard to these objective factors which considerably hampered picking and packing, the Labor Department, in collaboration with the Unemployment Fund of the General Federation of Jewish labor, shared in the cost of organizing this work. Picking was carried out in part by the General Labor Exchanges in the settlements. It should be noted that thanks to the great efforts made by the Department, it has been possible to keep Jewish workers on picking and packing work. During the period covered by this report the Department spent the sum of LP.10,088 on this activity.

These were the principal activities undertaken by the Labor Department during the period covered by this report for the maintenance of Jewish labor in citriculture. When we survey the condition of citriculture at the present time, we see that it has emerged from the war with very heavy losses. About 30,000 dunams of citrus were uprooted through inability to cultivate them, while in the remaining area of about 120,000 dunams large sums need to be invested for the amelioration of the trees if production is to be brought at least up to the level obtaining before the war. The number of Jewish workers in citriculture is about 2,000 in permanent employment, while the number rises considerably during the picking and packing season. With increased crops, and the rise in prices, the number of Jewish workers depending on this branch of industry will increase. Much effort will have to be devoted to improved methods of cultivation and marketing, and to the organization of labor in citrus groves throughout the year, as well as during the picking and packing period, if Jewish labor is to maintain itself in the settlements.

At the time of writing, more encouraging news is being received in regard to citrus marketing prospects during the winter of 1946-47, and we are helping to make preparations for the organization of labor this winter so as to absorb additional workers in the various branches of citriculture.

## B. ACTIVITIES IN TOWNS

During the first years of the war, there was serious unemployment among urban workers. Private building activity was paralyzed, and the branches of industry connected with building were also unable to maintain themselves. The Labor Department mobilized funds for the financing of public works that were of importance for the future development of the Yishuv, such as the building of roads. These public works were carried out for the most part with the assistance of loans granted by Bizur, Ltd. to public bodies under the partial guarantee of the Jewish Agency. Roads were built on Mt. Carmel, in areas set aside for housing south of Tel Aviv, in the Jerusalem area, in the area between Herzilia and the Tel Aviv – Petah Tikva road, and in the settlements of Hadera and Rehovot. The Labor Department underwrote partial guarantees connected with these works to the sum of £P.20,932.

### *Assistance to Unemployed*

The economic stress during the period from 1939 to the middle of 1941 was so great that it was necessary, in addition to the employment of a number of workers on public works, to extend financial assistance to the unemployed. In the year 1940, there were about 7,400 unemployed in the towns and about 6,000 in villages. For their assistance the General Federation of Jewish Labor imposed heavy taxes on its members ("Pidyon H'avada") in addition to the regular contributions which include a certain percentage for the Unemployment Fund. These efforts proving insufficient, demands were made on the Jewish Agency to participate in extending financial help to the unemployed. Assistance was given mainly to urban workers, but workers in the settlements also found it necessary to apply for assistance, and in several settlements these relief monies were spent on public works with the assistance of Local Councils.

The funds allocated by the Jewish Agency for relief purposes among the unemployed - £P.83,764 during the years 1940 to 1941 – were transferred to the Vaad Leumi, which centralized all the relief funds, including the grants-in-aid given by the Palestine Government to the unemployed and destitute directly affected by the war.

At the end of 1940 unemployment relief ceased.

### *Technical Training of Workers*

During the war the Labor Department made use of various opportunities to teach unskilled laborers trades that were in demand. As the war continued there was an increased demand for metal workers. After negotiations between the Jewish Agency and

the Government, courses were arranged by the latter for mechanics and metal workers. The Labor Department arranged for the attendance of suitable workers at these courses. The Labor Department also set up a committee jointly with the Labor Exchange of the General Federation of Jewish Labor for the purpose of introducing Jewish labor into Government and Army workshops and training workers there in various trades. In cooperation with the Unemployment Fund we allocated the necessary sums for the support of workers during the first months of their training in these workshops.

## QUARRYING

At the end of the war building activities in Palestine were renewed, and it became apparent that of the thousands of workers in the building trades, only a small number had remained, the majority having found work in other trades and not being willing to return to building. The Department therefore resumed the training of building workers. Together with the Unemployment Fund of the General Federation of Jewish Labor, the representative of the Department arranges for the training of workers in the building trades. Candidates for such training are recommended by the General Labor Exchanges, an appreciable number of them being new immigrants. The workers receive their training in actual building, generally on buildings erected by Solel Boneh, and with private contractors, under expert instruction. The necessary funds for the financing of this training are provided by the Labor Department and the Unemployment Fund of the General Federation of Jewish Labor. During the years 1945-46, 15,000 men were given training in the building trades. It should be noted that the entry of these new workers into building has in recent months eased the labor shortage and stopped a further rise in wages in this industry.

The Labor Department has participated in the cost of training of laborers in the metal and building trades, etc., to the extent of £P.16,751.

## JEWISH QUARRYING

The problem of stone supplies for Jewish building needs and for other requirements has caused anxiety for years, since it is dependent on the discovery of suitable quarries and on a knowledge of the needs of the Jewish consumer. Conditions in Jerusalem were particularly disturbing, for the city needs large quantities of stone (to conform with the building regulations in force there), and their supply could give employment to many Jewish workers in a town which has few sources of employment. In the course of the years, practical steps were taken to further the stone industry, but with out tangible results. In 1939 a considerable advance was made in this sphere. The "Even" company was established by the General Federation of Jewish Labor with the cooperation of the Labor Department and a loan of £P.6,000 was granted for its consolidation. To expand the activities of the company the Jewish National Fund acquired land for quarries in the neighborhood of Atarot and Ma'aleh Habamisha, some fourteen kilometers from Jerusalem. But as had already been said, building activities during the war shrank, and Jewish stone supply practically came to standstill. When

building was resumed the Labor Department renewed negotiations with Jewish stone producers. On the basis of its experience, the “Even” Company decided to introduce mechanized quarrying so as to secure a drop in prices and adequate output. The Labor Department is now working out plans along these lines.

### *Conquest of Work*

In the ports and in other Government works which may be regarded as new fields of work, thousands of Jewish workers were employed up to the outbreak of the war – the ports alone employed 1,900. During the war there was a setback. Exports and imports dropped, and many workers enlisted in the British Army. After the war, with the renewal of imports and the resumption of citrus exports, the Labor Department has again begun to introduce Jewish labor into the ports, particularly new immigrants and ex-servicemen. The Labor Department together with the Maritime Department maintains close contacts with the Haifa Labor Council and with Solel Boneh, which is a contractor for various port works. The return of Jewish labor to work in the ports has met with difficulties on account of the low wage level and the extreme physical strain of the work. Efforts are being made to overcome these obstacles by technical improvements designed to bring about increased production and by a rise in wages. During the months of August to September 1946 a number of Kibbutzim entered this field.

### *Technical Training of Youth*

The demand for labor rose with the development of industry during the war. Together with the Working Youth Organization of the General Federation of Jewish Labor and the “Bnei Akiva” of Hapoel Hamizrhi Organization, the Labor Department cooperated in maintaining courses for apprentices in lock-smithing, metal work, mechanical work, electricity, printing and other trades. For girls, courses were arranged in sewing, weaving and cooking. From 2,000 to 3,000 boys and girls attended these courses each school year. With the cooperation of the Louis Brandeis Vocational Training Center, these courses were extended, and opportunities were given to all young people in Jerusalem interested in vocational training to attend them. The collaboration of the Vocational Training Center also induced the Manufacturers’ Association to give its assistance, an agreement being reached whereby apprentices in industrial enterprises are released from their work in order to be able to attend these courses on days when practical training is given. The Labor Department is doing its best to extend and expand cooperation between the various organizations engaged in the vocational training of young workers, thus as far as possible embracing all classes of youth in need of vocational training.

### GENERAL LABOR EXCHANGES

In addition to the cooperation of the Labor Department in these vocational training courses for apprentices, special efforts were made to introduce young men to stone masonry and to give them training in that trade, particularly in Jerusalem where there is a shortage of stonemasons. The Department has also helped to transfer members of the “Noar Ha’oved” and the “Bnei Akiva” from the towns to the agricultural



settlements. Special importance is attached to this task, since it gives agricultural training to young people who belong to the poorest sections of the Jewish urban population. The educational value, however, is still greater, since the pioneering spirit has been infused into these young people who live under very backward social conditions. For this purpose the Labor Department has spent the sum of LP.2,900, in addition providing tents for the agricultural settlements concerned. The Labor Department brought young workers from Jerusalem in special groups for the fruit picking season in the settlements.

### *Women Workers*

In the economic stress which assumed alarming proportions at the beginning of the war, female workers were the main sufferers. For whereas thousands of male laborers were found employment in Government and public works, the women remained idle, particularly those in the villages, where before the war they were engaged in fruit picking and in jobs connected with fruit packing. The Labor Department was also very much concerned with the problems presented by new arrivals and their training, since success in their sphere decisively influences the social development of the Yishuv. Together with the women workers' organizations, the Labor Department undertook constructive schemes to help them. Women workers' farms and women's hostels received a number of workers for preliminary training, and these were afterwards found employment, partly with labor groups and partly in other places. Courses were also arranged for sewing, weaving and cooking, an every opportunity was taken to introduce limited numbers of women workers to army work. The Department also assisted in the laying out of vegetable gardens in the larger settlements, where women workers were employed at a minimum wage. On the average about 1,200 women workers were found employment annually during the period covered by this report. The Department spent LP.7,005 as its share in the special activities of the Women Workers' Council.

### C. THE GENERAL LABOR EXCHANGES

After lengthy negotiations with workers' representatives and employers, the Labor Department opened its first General Labor Exchanges in 1939. Before that period there were in existence separate Labor Exchanges of the General Federation of Jewish Labor, Hapoel Hamizrahi, the Agudath Israel workers, the Yemenite Union, the Union of Sephardi Workers, the Union of General Zionist Workers, and the Revisionist Union. These competed with one another, and there was incessant strife between them. The Zionist Executive Council devoted a number of meetings to a discussion of this serious problem, which greatly impeded our work in the Yishuv, until finally a proposal was worked out for the establishment of Labor Exchanges to be recognized by all workers' unions and employers, on the basis of a collective agreement between workers' representatives and employers in Palestine. The Zionist Council at its meeting in Jerusalem on April 15, 1934, resolved that:

"In order to consolidate Jewish labor in Palestine in all branches of Jewish economy, both in town and country; in order to ensure equitable conditions of work for the Jewish laborer with due consideration of the needs of a developing economy; in order to establish an adequate output of work; and in order to ensure a just distribution of work among all Jewish workers in the country and the averting of disputes,

competition and strife between the various workers' organizations; the Zionist Executive Council finds it imperative to establish a system of labor agreements in Palestine which shall lay down relations between employers and employees on the one hand, and between the workers among themselves on the other. The following principles shall serve as the basis of agreements between workers and employers:

- a) Equitable conditions for workers and adequate output in work;
- b) Settlement of disputes by arbitration which shall be binding upon all parties during the term of the agreement;
- c) The establishment of labor exchanges by both workers and employers who shall participate in the exchanges as complete units conducting their affairs independently, according to the resolution adopted by each unit individually."

The implementation of these resolutions adopted by the General Zionist Council was postponed as a result of disagreement between the Zionist parties in regard to details. The Zionist Council therefore charged the Executive with the task of speeding up these agreements and instructed all members of the Zionist Organization to assist in carrying them out.

In regard to regulating labor matters among the various labor organizations the Zionist Council laid down the following principles:

- (a) A just distribution of work among all Jewish workers according to fixed priority arrangements, discounting differences of outlook and party allegiance;
- (b) Insistence on equitable conditions of work;
- (c) The establishment of General Labor Exchanges in all places where joint labor exchanges were not in existence.

A committee was set up composed of representatives of all Zionist parties to lay down the principles of orderly labor relations and the establishment of labor exchanges. In the year 19337 the Labor Department succeeded in bringing the members of this committee to work out joint proposals for regulating labor affairs on the basis of the resolutions of the General Zionist Council, but could not carry the proposals into effect because of the opposition of the members of the various parties. Meanwhile, disputes between the workers themselves on the question of distribution of work grew in intensity, so that the Department of Labor felt in duty bound to carry the scheme into effect, stage by stage. The Department concentrated all its efforts on establishing General Labor Exchanges, embracing all workers' organizations and unorganized workers, where work should be allocated to all workers according to priority of registration without regard to party affiliation. Negotiations with the representatives were renewed, but numerous difficulties were encountered arising from the apprehensions of minority organizations that they might be discriminated against by members of the General Federation of Jewish Labor, who constitute the majority in the workers' community. After the General Federation of Jewish Labor had agreed that the Employment Committee of the Exchange should be composed half of representatives of the Histadrut and half of representatives of minority organizations, and that in the event of differences of opinion arising in regard to distribution of work, the decision should be left to the representatives of the Department of Labor, these apprehensions were allayed. All organizations then decided upon the establishment of Labor Exchanges on the basis of priority of registration, and the Department of Labor with the cooperation of representatives of the various organizations worked out rules and regulations governing these Exchanges, which provided for supervision of all its activities by the Department of Labor.

The resolutions of the Labor Organizations were passed in July 1939 and confirmed by the Executive of the Jewish Agency. For the time being the labor organizations agreed to the establishment of General Labor Exchanges in the settlements, but the Jewish Agency saw the need of expanding these offices to include the towns, where the industries are concentrated, in order that all workers without regard to their affiliation might benefit. With that end in view the Jewish Agency Executive passed the following resolution before leaving for the 21<sup>st</sup> Zionist Congress:

“Immediately after the 21<sup>st</sup> Zionist Congress, the Executive shall convene a meeting of all workers’ organizations to regulate relations between workers in industries in Palestine, so as to ensure equitable distribution of work in factories for all workers undertaking to abide by the labor regulations having due regard to the rights of the trade-unions. The Executive shall use its best endeavors to carry this resolution into effect at the earliest possible moment.”

The 21<sup>st</sup> Zionist Congress, which was held several weeks after the Agency Executive has passed this resolution, confirmed the establishment of General Labor Exchanges in the following terms:

“The Zionist Congress has heard with satisfaction of the success of the negotiations conducted between workers’ organizations in Palestine, who accepted the jurisdiction of the Zionist Organization and its institutions – negotiations conducted through the active mediation of the Labor Exchanges in the settlements on the basis of personal registration of the workers and the equitable distribution of work in agriculture, building and public works. The Congress confirms the outcome of the negotiations and the establishment of the Labor Exchanges, and charges the Zionist Executive to lend them both material and moral assistance.”

But despite the fact that the resolution in regard to the establishment of General Labor Exchanges had been passed with the agreement of representatives of all labor organizations, the Department of Labor met many difficulties in its efforts to carry the resolution into effect. These difficulties arose from the habit of all labor organizations to regard the supply of work to any laborer as a means of gaining his membership. After many attempts and with the assistance of the responsible representatives of workers’ community, who saw no means of averting labor disputes among the workers themselves except by the establishment of General Labor Exchanges, the Department of Labor succeeded in overcoming these difficulties.

### *The General Labor Exchanges in the Settlements*

The Exchanges were opened in the year 1939-40 at the beginning of the serious crisis in citriculture. Thanks to this unification of workers of all shades of opinion and party allegiance, serious disputes about work were averted among the workers themselves. The General Labor Exchanges centralized the work in the citrus groves, and with the cooperation of the Labor Department the initiative in inducing local and municipal bodies to organize public works for the purpose of alleviating the workers’ hardships. During the period covered by this report, the sum of LP.626,000 passed through the General Labor Exchanges for temporary work in which workers were employed in citrus groves, etc.

### *General Labor Exchanges in the Towns*

While the Department was busy establishing the General Labor Exchanges in the settlements, negotiations were conducted with the representatives of the workers' organizations for the setting up of Labor Exchanges in the towns. It was most difficult to find a suitable organizational form to enable the General Labor Exchanges to send workers, irrespective of party allegiance, to all industrial undertakings, and at the same time not to infringe the trade union rights of the General Federation of Jewish Labor. After lengthy consultations, all workers' organizations (apart from the Revisionists) came to a mutual agreement in regard to the allocation of workers to industrial undertakings, and in the year 1942-43 the Department was able to set up General Labor Exchanges in the towns as well. In the cities as well as in the settlements, it was necessary to bring about a spirit of harmony and cooperation. Considerable headway has been made in this direction. The General Labor Exchanges have succeeded in creating for themselves an honorable place among all sections of the community in Palestine, while the separate labor offices have ceased to exist.

The General Labor Exchanges in the towns, like those in the settlements, began to counteract the partial unemployment that existed in various fields, and at the end of the war they began once more to gain a fitting place for the Jewish worker in works of economic, communal and political importance. Thus the Labor Exchange in Haifa is at present striving to secure the share due to Jewish workers in the Haifa port. The Labor Exchange in Jerusalem is doing everything in its power to make progress in the field of Jewish stone supply. With the resumption of immigration, the various Labor Exchanges did all they could to ensure the absorption of the new immigrants in various branches of work. Every Labor Exchange has a special committee dealing with new immigrants, and according to the regulations governing the Labor Exchanges, passed with the general approval of the workers' community, new immigrants are entitled to work without waiting till their turn comes round in the usual way.

### *Workers and Employers*

When the first phase in the program of the General Zionist Council was completed, namely the regulating of labor relations in the Yishuv, and the General Labor Exchanges entered upon their activities, the Department of Labor began the second phase, namely the establishment of satisfactory relations between workers and employers. Relations between these two parties had deteriorated and urgent steps were required to improve the situation. The need for extending the activities of the Labor Exchanges made it necessary for the Department of Labor to seek some common ground, so as to induce employers to take on their workers through the Labor Exchanges only. The Department of Labor organized a meeting between workers' representatives and the Manufacturers' Association and endeavored to bring about cooperation in this sphere. The workers maintained that they were prepared to co-opt employers on the Labor Exchange boards only after the signature of a collective agreement between the Manufacturers' Association and workers' representatives in regard to conditions of work. The negotiations reached a deadlock in the course of the discussion on the details of the

agreement. It was then that the Department of Labor made the suggestion that permanent joint committees to be attached to the General Labor Exchanges. After full consideration, the Executive Council of the General Federation of Jewish Labor decided to collaborate with the employers in the coordination of labor affairs that affected both parties without making this collaboration conditional on the signing of a collective agreement. Negotiations are now being conducted with the Manufacturers' Association, and there is reason to believe that the cooperation of employers with the General Labor Exchanges will soon be brought about.

### *Palestine Government Department of Labor*

The Government Department of Labor which was established in 1942, after the setting up of the General Labor Exchanges for Jewish workers, planned to open Government labor exchanges which would supply work to Jewish workers as well as others. The question was discussed between representatives of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem and the Secretariat of the Palestine Government, and after a thorough examination of the matter in consultation with the Director of the government Department of Labor, the latter recognized the vital importance of the existence of General Labor Exchanges for workers of the Yishuv, but demanded the cooperation of employers in all matters concerning them.

### *Share in the Maintenance of the Exchanges*

Before the establishment of the General Labor Exchanges there existed, as has been mentioned, separate labor offices maintained by seven workers' organizations. These offices belonged to organizations which from time to time received financial assistance from the Jewish Agency in the form of grants to their labor centers, if they were within the framework of the Zionist Organization. When the General Labor Exchanges were opened the Jewish Agency withdrew its partial support of the labor centers of the separate organizations, but undertook to defray part of the cost of the maintenance of the Exchanges.

## RELATIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS

For years now the Department of Labor has endeavored to bring about collective agreements between employers and workers in order to regulate labor relations in Palestine. Unfortunately these efforts have not proved successful.

### *Work among Citrus Planters*

During the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the war, negotiations were conducted between the representatives of the General Federation of Jewish Labor and the Citrus Growers' Organization in the matter of regulating Jewish labor in the citrus branch. The negotiations were conducted under difficult conditions at a time when the position of the Jewish laborer in citriculture was precarious, and general conditions poor. Nevertheless, an atmosphere of good will was created for the purpose of achieving

cooperation for the maintenance of Jewish labor in citriculture. The agreement had as its basis the principle of Jewish labor in citriculture and the employment of workers through the General Labor Exchanges to be opened under the supervision of the Jewish Agency. Unfortunately, the war put an end to the chances of carrying this agreement into effect, for the citrus industry was hard hit, and the workers went to seek employment elsewhere. Only few laborers continued to work in groves whose owners regarded it as a national duty to maintain the principle of Jewish labor regardless of the serious financial situation in which they found themselves. These were farmers in settlements of the Sharon, and some in settlements in Samaria. In order to regulate relations between workers and growers in these colonies, joint local committees were set up for the purpose of averting disputes over low output and wages. Thus a joint central committee was set up, which has the cooperation of representatives of the growers, the workers and the Department of Labor. The Department did not succeed in setting up such joint committees in other colonies in view of the crisis in citriculture and the refusal of some of the growers to attempt to maintain Jewish labor in their groves.

At the end of the war, when it became possible to resume citrus exports to England and other European countries, the Department of Labor renewed its attempts to regulate the affairs of Jewish labor. For the time being, the Jewish Farmers' Federation is inclined to maintain Jewish work as far as the packing of the fruit is concerned, and for that purpose agreements have been reached between the Jewish Farmers' Federation and the combined Jewish Packers' Organization. As regards other work in citriculture, conditions are still uncertain, and the Department of Labor is doing its best to bring about the cooperation of both sides in order to consolidate Jewish labor in the citrus industry. There are many difficulties in the way, but it is to be hoped that the two sides will show understanding and readiness to overcome them.

### *Industry*

Jewish industry was in great difficulties at the outbreak of war. The Department succeeded to some extent in settling the wage problems that cropped up in the various branches of industry. The Department of Labor played a decisive part in cases where the two sides could not agree, and it devoted much time and effort to bringing about agreement.

Conditions changed fundamentally during the second phase of the war. Existing industries were expanded, and an appreciable number of new industries were set up, so that the number of Jewish workers in industry increased. There were not 50,000 Jewish workers in industry as against 25,000 at the beginning of the war. The prices of essential commodities rose to alarming heights, and it was necessary to raise the wages of industrial workers. Since the Army was the largest consumer in many branches of industry, the Jewish Agency found it imperative, under Government auspices, to contact the military authorities and to settle the wages of industrial workers on the basis of a cost-of-living index fixed by the Statistical Department of the Government, in constant consultation with the Department of Statistics of the Jewish Agency. Thus a solution was found for regulating cost-of-living allowances for industrial workers generally, and

serious disputes between employers and workers were averted. However, even after the introduction of cost-of-living allowances for industrial workers, numerous disputes arose, and the Department of Labor had to mediate in many cases to avert strikes. During the war the Department of Labor issued 993 rulings in disputes between workers and employers, with the agreement of both parties. A study of these rulings, which include a description of the background of each dispute, demonstrates the urgency of the problem of industrial arbitration.

The following tables present a picture of the Department's activities in the settlement of disputes by arbitration, from 1939 until September 1946. The tables do not, however, include the Department's efforts at mediation before the outbreak of disputes. These efforts produced no results binding on the parties, but had considerable importance in narrowing the field of conflict and speeding up the process of coming to an agreement.

#### *RULINGS ACCORDING TO BRANCHES AND DISPUTED QUESTIONS*

<i>Dispute</i>	<i>Industry</i>	<i>Building</i>	<i>Commerce &amp; Services</i>	<i>Citrus</i>	<i>Mixed Farming</i>	<i>Public Institutions</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>1. Wages</i>							
a) Basic rate & seniority	80	9	12	21	7	5	134
b) Cost of living	118	.....	7	.....	5	7	137
c) Additional pay (Overtime bonus, etc.)	54	2	9	13	3	9	90
Total	252	11	28	34	15	21	361
<i>2. Hours, Holidays, Social Insurance</i>							
a) Hours, holidays	50	.....	9	4	5	5	73
b) Sick leave, insurance against accidents and illness	44	.....	5	.....	4	2	55
Provident funds	21	1	1	.....	.....	.....	23
Total	115	1	15	4	9	7	151
<i>3. Employment &amp; dismissal, status, labor relations, etc</i>							
a) Employment and dismissal	49	15	10	14	6	13	107
b) Notice of dismissal, compensation	70	.....	8	3	5	4	87
c) Interruptions in work, transfers	25	4	2	8	1	.....	40
d) Tenure, grading, productivity, apprentices	53	1	6	8	6	5	79
e) Worker representation, agreements, labor relations, disputes and their outcome	116	7	17	11	9	8	168
Total	313	27	43	44	24	30	481
Grand Total	680	39	86	82	48	58	993

The table below classifies the rulings according to the subjects of dispute in each year, and demonstrates the development of the Department's activities in this field.

## 2. RULINGS CLASSIFIED BY YEAR AND SUBJECT OF DISPUTE

<i>Dispute</i>	<i>Until 1939</i>	<i>1940</i>	<i>1941</i>	<i>1942</i>	<i>1943</i>	<i>1944</i>	<i>1945</i>	<i>1946 Jan. Sept</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>1. Wages</i>									
a) Basic rate and seniority	5	16	18	29*	17	10	27	12	134
b) Cost of living	2	36	25	40*	19	5	8	2	137
c) Additional pay (Overtime, bonus, etc)	4	15	13	6	6	5	24	27	90
Total	11	67	56	75	42	20	59	31	361
<i>2. Hours, Holidays, Social Insurance</i>									
a) Hours, holidays	3	7	6	6	5	7	21	18	73
b) Sick leave, insurance against accidents and illness	2	.....	2	5	6	9	19	12	55
c) Provident Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	4	9	8	23
Total	5	7	8	11	13	20	49	38	151
<i>3. Employment and dismissal, status, labor relations, etc.</i>									
a) Employment & dismissal	20	13	15	8	8	13	13	17	107
b) Notice of dismissal, compensation, etc.	1	5	6	7	10	8	25	25	87
c) Interruptions of work, transfers, etc.	8	7	3	2	1	2	11	6	40
d) Tenure, grades, productivity, apprentices	5	8	9	7	12	10	16	12	79
e) Worker representation, agreements, labor relations, disputes and their outcome	14	22	17	12	15	14	41	33	168
Total	48	55	50	36	46	47	106	93	481
Grand Total	64	129	114	122	101	87	214	162	993

Despite the considerable efforts of the Labor Department in averting labor disputes or bringing them to an end, it cannot be claimed that the work was wholly successful. The Department is convinced that if the disputing parties had taken advantage of the Department's mediation before the declaration of strikes or lockouts, numerous disputes and strikes which caused serious economic injury to both sides would have been averted.

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\* Wage disputes reached a maximum in 1942 when the rise in the cost of living frequently outstripped the wage plus the cost-of-living allowance levels.



## A SUMMING UP

During this period the Labor Department was faced with difficult problems in the field of expanding labor markets, training of workers, and regulating conditions of work. The Department continued in its activities along the lines laid down and approved by the Zionist General Council and the Congresses. In the sphere of expanding labor possibilities and training of workers, closer cooperation was brought about with the various labor organizations, particularly the General Federation of Jewish Labor, as well as various institutions outside the Zionist Organization, which devoted both efforts and funds for assistance to workers. In such activities we have been able to set up permanent instruments, companies equipped with sufficient capital and working along commercial lines. Similarly, in the field of citriculture, the Hakal Company has been set up, which endeavors to concentrate all work in the various branches of industry. This company, which is responsible to the citrus grower as to the quality of its work, fixes the wages of the laborer and makes all arrangements in regard to working conditions. It is in a position to improve work by mechanized means, a thing which is beyond the scope of the individual grower and certainly not within the reach of single workers or even groups of laborers. The company prevents fluctuations in conditions of work and introduces some measure of permanence in the relations between employer and employee. If the company succeeds in taking root in the sphere of agricultural work generally, and citrus cultivation in particular, it will greatly facilitate the adaptation of the laborer to his work and will relieve employers of the heavy burdens imposed upon them by a frequent change of workers and the introduction of inexperienced labor who learn their trade on the job. By such means we will draw nearer the objective having recourse to the ordinary means which are sometimes more injurious than beneficial.

The Labor Exchanges withstood all trials successfully during this period. The hopes that we have placed on them were generally materialized. Differences of opinion between the workers themselves over places of employment entirely disappeared. The whole of the working community, in both town and country, reaps benefits from these Labor Exchanges which have grown both in number and in scope, so that there is hardly a settlement in the country where any appreciable amount of hired labor is required where no General Labor Exchange is in operation. With the hoped for affiliation of the Federation of National Workers there will be not a single laborer in the country unaffiliated to the network of Labor Exchanges, and if the negotiations now being conducted with the Manufacturers' Association in regard to their collaboration in the scheme are crowned with success – and there is no reason why they should not – the entire structure will have been completed and we may say that we have succeeded in solving the most difficult and complex problems in our economic life to the satisfaction of both employers and employees and to the benefit of the Yishuv.

The Government Department of Labor also, during the period covered by this report, decided to set up General Labor Exchanges under its direction. It was Government's desire that the Labor Exchanges to be established should serve both Jewish and Arab workers. It was not difficult, however, to convince Government of the un-

workability of the project in view of the decisive differences in wages and standards of living between the Jewish and Arab workers. In our conversations with Government we also stressed the tasks devolving upon our Labor Exchanges, which were different from the ordinary duties incumbent upon Labor Exchanges in other countries, because, while the latter limit themselves to sending laborers according to the demand of employers, our Exchanges are charged with the duty of allocating work in periods of unemployment in strict conformity with the principle of avoiding that some laborers should be fully employed and others have no work at all. The heads of the Government's Department of Labor agreed that it was impossible to destroy the structure that we have succeeded in setting up and were prepared to recognize our Labor Exchanges on condition that we obtained the collaboration also of employers – a collaboration which we have long since endeavored to bring about. But even after such collaboration was achieved, the Government Labor Exchanges did not agree to forego their desire to serve also Jewish laborers whenever they should apply to them. In their opinion the principle of equality of rights necessitates the fact that Government Labor Exchanges be open also to Jews as Palestinian citizens, and they did not agree to our proposal that in such cases Jewish laborers be directed to the Jewish Labor Exchanges. Meanwhile negotiations in this respect have ceased although it cannot be said with certainty that they will not arise once more in one form or another and that we will not meet difficulties in this direction.

War conditions led to the promulgation of a law in regard to compulsory arbitration in labor disputes in all enterprises working for the war effort. The Government department of Labor accepted our mediation and awards in all disputes settled by us, but in disputes where either one or both parties refused to go to arbitration, they were settled by the Government Department of Labor which was vested with coercive powers. During the period covered by the report, we endeavored to bring about an agreement between manufacturers and workers that all disputes be clarified, if not decided, by arbitration, but our efforts have proved unsuccessful. Employers this time demanded the introduction of compulsory arbitration, while the workers opposed all infringement of their freedom of decision in regard to the settlement of disputes. During the period of prosperity on the labor market the workers knew that the pressure of strikes would generally lead to an acceptance of their demands, a thing which they could not always achieve through arbitration. This fact seriously impeded the introduction of compulsory mediation in labor relations. Generally, both sides welcomed the mediation of the Labor Department to whom they brought their disputes for arbitration. The workers, however, refused to accept the Department's decisions unconditionally. That did not in any way show a lack of confidence in the Department but they had the feeling that if they exerted pressure they would achieve more. Sometimes this policy proved true. In some instances, however, it brought disappointment and disputes were brought up for decision by arbitration after prolonged and unnecessary strikes.

The period of prosperity is now over. In ordinary times, and particularly now when crisis threatens, the question of compulsory mediation and arbitration has once more become pressing. The time has come to carry out the plan for a collective agreement in industry which has frequently been discussed during the past seven years. The principle of compulsory mediation and arbitration must be the foundation of such

agreement. It is the intention of the Department to present a proposal on these lines to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Zionist Congress.

## POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

The period which has elapsed since the last Zionist Congress has been the most tragic in Jewish history. It has also been the most disastrous in the annals of modern Zionism. The last Congress met under the shadow of the Palestine White Paper of May, 1939. It broke up on the eve of the Second World War. Ominous anticipations filled the hearts of the delegates as they sped home, yet none could have foreseen the ghastly catastrophe that was to follow. In the course of a few years the bulk of European Jewry which, for fifteen centuries had been the principal center of Jewish life, was wiped out of existence. Entire communities with their ancient traditions, their synagogues, schools, colleges, libraries and communal institutions were destroyed overnight as by a tornado. A Satanic design to eradicate Jewish life for ever from the face of Europe led to the wholesale extermination of Jewish children. Of an estimated total of several million Jewish children on the continent of Europe before the War, only some tens of thousands are alive today.

In this colossal tragedy, the Palestine White Paper played a significant part. It is not suggested that all the 6,000,000 Jews who were killed in Europe during the war could have been saved if there had been no White Paper, but there can be no doubt that many thousands of those who perished in the gas chambers of Poland would be alive today if immigration to Palestine had been regulated, as formerly, by the principle of the country's absorptive capacity and had not been subjected to the arbitrary numerical restrictions imposed under the White Paper. The German occupation of Poland during the first few weeks of the war immediately placed the largest Jewish community of Europe at the mercy of the most fanatical Jew-haters the world has ever seen. It was clear from the beginning that the position of the Polish Jews under a Nazi military occupation would be precarious in the extreme. But so far from this inspiring a more humane administration of the Palestine immigration laws, the fact that the country had come under enemy occupation was used as a pretext for an even more rigorous application of the procrustean restrictions of the White Paper. The specious argument was used that for reasons of security no Jew who had been in an area under enemy occupation could be admitted to Palestine, as he might conceivably be a Nazi agent. On this preposterous plea, the Jews of one country after another, as the area of German occupation extended, were adjudged to be ineligible for the grant even of such limited numbers of certificates as were still available under the White Paper. The evident policy of the Government was to dole out the available remainder of the 75,000 certificates authorized by the White Paper as slowly as possible so as to postpone a reconsideration of the immigration question until after the war. In this it succeeded – at the price of untold Jewish lives.

There was no change even when the terrible story of the wholesale extermination of the Jews of Europe became known. The ruthless application of the White Paper policy was thrown into striking relief by the cruel handling of the refugee boats that sought admission to Palestine. The foundering of the S.S. Atlantic refugees to Mauritius and the sinking of the Struma illustrate the working of the policy. While the German machinery of homicide was wiping out one Jewish community after another, the Palestine White Paper policy effectively bolted the door against any trying to escape.

Nor was the ruthless effect of the policy limited to the sphere of immigration. In the very midst of the war, the Government, in open defiance of the Mandate which enjoined the Mandatory to encourage close settlement by Jews on the land, enacted the Land Transfers Regulations which restricted the area of free Jewish settlement to 5% of the country. The enactment which introduced a statutory discrimination against Jews, gave rise to embittered demonstrations which were repressed by military force with ruthless cruelty.

It was in the atmosphere engendered by these policies and aggravated month after month by the news of the Jewish catastrophe in Europe that the Jewish Agency had to undertake the task of mobilizing the Jews of Palestine for the military and economic war effort, to enlist volunteers for service with the British Forces, for commando work on land and sea and for post-occupational activities against the enemy. The response of the Yishuv forms a page of honor in the history of the Jewish People. Thousands of Jewish men and women left their settlements and workshops for active service, while Jewish agriculture and industry geared themselves to meet the endless demands of the military forces fighting in the Middle East. Little credit was given to Jewish services, and it was only after endless efforts and bitter disappointments that in the last stages of the war they received national recognition.

In the furnace of these trials the Yishuv grew to manhood. The White paper had undermined the framework of the Mandatory regime. It was clear that after the war a new political order would have to be created. There could be no return to the old tutelage, to the system of restrictions and frustrations which had held up the growth of the National Home and the development of the country and which had in the end closed the gates of Palestine at the most critical period of Jewish history. If the resources of the country were to be adequately developed with a view to the expansion of its absorptive capacity and the improvement of the lot of all its inhabitants, effective control of those resources must be vested in those who had shown themselves best qualified to undertake this creative task. If the rights and interests of the National Home and of the Jewish People were to be adequately protected in the new international order political freedom and international recognition must be secured for the great effort. If friendship and cooperation with the surrounding Arab world was to be attained, equality of status for the Jewish People must first be secured. Such were the considerations which led to the adoption, in the middle of the war, of the "Biltmore Program" for the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth. It was first accepted by the major Zionist organizations in the Diaspora and adopted as the official program of the Zionist Movement at the first

international Zionist Conference held in London after the conclusion of hostilities in the summer of 1945.

The end of the war marked the opening of a new chapter. As the waters of the Great Flood receded, they revealed a scene of unparalleled ruin. The old landmarks of Jewish life had been destroyed beyond repair. From the ruins of the Polish ghettos, scores of emaciated men and women crept out, brands saved as by a miracle from the fire. In the West, as the doors of the concentration camps were pushed open by the liberation armies, ghastly specters of human beings emerged. As information from all parts of liberated Europe accumulated, it became evident that despite the efficiency of the Nazi machinery of extermination a million and a quarter Jews had survived. Their rescue became the supreme task of Jews in all free lands. The Yishuv, whose sons had, while fighting in Europe, done yeoman service in rescuing Jews from death and starvation, felt itself called upon to throw all its resources into the great effort of salvation. Plans were elaborated for the immediate reception and absorption of 100,000 refugees, among them 20,000 children, and thousands of relatives of Palestinian residents. In June, 1945, a month after the German surrender, the Jewish Agency addressed an elaborate communication to the Government of Palestine requesting the immediate admission of 100,000 immigrants and submitting detailed plans for their accommodation and absorption. The plea was to receive powerful endorsement in a report sent three months later to President Truman by his special emissary to liberated Europe. On the strength of this report, President Truman in September, 1945, addressed an urgent plea to the British Prime Minister for the immediate admission of 100,000 Jews to Palestine. But no action followed. The White Paper was maintained in force. The Jewish survivors remained in the concentration camps. Emaciated by long suffering and starvation, and denied all prospects of escape to Palestine, thousands of their number died week after week. Jews who had miraculously escaped the Nazi slaughter in Poland were compelled to remain in the Polish townlets where they became easy victims of Polish anti-Semitic bands bent on completing the Nazi plan of extermination.

A wave of bitter resentment such as Jewish history has not known in centuries ran through the Jewish people. It reached its peak in the Yishuv. Was it conceivable that after all that these Jews had gone through under the Nazi terror, after the slaughter of 6,000,000 of their people, no mercy would be shown even to the remainder now that the great tyranny had sunk in the dust? When it became clear that pleas for mercy and reasoned arguments met with no response, despair set in. It found expression in acts of violence against British police and Government offices. They were condemned by the Jewish public bodies and by the Yishuv generally, but the bitterness which had given rise to them was shared by all. When it was realized that the new Labor Government, in spite of the innumerable statements and declarations made by Labor spokesmen in previous years, stood by the White Paper policy, hopelessness became general. Mr. Bevin's statement of November 1945 implied the complete abandonment of the National Home policy and the acceptance by the British Government of assimilation and dispersal as the effective solution of the Jewish problem. In reply to President Truman's plea, the British Government proposed the sending out of an Anglo-American Committee to probe into the problems both of Palestine and of the Jewish displaced persons in Europe. A lengthy

inquiry followed. The Jewish case was presented to the Commission in Washington, London, Europe and Palestine. The committee brought back a report, the most urgent recommendation of which was one for the admission to Palestine with the least possible delay of 100,000 Jewish survivors. Again no action was taken. A new "solution," representing a limited scheme of cantonisation within the existing framework of the British Crown Colony regime, was elaborated and accepted by a group of British and American experts, which the American Government declined to endorse. The further delays and disappointments and the evident unwillingness of the British Government to take any effective action for solving the problem of the Jewish refugees in Europe and implementing the National Home policy to which they were so strongly pledged, produced further bitterness and violence in Palestine.

The Government's response to the Yishuv's bitterness was the enactment of further draconic emergency regulations, followed by the arrest of leading members of the Jewish Agency Executive and of the Yishuv, by the invasion of the Jewish Agency offices and the impounding of its archives, and by military searches all over the country, particularly in the Jewish agricultural settlements, which were conducted with unprecedented brutality. This was followed by a decision of the Government to deport the inmates of further Jewish refugee boats approaching the coast of Palestine. It was subsequently translated into action and shiploads of refugees were, after a fierce struggle, transferred to Cyprus and interned there.