Anti-Zionism in a Key United States Diplomat: Loy Henderson at the End of World War II

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In the period between the end of World War II and the establishment of the State of Israel, partisans on both sides of the Jewish State controversy used words as weapons; lasting injuries were inflicted on reputations, some of them richly deserved. At a remove of over a quarter-century, it is now possible to reexamine that damage and either confirm or correct the judgments.

One case ready for such reexamination is the issue of the United States State Department’s alleged anti-Semitism. Many of those who dealt with the world Jewish problem at the end of World War

1 My sincere thanks to Dr. Jere Bacharach, Professor of Near Eastern History, University of Washington in Seattle, and to Dr. Selig Adler, Distinguished Service Professor of United States History, State University of New York at Buffalo, for their kindness in reading and commenting on this study. The conclusions reached here are in no way their responsibility.

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2 Harry S. Truman, Memoirs by Harry S. Truman, Volume 2: Years of Trial and Hope (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1956), pp. 162-64. Truman states that he considered anti-Semitism part of the reason the Department of State acted as it did. For present purposes, anti-Semitism means opposition to Jews as Jews; it does not have to do with “Semitic” races or language groups. Anti-Zionism is opposition to the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

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II accused the Department of State of acting as if it were committed to anti-Semitic policies. One of the Department's most influential people concerned with postwar Zionist history was Loy Henderson, who as head of the Department of State's Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (NEA) was the single diplomat most centrally involved in questions of Zionism, of Palestine, and of the world Jewish movement that centered on these issues. His opinions were the most decisive expression of Departmental policy on a day-to-day basis. Henderson's own views on these issues in this period are not distinguishable from his official views, the views of the NEA office, except in that he held them for years prior to his elevation to chief. He was admittedly an archenemy of Zionist aspirations for a Jewish state, and when he reached the height of his powers in 1946-1947, he seemed a major impediment to the Zionist plans for saving the Jewish refugees in the European camps from further suffering by allowing them to go to Palestine.

At that time, there were nearly 100,000 Jewish refugees in the camps administered by the victorious Allies in Europe. The overwhelming majority of those surveyed were clamoring for admission to Palestine. Even after the cessation of hostilities in Europe, reports were still coming in about fresh pogroms and atrocities against Jews surviving in Poland and in less important population centers. Observers such as Earl Harrison pointed out that it was impossible for many of the 100,000 to return to their former homes. The Department of State confessed in a secret memorandum that neither the United States nor a large number of countries in the Americas and in Europe would consider accepting them in significant numbers. Adding to this pressure, American and

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British Zionist organizations, liberal groups, humanitarian organizations, church bodies, and individuals of eminence supported the admission of the refugees to Palestine. President Harry S. Truman's own Near Eastern policy was far from clear. Although many Zionist publications understood him to say that he favored a Jewish state in Palestine, it is fairer to say that he advocated without reservations only the admission to Palestine of the 100,000 refugees, but he hedged on whether a formal Jewish state should be established. If the Department of State was indeed anti-Semitic in this foggy period, then that should show up most clearly in the policies and activities of Loy Henderson.

This study therefore examines Henderson's alleged anti-Semitism.

Henderson's career in the Department of State began in 1922. He rose rapidly through service in various posts in the Soviet Union, became Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs in 1938 and Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Iraq in 1943 before being named Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs on April 17, 1945. He is still alive, and several interviews with him are among the sources of this article.

Zionist leaders were attentive to Truman's many public reiterations, when running for Vice-President, of the 1944 Democratic platform plank on Palestine: "We favor . . . the establishment there of a free and democratic Jewish commonwealth," *Palestine Year Book* for 1944, p. 501, entry for October 14-17, 1944. More impressive to the Zionist leadership was an interview with Rabbi Stephen S. Wise on April 20, 1945, at which Truman agreed with Wise that the problem of resettling the Jewish refugees was inextricably linked with the birth of a Jewish state in Palestine. Wise released a statement to the press after the visit, authorized by the White House. See Howard M. Sachar, *The Course of Modern Jewish History* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1958), pp. 470-72; and Robert Silverberg, *If I Forget Thee O Jerusalem: American Jews and the State of Israel* (New York: Pyramid Books, by arrangement with William Morrow and Company, 1970, 1972), pp. 282-84; *The New York Times*, April 21, 1945.

Henderson's Importance

It is curious that Loy Henderson emerges as a more visible figure in the development and expression of Department of State policies on Palestine, on the Jews, and on the Arabs, than even Dean Acheson. Acheson, first as Assistant Secretary and, after 1945, as Under Secretary of State, left in his voluminous records now in the Harry S. Truman Library at Independence, Missouri, surprisingly little evidence of his opinions or involvement in the Palestine problem and in the world Jewish problem, both of which were in perpetual crisis from 1944 onwards. Although Truman considered these to be among the most vexing and pressing problems of his early foreign policy, one would hardly conclude from Acheson's own memoirs, *Present at the Creation*, that they were so impor-

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6 United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1944, Volume 5: The Near East, South Asia, Africa, The Far East* (hereafter *FRUS 1944:5*), pp. 565–617; *FRUS 1945:8*, pp. 691 ff. Henderson's memorandum to Acheson, 867 N. 01/10-145 of October 1, 1945, is clearly the source of Acheson's memorandum briefing Truman, 867N.01/10-245 of October 2, 1945, marked "Top Secret" on the original but not in *FRUS 1945:8*, pp. 751–55. Acheson's memorandum to Truman incorporates as an annex what Acheson calls there a "statement of the basic views of the Department of State," which turns out to be a restatement of Henderson's earlier memorandum without reference to Henderson. This, too, is marked "Top Secret" on the original, but not in *FRUS*.

For the Acheson material see Dean Acheson MSS Collection, Papers 1933–1971, papers of 1944–1947, in the Harry S. Truman Library.


10 Acheson devotes to the total Palestine problem seventeen pages in a book of nearly 1,000 pages. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York: W. W. Norton, Signet Reprint, 1969), pp. 231–32. For Acheson's assessment of Truman's motives, see p. 240: "When President Truman engaged in a political maneuver, he never disguised his undiluted pleasure in it....But he never took or refused to take a step in our foreign relations to benefit his or his party's fortunes. This he would have regarded as false to the great office that he venerated and held in sacred trust."

Acheson hints on p. 232 at the touchiness of the subject in a way that helps explain why he put so much of it onto Henderson and why he tried to protect Henderson: "By the time I took up my duties as Under Secretary in September 1945 it was clear that the President himself was directing policy on Palestine. I detected no inclination on the part of Secretary [James F.] Byrnes to project himself into this issue, but rather a tendency to leave supervision of the Department's work on it more and more to me."
tant. Acheson's extraordinary restraint makes it seem as if he as an individual and the Department of State as an agency had little contact with or interest in this area. That is not because Acheson had no opinions. He wrote in 1969, "I did not share [in 1945-1948] the President's views on the Palestine solution to the pressing and desperate plight of great numbers of displaced Jews in Eastern Europe"; further, "to transform the country [of Palestine] into a Jewish state capable of receiving a million or more immigrants would vastly exacerbate the political problem and imperil not only American but all Western interests in the Near East." But the problem was readily manageable, Acheson suggests. "Despite my own views, I did my best loyalty to see that the President's wishes were understood and carried out."

Acheson in his papers and memoirs contributes little new information beyond the important note that Truman ignored domestic considerations such as the Jewish vote when making his determinations in this field of foreign policy, an approach which Acheson considers a compliment to Truman. (John Snetsinger's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, in some ways a more revealing work than his book, presents evidence of Truman's sensitivity to domestic political pressures which contradicts Acheson.) He, like Acheson, considers Truman's alleged compliance with popular opinion uncomplimentary to the President. Both writers seem to be guided by the idea that foreign affairs should be handled without consideration of other affairs. Snetsinger in his dissertation, and again in his book, stumbles methodologically over the fact that presenting evidence of domestic pro-Zionist pressure is not the same as showing how influential that pressure was in determining the actions of the President.

Loy Henderson believes that he understands why Acheson kept himself so distant from this matter: "Dean was a man of great warmth. He kept largely aloof from the Palestine issue one way or the other for the reason that he cherished a deep friendship with [Supreme Court Justice] Felix Frankfurter, who had been his teacher, and he thought that if he came out on the Palestine mat-

ter—Frankfurter was a most devoted, ardent Zionist—it would have broken the old man’s heart.”12 For that reason, Henderson believes, Acheson “ducked” the issue, and it was Acheson’s successor, Under Secretary Robert Lovett, and Henderson who dealt with it.13

Largely because of Acheson’s reticence, much of the burden of representing the Department of State’s thinking at the end of the War, both on the Jewish refugee problem and on the related Palestine problem, fell to Henderson. In 1945 and 1946, a large group of United States Department of State Near East experts shared certain broad opinions about the Jewish-Palestine problem: Pinkney Tuck, the Minister in Jerusalem; Gordon Merriam, in Near Eastern Affairs; George Wadsworth, the Minister in Cairo; Evan Wilson, a rising star in the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs; Dean Acheson, Under Secretary of State until June, 1947; and Henderson, who was involved first as Ambassador in Baghdad and later in his capacity as Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs. Because the Palestine problem was important to the political leaders in Iraq, and because Henderson was a man who found it irresistible to respond to what he considered a moral and political challenge, Henderson came to stand squarely in the road of the Zionists’ hopes and dreams. Down this road came a mixed multitude of people, Jews and Gentiles of the left and of the right. The Zionists—an umbrella term which covered adherents of many programs, some of them mutually exclusive—spent an inordinate amount of time fighting

12 A. H. Podet, Oral History Interview with Loy Henderson, Former Director, NEA (Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs), United States Department of State, Washington, D.C., August 5, 1975, 13 sections, section 7. (Hereafter cited as Henderson Interview, section 7.) Transcripts are deposited at the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio 45220. Most quotations from Henderson have at his request been rendered indirectly.

A hint of Acheson’s motive is in Acheson’s comment: “‘From Justice Brandeis, whom I revered, and from Felix Frankfurter, my intimate friend, I had learned to understand, but not to share the mystical emotion of the Jews to return to Palestine and end the Diaspora. In urging Zionism as an American governmental policy they had allowed, so I thought, their emotion to obscure the totality of American interests. Zionism was the only topic that Felix and I had by mutual consent excluded from our far-ranging daily talks.’” Acheson, op. cit., pp. 231-32.

13 Henderson Interview, Section 7.
 They seemed to be a unified, coordinated movement only to those ignorant of their history or to those who were afraid of them. Henderson was identified, and he identified himself, as their “opponent,” and largely because of his influence the Department of State set its face against the Zionists.

II

Henderson’s Early Background

Henderson’s personal history sheds light on his motivation. His first contacts with Jews and Judaism were very early. His father was studying for the Methodist ministry when Loy Wesley Henderson was born, on June 28, 1892, on his grandfather’s farm in the Ozark foothills three miles from Rogers, Arkansas. “My father did not only study for the ministry. He was a Methodist minister for forty years. He became a preacher when I was two years old. He held his first church in the Ozark Mountains. He was in Little Rock in a church for eight years and then in Ohio for seven years more, partly while I was in high school. He was a pastor when I went to Southwestern College in Kansas.”

The Reverend George Milton Henderson was, in the eyes of two of Henderson’s hostile critics, “a hearty extrovert, a man of broad social consciousness and of virtually no bigotry.”

The picture of a thorough religious education combined with a decided lack of religious prejudice is confirmed by Henderson: “I had no consciousness of Jews one way or the other in Little Rock. I am certain there must have been Jews among my friends then, but I was not conscious of it. As a religious influence, my father


15 A. H. Podet, Oral History Interview with Loy Henderson, Former Director, NE (Near Eastern and African Affairs) Office, Department of State, Washington, D.C., January 22, 1976, 4 sections, section 1. (Hereafter cited as Henderson Interview 2, section 1.)

was extremely broad-minded towards non-Methodists." Even Henderson's enemies suggest that whatever bias they ascribe to the son was not found in the father. Henderson has taken a lifelong pride in this freedom from personal bias, both on his part and on his father's: "When I had a post in Ireland [Vice Consul at Dublin, August 28, 1922, three months after being appointed Vice Consul of Career of Class Three], my responsibility extended to the issuance of visas. A young Roman Catholic priest applied to me for a visa to be sent as a Catholic missionary to Colorado Springs. My father befriended this man and was helpful to him in getting settled. Both my father and I had close relations with rabbis, and had many Jewish friends. I still have."

The major part of Henderson's early training was textual and classical. While his father pursued an active ministerial career, moving from one midwestern town to another, Loy had by the age of thirteen read most of the English classics and was looking forward to studying Latin and Greek. The classics of his youth retained a lifelong attraction for him. The Jews, to young Henderson, were associated with classical antiquity and with the Bible. This very fact may have made it difficult for him later to understand the Palestinian Jewish community as a potent, nationalistic, modern society, as they called themselves, a "nation." It is perhaps for this reason that, as we shall see, when he dealt in his dispatches with the postwar Zionist ambition for a Jewish State in Palestine, he often used phrases like "against the will of the inhabitants" or "against the will of the majority of the inhabitants," referring to the Arab inhabitants and omitting mention of the Palestinian Jewish inhabitants.

Neither he nor his critics can suggest any animus toward the contemporary Jews of his youth that influenced him or that showed in him. It seems reasonable to accept the notion that he was for the most part unaware of them, and that his father's influence in

17 Henderson Interview 2, section 1.

18 Van Devander and Wechsler imply that Henderson's religious background, which his middle name "inevitably suggests," has some sinister influence on his attitudes towards Jews and Palestine. Van Devander and Wechsler, loc. cit. This is directly opposed to Henderson's own view of himself and his motives.

19 Henderson Interview, section 5, and Henderson Interview 2, section 1.

this regard was, if anything, positive. One finds nothing in the Official File on Henderson which would in any way temper the judgment that Henderson demonstrated no personal phobia of Jews.

Loy Henderson had an identical twin, Roy. They had the same tastes in clothing, career ambitions, and girl friends. They also shared the desire, common in identical twins, for recognition as individuals. Decisions of taste—which one would grow a moustache, for example—were often settled by tossing up a coin. They planned to join in a law partnership, and to that end Loy went to Denver University Law School and Roy to Harvard. When World War I broke out in Loy's second year of law school, both brothers volunteered. Roy was injured in officers' training and died shortly after his return to Harvard Law School. But Loy was unable to fulfill the military commitment: he was rejected because of an arm stiffness left over from a fall out of a tree he had suffered as a boy. "I had a problem with my right arm and was unable to serve in the armed forces, but I wanted to do something, so I went with the Red Cross." He got as close to the actual fighting as he could. "My first job when I arrived in Europe in the latter part of 1918 with the American Red Cross was to head a team of Red Cross workers in the Great American military hospitals in Bordeaux who were informing the wounded men of what the United States Government was planning to do to help them. Early in 1919 I went to Berlin to assist in the repatriation of interallied prisoners of war, including the Russian prisoners. Following the Treaty of Versailles I went on an ARC mission to Western Russia and the Baltic States. In the Spring of 1920 I returned to Berlin to head the ARC office there." Shortly thereafter, he took the Foreign Service Examinations.

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tion. It was thus, in part, the death of his brother and the dislocation of their plans, together with the desire to fulfill the military commitment that they had jointly undertaken, that brought Loy into the Red Cross and ultimately into the Eastern European theatre. It was not merely a job or a personal commitment which he could easily rescind, but in a sense it was a broader commitment, a kind of destiny. He was deeply affected by his brother's death, and one suspects that he saw himself at least for a time as doing something for both of them.

When the war ended and Henderson faced the prospect of returning alone in 1921 to the study of the law, he chose at that point to assert his individuality and opted not to finish his degree but to enter the Foreign Service, with which he had enjoyed pleasant contact while he was with the Red Cross.

III
Henderson's Background in the Department of State

How Henderson came to be so deeply involved in Near Eastern affairs is a story important for assessing his motives in the postwar period, both because his intellectual development and character were shaped to an unusual degree by his professional experiences, and also because in the conduct of his diplomatic career prior to 1945-1947, he revealed himself more than many diplomats do.

Henderson spent eighteen years dealing with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe before he came, virtually by accident as he says, into Near Eastern affairs. His earliest international work, which stemmed out of World War I, brought him at the war's end to Eastern Europe. Later he took the Foreign Service Examination, and "at a particular time we [the Department of State] needed someone who had had experience in Eastern Europe. My file showed that I had, so I became involved in Russia and Eastern Europe."\(^\text{23}\)

At first, Henderson was not involved in contention, but appeared to handle his responsibilities without incident. He found it hard, however, to maintain for long an unemotional diplomatic pose. He developed powerful, lifelong moral reactions to what he

\(^{23}\) Henderson Interview, section 5.
saw as Soviet brutality, and in time he shared his views with Pinkney Tuck, George Wadsworth, Wilson, George F. Kennan, Acheson, and Lovett, effectively using the leverage of his firsthand experiences to influence their attitudes. "I saw the purge trials. I saw what the Soviets did in Poland and how they administered Moscow, where I served." Henderson was partly responsible for advising Franklin D. Roosevelt on the Russian borders issue (i.e., Soviet expansionist intentions), and George F. Kennan was trained in his office.24

As Henderson became more influential, and as his alarm over the Soviets was communicated with increasing force, the Moscow authorities felt compelled to dislodge him. Shortly after Henderson was made Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs in March, 1943, Soviet Ambassador Maxim Litvinov complained to the White House and to Under Secretary Welles: "As long as Henderson is sitting on these [Soviet] affairs, good relations will be impeded."22 Such personal recognition was probably rewarding in its way, but in response to that remark, Secretary Cordell Hull had Henderson removed. Litvinov, Henderson confirms, was right. Henderson knew the Soviets, and was able to stop their "shenanigans" more than once. He was concerned about them before the Kennan book came out, i.e., before Kennan's article of 1947.26 The Secretary of State did not want to have one of his own people "hurt" by an action of the Soviet Government, so Henderson was allowed to choose a post to his liking. Most of the posts then open called for a "Class 1" Foreign Service Officer, and Henderson was only a "Class 2" Officer. "Baghdad was open,

24 Ibid. The Roosevelt advice had to do with supposed Soviet territorial ambitions. George F. Kennan, in two articles in Foreign Affairs mentioned later, emerged as one of the first writers of major influence to detail what some considered the goals of the Soviets.

Professor Selig Adler is persuade[d] that a major influence on Henderson was the old and deep Russophobia of Wallace Murray, Henderson's predecessor as Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, and Professor Adler plans to present that case in a forthcoming article. My thanks to him for sharing this information with me. See Organiza-[492]tion of the Department of State (Washington: U.S. G.P.O., April 1, 1945), s.v. NEA.

22 No record of this has been found in the Welles Papers or the Hull Papers. The quotation is from Henderson Interview, section 5.

26 Ibid. See Foreign Affairs, July, 1947. Litvinov had been Commissar of Foreign Affairs when Henderson was on duty in Moscow in 1934–1938.
however, and nobody seemed to want it. I took it, and that is how I became involved in the Near East."

Henderson spent two years in Iraq, from July, 1943, to April, 1945, and then returned to Washington to assume the job at Near Eastern and African Affairs just a few days after President Roosevelt died. "I had no experience in the Near East outside of Iraq," says Henderson of his appointment to chair the Near East Office. But his Soviet training and experiences made him particularly sensitive to certain aspects of the Near East situation. In Henderson’s eyes, "The main problems on that desk were Greece or Greece-and-Turkey, the Truman Doctrine that is, and Palestine. Those two were the main issues, and the Russian situation was a principal consideration. We were concerned that after Greece, Italy would fall."27 His assessment of sinister and well-organized Soviet power about to consummate old Mediterranean ambitions led him to fear that the Soviets looked upon the Near East as a plum ripe for plucking. The Soviets were plotters seeking only an occasion to justify that action. In this view, he agreed totally with the British diplomatic establishment’s traditional assessment of Soviet power and ambition; that is, he looked upon the Islamic Near East as a region that had to be pacified at all costs lest the situation escape Western control and the ensuing disorder give the Soviets their chance to take over.28

The key to the strategy which followed from this view was that the Arabs, more volatile than the Westernized Jews, had to be accommodated, but the Jews could be relied upon to understand the needs of the West.29 The accommodations which seemed impor-

27 Henderson Interview, section 5.

See United States Department of State Memorandum of Conversation (Top Secret), The Great Britain Ambassador, the Right Honorable the Earl of Halifax, with the Secretary of State (Byrnes), October 19, 1945, Palestine file, 867n.01/10-1945, p. 1 (Not printed in Foreign Relations of the United States [FRUS].)

tant to the Arabs were formulated as (1) repudiation of a formal Jewish state, whose establishment most Zionists had adopted as a program platform since 1943; (2) repudiation of the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine; (3) halting of Jewish immigration to Palestine; (4) denial to Jews of the right to buy land in Palestine; and (5) the establishment of an independent, self-governing Arab state in the whole of Palestine between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. The Arab nationalists, like the Zionists, were divided. Almost all of them agreed on the 1st and 2nd demands, most of them supported the 3rd and 4th, and a minority of them insisted on the 5th.30

Henderson never spelled out a positive program of his own for accommodating the Arabs, but simply sounded the alarm against the Zionists. Even in this regard, he limited himself mainly to the anticipated effects of American support for Zionism on American interests in the Near East. He never dealt with the rights and wrongs of the Zionist positions. Had he done so, had he plainly opposed Zionism in so many words, it would have been clearly inappropriate behavior and evidence of lost objectivity in a diplomat not even assigned to Palestine. Within that restriction, however, he stretched to the limit what influence he could wield.

In sum, Henderson came to his Baghdad post, which became one of the most sensitive and influential in the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, without training or experience in the area. He could not even speak the language of the country. But he brought with him an impressive amount of seniority and power; a "fair-haired boy" status within the Department which was augmented by the collision with Litvinov; a very good career record within the Department; and an influential and powerful personality. Henderson also advanced a firm and clear idea of what he felt the dangers were at that time and were henceforth going to be in the Near East, an idea based in large part not on the

30 Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, Transcripts of Testimony, Washington Hearings, London Hearings, Jerusalem Hearings, and Cairo (Mena House) Hearings, 1945–1946. The Transcripts are in the Department of State, "Lot 8," Boxes 1099, 1102, and 1103, now stored in Suitland, Md. An annotated set of transcripts, incomplete, is in the Zionist Archives in New York City. The annotations are by James G. McDonald, later the first United States Ambassador to Israel. The most important Arab testimony is that of Philip Hitti, Jamal al-Husayni, Auni Bey Abdulhadi, and Albert Hourani.
Near East itself but on his experience of eighteen years in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. All of his many secret telegrams to the Secretary of State in the Fall and Winter of 1944–1945 raise the spectre of Communist expansionism: at best, the Zionists were foolishly playing into the hands of the Soviets all unawares; at worst, it was quite possible that they were not unaware.\textsuperscript{31} At one point, Henderson himself became embarrassed that he would be thought to be "flooding the Department" with messages on Zionism and Palestine. After apologizing for sending so many telegrams, he went on to lay out his fears in great detail yet again; he recognized but was not deterred by the idea that "the readers of these telegrams are likely to feel that I am rabidly anti-Zionist."\textsuperscript{32}

"Not only I," says Henderson now, "but everyone in the field felt it was a mistake to encourage problems in the Near East. It was not merely my opinion."\textsuperscript{33} It is clear from the interoffice communications and confidential reports of Pinkney Tuck, George Wadsworth, and other Department of State Near East Officers that what was unique to Henderson was not his opinion but only his willingness to share it. Henderson's opinion may be seen in these forceful presentations of 1944–1945:\textsuperscript{34}

1[After opening with a statement that the Iraqi press is editorially silent on Zionist activities in the United States, Henderson adds:] The Conservative Arab Nationalist an-Nida on October 24 carried a Reuters dispatch reporting a statement by Rabbi Wise [of the American Zionist Emergency Council] to the effect that the President in his capacity as a presidential candidate has promised to support unlimited immigration into Palestine and to send a message to the Forty-Ninth [Forty-Seventh] American Zionist Congress. The pro-

\textsuperscript{31} Henderson to the Secretary of State, 867N.01/11-144, passim. Telegram 238, in FRUS 1944:5, p. 628. See also the firsthand reports of Bevin conversations and the comments on them in Richard Howard Stafford Crossman, A Nation Reborn: A Personal Report on the Roles Played by Weizmann, Bevin and Ben-Gurion in the Story of Israel (New York: Athenaeum Publishers, 1960), pp. 79–81. The same suggestion was written by Crossman in his 1945–1946 private diary, which is at St. Antony's College, Oxford, under embargo: entry of March 14, 1946.

\textsuperscript{32} Henderson to Near Eastern and African Affairs, 867N.01/11-444 of November 4, 1944, in FRUS 1944:5, pp. 631–32.

\textsuperscript{33} Henderson Interview, section 5.

\textsuperscript{34} The Minister in Iraq (Henderson) to the Secretary of State, 867N.01/10-3144 of October 31, 1944, telegram #237, in FRUS 1944:5, pp. 626–27. The following is 867N.01/11-144 of November 1, 1944, telegram #238, in FRUS 1944:5, pp. 628 ff.
royal family *al-Bilad* on October 27 published a collection of statements relating to Palestine ostensibly emanating from various parts of the world. These statements were so arranged that those showing sentiments in the United States favorable to the Zionists alternated with those indicating British support of the Arab cause. No other statements of this kind have thus far been published except those reported in my [telegram number] 230.

2. The minister for Foreign Affairs tells me that these statements have been published without his knowledge and contrary to his directions and that he is again requesting the Ministry of Interior to keep stories of this nature out of the press, at least until after the American elections. He states that knowledge gained from articles condemning pro-Zionism in the United States which are appearing in the press of neighboring Arab countries and information gleaned from foreign radio broadcasts are rendering it increasingly difficult for the Government to restrain the local press.

3. The Minister says that he will be compelled to lift the lid after the elections. He will do everything possible to prevent a sudden avalanche of news on the subject and to prevail upon the press to handle pro-Zionist activities in the United States in such a manner as to create a minimum amount of resentment in Iraq against the Government and people of the United States.

[The Minister says that] if the United States Government actually begins to take steps to implement pre-election statements supporting the Zionist cause, Arab friendship for and trust in the United States will change instantly in spite of any restraining measures which the Government might take into a feeling of betrayal and into a resentment which will render further friendly relation impossible. Such a development, he says, might appear unimportant to a great power like the United States but it would represent a bitter defeat to those forces in Iraq who have been endeavoring to lead the Arab people along the paths of the great future upon the maintenance of good will between the Arabs and the Democratic Western World.

The following day Henderson continued to press his position:

Most Iraqis interested in international affairs, while cognizant of certain Zionist sympathies in the United States, have never really been convinced that the United States intended actively to espouse the Zionist cause. Recent information coming in from abroad, by radio, press and word of mouth however is causing them for the first time to believe that the United States may have the intention to intervene in Palestine on behalf of the Zionists. As this belief is deepening their first reaction appears to be one of bewilderment accompanied by bitter
disappointment and a feeling of betrayal; their second, growing resentment.

Their bewilderment arises from the fact that for many years most of the better educated and more progressive Iraqis have been accustomed to regard the United States as the one great power which could be trusted to strive for a fair solution of international problems. They fail to find principles in international justice or any factors connected with the preservation of world peace which would justify American support of Zionist demands. They find it difficult to reconcile themselves to the belief that the United States merely for the sake of internal political expediency is favoring a course in Palestine which in their opinion not only would be unjust, but would inevitably lead to bloodshed and to misery for all concerned. . . . the general outlook in the postwar world for the Arabs is sure to be bleak. Those Iraqis possessed of Western education who have been hoping that Arab civilization will look westward for its inspiration are particularly concerned. They feel that a loss of confidence by the Iraqi Arabs in the fairness and good intentions of the United States would effectively nullify the efforts of the advocates of a Western democratic civilization for Iraq, would strengthen the forces of autocracy and reaction, and would eventually throw Iraq if not also some of the other Arab countries into the arms of the Soviet Union which would at once extirpate all elements favoring the adoption by Iraq of the Western democratic way of life. Those groups which believe merger [?] with the Soviet Union is the most desirable solution of all problems are making strenuous efforts to complete the disillusionment of those who are still inclined to look to the West for inspiration and guidance.

4. The swelling resentment has not as yet made itself manifest. . . .

It should be noted that the first telegram is more characteristic of Henderson's chain of 1944-1946 communications than the second. He preferred to deliver his messages through quoting others rather than, as in the second case, by citing his own judgments. It is not that what he reported was inaccurate. Henderson was an ethical man. He would never have deliberately falsified information. Rather, he selected carefully, but not necessarily consciously, which sources to quote. In the latter telegram, for example, one would hardly guess from the reference to educated Westward-looking persons seeking justice and fairness that the powerful pro-Nazi ties of many Iraqi political leaders had been severed only when the British army had forcibly ousted the pro-
Axis government of Rashid 'Ali al-Gailani, and had reinstated the repressive British-backed monarchy merely three years before these communications were being sent. One would also suppose from the entire series of Henderson's telegrams and communications reproduced in *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1944 (FRUS)* that there was nothing but the Zionist issue alive in the Arab world, at least as it was visible to Henderson from Baghdad. There is, for example, no reference from Henderson to the important British-Iraqi relation—the British were then in effect governing Iraq through the monarchy—except when Henderson posed the threat that the British might use the Zionism issue to alienate Iraqi leadership from America. But there exists evidence that important Arab leadership had already by 1944 come to terms with the prospects for an outright Jewish state, and perhaps with prospects for other solutions to the Jewish refugee problem less dramatic than a state. There is no recognition of this thinking in any of Henderson's communications, neither those preserved in the *FRUS* volumes of 1944-1945 nor in those consulted elsewhere. There has also surfaced no evidence outside of this telegram that any political force in Iraq or in the Soviet Union, at this time or earlier, ever advocated merger between Iraq and the Soviet Union, for any purpose. All of

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36 Reference is to a classified letter on a possible Jewish state proposed by the 1943 wartime Prime Minister of Syria, in the files of the Department of State, official copy deposited with the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, the subject of a forthcoming article. Other files consulted containing material relating to Henderson or activities in which he was engaged are the Department of State materials in "Lot 8" and "Lot 22," now stored in Suitland, Md., the National Archives in Washington, the Harry S. Truman Library in Independence, the Zionist Archives and Library in New York, the files of the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office for the period in the Public Records Office in London, and the secret Cabinet Papers opened in London in May, 1977. The personal diaries of James Grover McDonald and Richard Crossman have been most useful. The first is in the James G. McDonald Papers, drawer 351, file 14, Herbert H. Lehman Papers, Columbia University. The second is at the Middle East Center, St. Antony's College, Oxford, under an embargo.
this suggests that Henderson’s vision was distorted, his reporting inaccurate, and his perceptions lacking in balance and perspective. Henderson summarized his views finally that intervention by the United States on behalf of the Zionists in Palestine would, in my opinion, adversely affect our relations with Iraq in every field. I have no intention of taking sides in the Palestine dispute. I am merely endeavoring truthfully to inform my Government what results might be expected in this area from its espousal of the Zionist cause. [The Iraqi Foreign Minister has said that should the United States Government] prefer the support of the Zionists to the friendship of the Arabs, the Iraqis would have the choice of complete subservience to Great Britain or the establishment of close relations with the Soviet Union. . . . which they had been taught during the present war to admire and regarding which they had little factual knowledge. He felt that in any struggle between the Soviet Union and Great Britain for dominance in Iraq, the Soviet Union would be the victor in view of its proximity and its willingness to make use of all weapons at its command in order to attain its international aims.

Henderson not only reported his views and opinions to Washington, but he transmitted with approval “instructions” received from the Iraqi Prime Minister for Henderson’s colleagues. Some of those colleagues expressed the same views as Henderson’s or similar views to their superiors at the Department of State, and ultimately the anti-Zionist pressure became strong enough to cause the Secretary of State to bring the whole question to the President in the midst of an election campaign.

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37 Henderson to the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, 867N.01/11-444 of November 4, 1944, in FRUS 1944:5, pp. 631-32.
38 867N.01/2197 of February 18, 1944, Wadsworth’s telegram #36, in FRUS 1944:5, p. 566. In Henderson’s direct report to the Secretary, 867N.01/2185 of February 14, 1944, telegram #31 in FRUS 1944:5, p. 565, the Prime Minister’s conversation does not appear to be an “instruction.”
39 See Memorandum by the Secretary of State to the President, 867N.01/7-1844 of July 26, 1944, beginning: “I believe that you will be interested in the attached paraphrase of a telegram from our Minister in Baghdad, Loy Henderson….” See also the telegrams from Satterthwaite in Damascus (867N.01/8-344), Wadsworth in Beirut (867N.01/8-544), and Tuck in Cairo (867N.01/8-1044). On these bases, Wallace Murray, Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, sent a memorandum to the Under Secretary which began: “I have come to the conclusion that the reaction in the Near East to recent developments in this country affecting Palestine [American campaign statements on Zionism] is going to have so serious an effect upon our foreign relations as to make it ad-
It is important to note that Henderson's involvement in the Near East came about, as he admits, because he was not wanted somewhere else. This was not a career failure for Henderson: he had been in Soviet and Eastern European Affairs for eighteen years.

On the other hand, it was no great success either. His aggressive, outspoken hostility to what he conceived to be Soviet ambitions had ultimately made him unable to serve as a diplomat in the theatre of his assignment. He exceeded his diplomatic responsibilities and, due to his passion and enthusiasm, he became a problem in Soviet-United States diplomacy.

When he was dispatched after that to the Near East, he brought to his new assignment a concern with and expertise in Soviet politics, coupled with an ignorance of the area to which he was sent.

It was not only reasonable, but it was in retrospect altogether inevitable, that Henderson saw the Near East as a new arena for Soviet political machinations. Henderson was a senior and influential Foreign Service Officer, one step below the highest class. He had access to a wide range of sources in Moscow. But in Baghdad he was virtually dependent on such second- and third-level sources as the Foreign Service bureaucracy conversant with Iraqi Arabic who were eager to please Henderson, and on the Iraqi bureaucracy, or more exactly that part of it which had linguistic and political access to Henderson. Sophisticated members of the first presumably realized that Henderson would be receptive to and perhaps appreciative of evidence that seemed to support his pet theories. Sophisticated members of the second must have been aware not only of Henderson's record but of the growing American fears of the U. S. S. R. It would have been clearly in

visable for you to discuss this matter with the President at the earliest opportunity." The memorandum proceeds to criticize the President's endorsement of a Jewish state. FRUS 1944:5, pp. 606-36.

It seems from the Secretary's memorandum back to the Near East Office after his meeting that the President did not take the matter very seriously, and that the Secretary was left with the impression that the issue had been blown out of perspective. See 867N.01/12-1344, in FRUS 1944:5, p. 636.

For the British Foreign Office view, identical with this one and anticipating it by some years, see F. O. 371/45383, FF 1-50, file 15, pp. E8309/15 g, documents 203–6.
their own interests, too, to provide Henderson with the impression that the Soviet issue was the central issue in the Near East. Finally, certain missionary tendencies in Henderson, already touched upon, had by the time of his Baghdad assignment already come to center on the Soviet world-threat. He was probably committed to an "Anti-Christ" view of Moscow when he was still in Eastern European Affairs. It is likely that he was confirmed in this view by the fact that he was removed from that post because of Soviet pressure.

It was this view, that other considerations had to be subordinated to the Soviet menace, which moved Henderson to adopt his posture of vigorous and uncompromising anti-Zionism. It was Henderson's inability to appreciate the reality of the Palestinian Jewish "nation" and to assess its vitality that allowed him to do so.

IV

Henderson and the White House

Necessarily a certain conflict arose between Henderson and the White House, based upon two considerations. The first was a matter of point of view. The Department of State clearly operated with a much more limited view than the White House. When the Department presented an evaluation, its parameters framed what it considered to be the whole picture. To the White House, the State Department was but one service agency to the Executive out of many; the whole picture, of which any service agency had only a partial view, was accessible only to the White House itself. The scope of White House decisions would always necessarily be broader than that of any Departmental recommendations.

The second consideration was that of expertise as opposed to judgment. Henderson correctly held that he had access to special, expert knowledge based on field experience which others lacked. The White House staff believed that they had a certain overall view which gave them a balance of judgment unavailable to specialists. Furthermore, White House views were theoretically formulated after specialized agency views were considered and weighed, but no specialized agency could in the nature of things claim to have reached its particular expert conclusions after
weighing the views of the White House. In Henderson's view, the Department of State had the function of offering the White House its advice, not making decisions. But, in fact, the decision options were put in such a way that the White House staff concluded that they were intended to force a certain decision.  

Each side developed certain stock rebuttals to the positions of the other. The Department of State field experts looked upon the White House staff as military people sometimes look on civilians, i.e., as inexperienced, untrained, and uninformed. They felt that the "politicians" were contaminating what should be pure foreign affairs decisions with domestic affairs considerations. The White House staff looked upon the Department as cold, calculating professionals in the worst sense, people who had in their technician-like fascination lost sight of the human dimensions of the problem.  

"In Henderson's view, "the Department of State was not trying to oppose the President. It was trying to help him. If the President had informed the State Department that he had decided that the United States must take the lead in supporting the establishment of a Zionist State in Palestine even though this must be accomplished by the use of armed force and against the will of the majority of the inhabitants and even though the consequences might be far-reaching, the State Department would necessarily, since it was under the command of the President, have done its best to assist in carrying out that decision. The President, however, had never told us that he had made such a decision." Henderson letter to the author, March 29, 1976. It is hard to imagine an American President seriously proposing an option in those terms. There did exist other options unrecognized by Henderson here or in his 1944 and 1945 messages; for example, that the United States advocate the consummation of the Palestine Mandate, but make no troops available towards that end; that the United States help—financially—with the resettlement of war refugees and DP's in Palestine, with the understanding that the Palestinian Jewish community would have to do the job; and many others. The point is that Henderson made it sound as if American troops would be needed to secure the Zionist State. This was misleading in 1945 and in point of fact proved to be untrue in 1948, when the State of Israel was declared. At the war's end, when Henderson was writing about imposing a State by military force, presumably American, both British and American military sources were reporting to the Department of State, the White House, and to the British Government that the Palestinian Jewish community had the only serious military force in the region apart from the Jordanian Arab Legion, and that it was well able to defend itself against the best attack it was likely to encounter. (Department of State, "Lot 8," Box 1100, sections 2 and 3.) But see against that the informal report commissioned by Henderson from the War Department, FRUS 1945:8, pp. 725, 752, 762, discussed in Note 43 below, which Henderson summarized in a memorandum to Byrnes.  

Truman, op. cit., pp. 134, 137 f., 140.
Truman came eventually to view the humanitarianism of the Department of State with suspicion, and often to disregard the Department’s recommendations. Henderson came eventually to view his job as impossible; but since he felt that there was a challenge to his honor and that it was his responsibility to make

When, in the Fall of 1945, Truman and Clement R. Attlee were in the midst of negotiations that were leading to the creation of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, behind the scenes both the Foreign Office and the Department of State were single-mindedly opposed to the Jewish Agency proposal, endorsed by Truman, which called for the admission of 100,000 European Jewish DP’s to Palestine. On August 30th, twenty days after Truman stated unequivocally in a press conference that no American troops were to be involved in Palestine, Henderson had a dispatch sent to the United States War Department (Memorandum 867N.01/10-945), asking what American troop force would have to be sent to Palestine to maintain order against an Arab revolt provoked by Jewish immigration. The unofficial report came back on September 19, 1945, calling for a United States commitment which “might be over 300,000. The commitment would continue for an indefinite period.” It would also impair the American role in Japan and Germany and would halt demobilization. To appreciate how remarkable these statements are, one may compare the reports of the British GOC for Palestine (P. R. O. File 4 (1946), Palestine and Trans-Jordan, F. O. 371/52525, E4623, E4624, E4773, E4774), indicating that no troops whatever would have to be imported if the Palestine Jewish community were allowed to defend itself.

Subsequent to the receipt of the War Department report, Henderson accepted a lengthy memorandum from Gordon P. Merriam, Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, dated September 26, 1945, three days after Truman had firmly backed the Jewish Agency request for 100,000 entry certificates to Palestine for DP’s. Mr. Merriam’s memorandum sought to repair the “grievous harm” to United States-British relations arising from the President’s letter to Attlee which had accompanied the Harrison report. First, Merriam noted that the Division of Near Eastern Affairs had not been informed of the transmission of the Harrison report to Attlee which had accompanied the Harrison report. First, Merriam noted that the Division of Near Eastern Affairs had not been informed of the transmission of the Harrison report to Attlee, nor of the President’s letter to Attlee. Further, the Division had been left out of the picture on the “discussions which Mr. Truman told the press he had had with Mr. Churchill and Mr. Attlee at Potsdam but regarding which we in NE have no information.” (FRUS 1945: 8, pp. 746-47.) The Near East department report proposed that the Department of State issue, with Truman’s approval, a final policy platform on DP’s and Palestine, to the effect that whereas the British had decided it would be impossible in present circumstances to allow any large number to go to Palestine, and “In view of the responsibility which the British bear as the Mandatory Power, we were not in a position to take issue with their decision.” (Ibid.) The report went on to suggest that United States actions might instead deal with improving conditions in the camps and securing piecemeal settlement of DP’s in various countries.

Attached to the report was a handwritten comment to Henderson by Deputy Director Allen of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, that “it seems apparent to me that the President (and perhaps Mr. Byrnes as well) have decided to have a go at Palestine negotiations without bringing NEA into the picture for the time being. The question we must answer is: Should we nevertheless inject ourselves actively into the negotiations with
heard the opinions which he was convinced were right, he could not abandon or suppress his views. Henderson recalls that he would prepare memoranda indicating that it was the State Department's feeling that proposed actions on Zionism or Palestine were not in the best interests of the United States, and these memoranda would go to the Under Secretary and from there to Truman. He says that White House Staff Member David K. Niles would try to "deride" them and Henderson and the Under Secretary from Niles's vantage point of Special Advisor on Minority Affairs, especially Jewish and Palestine affairs. Niles, in Henderson's view, succeeded in making the issue primarily a domestic one instead of a foreign one in Mr. Truman's mind. Indeed, it was, says Henderson: Mr. Truman's proposals to allow the Jewish refugees to enter Palestine were approved by most of the American people."

In spite of what was considered at the time the one-sidedness of Henderson's views, it seems that Henderson was able to appreciate the presumed White House position that American foreign policy and domestic policy were inevitably interrelated; in other words, that the feelings of American Jews, who were by and large Zionists, were a legitimate concern for a President who aspired to represent them. But overall, Henderson remained a specialist, hostile to the "long view" from the President's chair. As a result, he felt that what was expected of him was something approaching corruption. Truman, he felt, was looking for someone to tell him further recommendations at this stage, or should we wait to be called? . . . I'm inclined to recommend that we stand by for the moment . . . carry on our current work, answering letters and telegrams, receiving callers, etc. as best we can, pending the time (which will come soon) when the whole thing will be dumped back in our laps." (867n.01/9-2645, FRUS 1945, vol. 8, pp. 745-46.)

It seems clear that at this particular time, some top officials of the Department of Near Eastern Affairs and of the overall Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs felt uninvolved and perhaps resentful, considered that they were not being kept in the picture at all. Further, the major policy recommendation then coming out of the Near East division was altogether out of step with the realities of White House negotiations, and their military information was gravely out of line with field analyses, but quite in line with information which was originating with Foreign Office experts and being sent to the Cabinet. (See F. O., CAB 79/46-COS 77 [46] The upshot was that the significant negotiations at that point were those between Mr. Truman and Mr. Attlee, Attlee acting with the support of his advisors in the Foreign Office, but Truman and perhaps Byrnes acting independently of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs and the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs.

"Henderson Interview, section 7.
what he wanted to hear about the Jews in the Near East. Henderson simply was "unable" to do it. He and all the men in the field felt that it was a "tragic mistake." Henderson was himself a loyal friend, and one who owed his Baghdad appointment to the loyalty of his colleagues; he could sympathize easily with his foreign affairs-oriented colleagues in the Iraqi leadership who seemed to share his concern on the Soviet-Zionist-Near East constellation of issues: "Nuri [Nuri as-Sa'id, Prime Minister of Iraq] said to me, 'If you go ahead with a Jewish state, we are finished. All of us in the middle East who have been friends of the West, we are all finished.' It has been proven to be true." Both Nuri as-Sa'id and Henderson thought that the creation of the Jewish state, and not perhaps native resistance to the repressive monarchy that Nuri served, would bring down the government. Here as elsewhere, a fixation on Zionism prevented the proper assessment of a complex situation.

Recognizing that he was a major impediment in White House planning, Henderson ponders why he was allowed to remain so significant an obstruction for so long: "Truman could have replaced me, of course, but he did not. Principally, I think, because he would have lost the respect of his Secretary of State, and the Under Secretary, by putting in someone who told him what he wanted to hear." As a consequence of his stubborn outspokenness, Henderson found himself an accidental beneficiary of what one may call prophetic license: he was safe precisely because what he was saying was unwelcome, so that to destroy him would have

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" See the Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Roosevelt (annex), together with the Suggested Procedure Regarding the Palestine Question (sub-annex), both of which deal with Departmental opinion summaries and both of which were marked "held" and "not sent." 867N.01/12-2344, annex and sub-annex of December 23, 1944, in FRUS 1944:5, pp. 655-57. Seven months later, the chargé in Iraq (Moose) telegraphed to the Secretary of State a report confirming Henderson's evaluations of the power of Zionism and the threat of Soviet exploitation of the Zionist threat (867N.01/8-2245 of August 22, 1945). Meantime, the chargé in Syria (Satterthwaite) telegraphed the Secretary that Henderson had come up from Iraq to Damascus and that a Syrian Minister had caused a group of students, potential demonstrators, to present to Henderson an anti-Zionist petition in Damascus (867N.01/3-2045 of March 20, 1945, in FRUS 1945:8, pp. 693-94).

"Henderson Interview, section 6.

*Ibid., loc. cit.

been demeaning. As for his superiors at the State Department, they found themselves on a tightrope. Embarrassed by Henderson's reiteration of his message, the Secretary and the Under Secretary of State were unable to back Henderson and unwilling to punish or remove him. They maintained a total diplomatic silence both publicly and in private. He could not be given any encouragement in a form which might come back to injure the giver. In his missions, he could only receive subtle hints of sympathy, obliquely communicated from above. "They never commended me, but they let me feel I was doing my job. When I was later sent to India, that was considered a promotion." That is an overstatement, according to George E. Sokolsky, who considers that Henderson's appointment to India was a convenient way of getting rid of him. It is a promotion nonetheless, even though it is certainly true that after he was dispatched to Bombay and Katmandu, he had virtually no further contact with Zionism, Israel, or the Jews as a group. His subsequent career sheds no light on these matters and will not be discussed here.

Henderson and the Zionists

The main effect of Henderson's position as the flagbearer of the anti-Zionist view was that he became the target of hostile public opinion to a degree experienced by few career diplomats. He was attacked in major newspapers and magazines and in the Congressional Record. "Henderson has been working, with fanatical zeal, for a backward and decayed [pro-Arab] policy—out of conviction," said Congressman Arthur G. Klein of New York on

"Henderson Interview, section 5. The Sokolsky material is in the Biographical Files at the Harry S. Truman Library. Acheson did in fact defend Henderson when ardent Zionist sympathizers attacked him for obstructing Truman's policy: "This was untrue and grossly unfair to this entirely loyal and competent officer." Acheson, op. cit. p. 232.

Henderson was married in 1930 to the former Elsie M. Heinrichson, who came from one of the Balkan states which had been overrun by the U. S. S. R. Emanuel Neumann of the Zionist Organization of America believed that the persecution of her family under Stalin was at the root of Henderson's anti-Communism. It seems more likely that by 1930 Henderson's attitude towards the Soviets was rather well established. The Neumann material is in an interview given on January 15, 1968, to Dr. Selig Adler, who retains the records of that interview and has very kindly shared that information."
the floor of the House of Representatives. "This man Henderson has a foreign policy of his own, based on such deep-seated prejudices and biases that he functions as a virtual propagandist." He may not have found the role of "target" unwelcome. It is a role suspiciously similar to the one he played out with Litvinov, and in both cases, Henderson may be said in retrospect to have made confrontation inevitable by acting beyond the normal demands of the job. It is undeniable that he absorbed public hostility, some of which might have otherwise fallen upon Truman himself as a result of his moments of apparent indecision, or on the Secretary of State and the Under Secretary. "My office received sometimes 200 to 500 letters a week against me." He identified this pressure not with public opinion in general, although he knew that the American public in general opposed his stand, but rather with "the Zionists." He considered accurately that the staunchly anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, led by Rabbi Elmer Berger and a Sears-Roebuck heir, Lessing J. Rosenwald, "was not a potent group. They had a certain amount of money, but few followers." Aside from that nearly negligible support, he felt he stood like a solitary prophet. In his view, the Zionists commanded "enormous" power. Letters, editorials, the clergy—all seemed to him to be in the hands of the Zionists. In Henderson's eyes, Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal, who like Henderson was alert to both the Soviet and the Zionist issues, was driven to suicide by them. Henderson still contemplates with awe the supposed

50 See below, notes 50 and 54. See United States Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 1st Session of May 7, 1947, R. 281, vol. 93, pt. 34, pp. 4728b and 4728c.

For Congressman Klein's attack on the floor of the House, see United States Congressional Record, 80th Congress, 2nd Session, of January 26, 1948, R. 287, vol. 94, pt. 1 and 2, pp. 553a and 553b. In the years immediately after the close of World War II, the use of words like "prejudices," "biases," and "propagandist" constituted a subtle charge of anti-Semitism against Henderson without actually using the word.

51 Henderson Interview, section 6.

52 Ibid., section 8. James V. Forrestal died on May 22, 1949, in a fall from the sixth floor of the Bethesda Naval Hospital, Washington. He had been mentally ill for a long time, but was placed in the sixth floor open wards at the insistence of friends who wanted to spare him the stigma of being confined in a closed ward. The United Nations had approved the partition of Palestine and the creation of the Jewish state on November 29, 1947, nearly a year and a half earlier. The State of Israel had been in independent existence for over a year. It is doubtful that the Zionist leadership had given much thought to Forrestal for a considerable time before his suicide.
power of the Zionists to destroy a man who stood in their way, even one as powerful as Forrestal. When Forrestal jumped out of a window at Bethesda it was, says Henderson, largely owing to their pressure. Tax enquiries, “every available weapon” was used.\(^5\)

Henderson’s initial contact with the Zionists did not come until very late in his Department of State career, although when it came it was of a strange nature, redolent of international conspiracy stories. Henderson relates that in 1942 he had his first contact with the Zionists. Two men “claiming to represent” the Zionists—they were not officials—called on him to get them an appointment to see Litvinov. They said they could assure “recognition” of Russia’s revised borders in exchange for Russian “endorsement and backing” of the Zionist proposals. He told them he was not in favor with Litvinov, and referred them to someone better placed to make the connection. He asked them to check back with him, and it appears that Litvinov was as suspicious of the offer as he was, because nothing came of it. That was his first contact with the Zionists. They were speaking not only of “American recognition” but in broader terms also, one understands.\(^3\) In 1942, Henderson was so suspicious of Soviet intentions that one can readily appreciate what sort of first impression would be made on him by an international agency seemingly offering to guarantee Soviet territorial gains not only with American recognition, but in broader terms also. It is a picture that in some respects he failed to outgrow or modify. In spite of his suspicions of these two unofficial representatives, he remained impressed by what he conceived to be the Zionist potential to do mischief.

Henderson’s fears and frustrations came to center on his view of David K. Niles, the White House staff member whom Truman “inherited” from Roosevelt. Although there is evidence that Niles may have been relatively unimportant both to Roosevelt and to Truman, in Henderson’s mind he became a kind of nemesis. “David Niles at the White House,” says Henderson, “was the most powerful and diligent advocate of the Zionist cause.”\(^55\) He was a Jew; the colleagues at the State Department all assumed that. He became close to Bartley Cavanaugh Crum, a politically

\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^55\) Henderson Interview, section 1.
influential liberal attorney from San Francisco and later a powerful pro-Zionist, when Crum headed the "Republicans for Roosevelt" breakaway group in 1944. Under Roosevelt, Niles was not very important, but his influence grew with Truman. He would have dearly loved to replace him, Henderson believes. Niles, in Henderson's view, wanted men that he could control. Authorities who heard it reported to Henderson that when the Committee was in Vienna [the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Jewish Refugees in Europe and Palestine, 1945–1946], Crum was on the telephone with Niles daily, "issuing reports" and conferring on what he should try to get the Committee to decide.56

The statement is true, and some of these Niles reports are in fact in existence.57 What is out of place is Henderson's subtle interpretation that there was something unusual, perhaps even sinister, about a White House staff member keeping tabs in this way on an intergovernmental committee which was in part a White House responsibility. Niles's reports and briefings to President Truman and to Truman's secretary, Matthew Connolly, were filed routinely.58

Henderson believes that Niles was a "pipeline" for the material the Department of State sent to the White House. Niles, says Henderson, supplied this information directly to the Zionists. Henderson knew in advance that every memorandum he sent to the White House went immediately to the Zionists. Even when they sent over their recommendations and materials on Crum relating him to Communist or semi-Communist organizations59 Niles "handed them over" to Crum directly.60

56 Ibid., section 3.
57 David K. Niles Papers, Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass. The papers are now being edited for publication by Professor Abram Leon Sachar at Brandeis. Since I was not able to see the originals, Dr. Sachar very kindly offered to research for this study questions involving Niles or the Niles Papers. Niles was by nature an unusually conservative man, averse to putting things down on paper. He preferred oral briefings. Researchers in the Niles papers believe from evidence there that Niles was briefing Truman orally on the Committee, and serving as a liaison also with the Jewish Agency for Palestine.
59 Memorandum, Secret, 811.00B/12-345, of December 3, 1945, drafted by Borden Reams on instruction from Loy Henderson. This memorandum was not in the files when search was made for it in Summer, 1975, and no references to it appeared in the Purport
Although Henderson considered that he was unable to do much more than say what he had to say and stand in his integrity, he appreciated that there were some limits on what Niles could do as well. Henderson considers that on the White House side, Niles was not alone. Clark Clifford, his senior, was not a “manipulator” as Niles was. Clifford “was a gentleman,” and Niles did not entirely have his own way, although Clifford shared his general views on Zionism. Clifford would have stopped anything “underhanded.”

Today Henderson considers his opposition by and to Niles a matter of principles, not personalities, perhaps because of the painful memories of how personal the attacks on him were. He says now that there was no personal animus between Niles and himself. Niles was a diligent and tireless worker for their side. Now that he is dead, the Zionists, Henderson feels, have made Niles almost a “little god.” And in fact they should. Henderson will say that without David Niles—he won’t say there would not have been a state of Israel in Palestine—but it would not have been recognized at the United Nations as it was. They owe him, concludes Henderson, a great deal.

An altogether different picture of Niles emerges from the White House itself. Clark Clifford, described by Henderson as Niles’s “senior,” was White House Naval Aide to the spring of 1945, and then White House Counsel, succeeding Judge Samuel I. Rosenman. Although the White House Counsel was responsible mainly to prepare speeches and messages, under Clifford the Counsel came to serve also as the President’s Executive Officer or Chief of Staff. “David Niles,” Clifford states, “was a staff member at the White House functioning in the field of Minorities. He was one of perhaps ten such staff members, and was not very important. Peo-

Card Indices (File 811.00). It developed that it was “restricted” as a matter of “personal privilege,” i.e., to protect the reputation of Mr. Crum, who had died on December 10, 1959. With the kind cooperation of John S. Pruden and Wilmer Sparrow of the Department of State and of Milton O. Gustafson of the National Archives, the document has now been declassified. The information that the F. B. I. investigation that led to this memo was solicited by Henderson is not on file, but was contributed by Henderson himself.

60 Henderson Interview, section 2.
61 Ibid., section 11.
62 Ibid., section 13.
ple on the White House staff might very well have difficulty in remembering who he was, or in recalling him at all."63 Clifford is probably as well placed as anyone to make that judgment: until July 1, 1946, Judge Samuel Rosenman, another staff member of the few Truman "inherited" from Roosevelt, held the post of Counsel, then Clifford assumed that title. "Actually, I was doing a substantial amount of work connected with that post before I assumed it."64 In the extensive Samuel I. Rosenman records, memoranda, personal and official papers, files, and oral history transcripts now preserved at the Harry S. Truman Library, there is no significant reference to David Niles, either positive or negative. This seems to support Clifford's judgment. If that judgment is accurate, then it may be that Henderson created out of David Niles the Zionist archenemy that he needed to support his view of the Near East and the Zionist role in it.

"Truman had six staff men," Clifford explains: "Charles Ross, who was in charge of press, Mike Connolly, who handled his appointments, one for letters and one for domestic issues, one for military affairs, and the White House Counsel, who was responsible to help prepare speeches and messages. That job carried me into every aspect of White House activity. Later I became White House Liaison to the State Department, and to the Navy and War Departments, which were not then combined." Niles would very rarely have had access to the President, and then only to report on an issue identified as falling principally in his particular specialty of domestic minorities. "Niles would have reported to Truman [only] on occasion, when his specific interests were useful. We six met with the President every morning, but Niles would have operated at a much lower level. "It indicates," concludes Clifford, "Loy Henderson's lack of knowledge or faulty recollection that he thought Niles an important person at the White House."65 As an alternative, it may indicate Henderson's lack of objectivity where Zionism is concerned, a result of his overarching fear of the Soviets.

63 A. H. Podet, Oral History Interview with Clark Clifford, White House Naval Aide to Spring, 1945, then White House Counsel to 1950. Bethesda, Md., August 5, 1975, 6 sections, section 1. Transcripts are deposited with the American Jewish Archives.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
Conclusions

There is little reason to accept the implication of Henderson’s critics that anti-Semitism, opposition to Jews as Jews, was a significant motivation for him, although his rigid anti-Zionism may have played into the hands of anti-Semites. There is no evidence of a predisposition towards anti-Semitism in any of Henderson’s official or unofficial communications, the files he generated or those kept on him. It also is unacceptable to generalize, as some of his critics did, from the fact that he was a minister’s son, raised in a strong religious atmosphere. A more reasonable cluster of hypothetical motives than dislike of Jews may explain Henderson’s undeviating anti-Zionism. Resistance to the pressures of the Zionists and liberals became to him part of an anti-Soviet mission, and Henderson became in an important sense a missionary. His missionary zeal had to do not with his minister father, but with his twin brother Roy. Against the background of Roy’s death, Henderson came to function as more than a career officer. By the time he joined the Department of State, a sense of calling was evident which had been taking shape in his mind from the time of his contact with the Eastern European theatre. He attributed his admitted hostility to the Soviets to what he saw in his Department of State assignments. But it is likely that at least three other factors played a role in forming that attitude. The first was the militant atheism of the Soviet regime, seen against the extremely positive religious orientation which Loy and Roy had shared; the second was the betrayal of the Allied cause by the Soviets in the War which had indirectly cost his brother’s life; and the third was the picture of Soviet injustice and cruelty which he received from the refugees from Eastern Europe during his period of Red Cross service.

Although Henderson gives the impression that he was merely “sent” to Eastern Europe by State because someone was needed there and it was in his dossier that he had been there before, the fact is that he requested Eastern Europe as an assignment from the first, and seemed to be keenly disappointed when he was dispatched to Dublin. His mission, as it must have seemed to him, lay elsewhere than in Dublin.

Henderson’s importance is enlarged by the fact that he was not
alone. In many ways he was a characteristic Department of State Senior Officer. His views, as he often points out, were shared by nearly every Foreign Service Officer in his office and in the Near Eastern field. He was a man of great personal integrity and courage, and of enormous ability. He was not alone, as well, in viewing his activity not as a job but as a calling, a position which did not aid his objectivity and balance of judgment. While it is true that his insight and drive made him an invaluable diplomat, especially in his Soviet period of service, it is also true that he subsequently endorsed and promoted with single-minded zeal positions which were at least in large part wrong. He devoted much of his latter diplomatic career, up to the time when he was sent to India and Nepal, to convincing people (1) that Palestine would not be able to absorb the Jewish refugees from the European camps, let alone other European Jews who wished to immigrate there; (2) that American support of Zionist ambitions for a Jewish state in Palestine would lead to an immediate and permanent injury of American interests in the Islamic Near East; (3) that no more oil would be supplied to the United States or to American oil firms; (4) that the Soviets would rapidly and permanently dominate the Near East, c.f. at least the Arab world; and finally, (5) that pro-Western leadership, beginning with his friend Nuri as-Sa‘id, was doomed. In all of these conclusions but the last one he was in error, and he led others into error. His fear of the Zionists and his estimate of their coordination and power, like his fear and respect for the Soviets, were out of line with reality. He shared both the Zionist and the Soviet prejudices with his good friend and advisor, James V. Forrestal, who in 1944 exclaimed to a colleague, “My God . . . you and I and Bill Bullitt are the only ones around the President who know the Russian leaders for what they are.”

But Henderson’s miscalculations can be adequately understood in terms of his personal history and in terms of the transfer effect between his Soviet service and his Near East service. Henderson’s

inability to appreciate that the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine were already in 1945 a viable nation in all but name was a flaw that had to do perhaps with his early association of Jews with classical antiquity and the Bible. But a phobia generally occupies a central position in the affected person's thinking, and the Jewish nation was not in the forefront of Henderson's thought either as a positive force or as a negative one. Anti-Semitism as a motive is not supported by the evidence and is not necessary to explain the case. That Henderson was a vigorous anti-Zionist was hardly disputed by Henderson himself. But in some cases, a clear distinction should be made between anti-Zionism and dislike of Jews. By 1947 American Jewry was virtually all pro-Zionist, and from that point on one may speak of a growing general association of anti-Zionism with dislike of Jews. But in the case of Loy Henderson, who fought his cause with dignity and courage, guided by the instincts of a patriot and by the code of a gentleman, the distinction is valid and clear. It is time that the record be set straight.

Crossman, op. cit., p. 79, citing and commenting on a remark to him by Bevin: Crossman had said, "But Ernie, I've seen it for myself. The Palestine Jews have grown into a nation, and if you refuse them partition, they will fight for their lives." 'No,' Bevin answered, "there's only a Jewish religion, not a Jewish nation. And if those Jews in Palestine aren't religious, they ought not to call themselves Jews!" Crossman's view of Bevin's inability to deal with Jewish nationalism was that Bevin related international problems to his labor-organizing experience. In organizing the Jews of the East End, Bevin had solved the Jewish-Catholic feuds by teaching his union members that religious differences should not be permitted to undermine working-class solidarity. "By a strange coincidence, Clement Attlee also had his first experience of Jewish politics in the East End, when he lived as a social worker in an East End boys' club. As a result, both men got it firmly into their heads that the Jews of Palestine should be treated as a religious group. . . . The Arabs, in their views, had a right to national self-determination, because they were a nation. But the principle did not apply to the Jews, since they were only a religious community."

See in this regard F. O. 371/45383, E8309/15g, documents 177-96.

Halperin, loc. cit.

Henderson writes in a letter to the author of March 20, 1976 (deposited at the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati): "I may add that I do not consider myself to have been anti-Zionist, I did, however, oppose the United States playing a leading role in the establishing of a Zionist State in Palestine by force against the will of the inhabitants."