

DOCUMENTS

A NON-ZIONIST ON ERETZ ISRAEL:

Observations and Suggestions by Max Warburg in a Letter to his brother Felix

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When Max Warburg wrote to his brother Felix in December 1929, he was seriously concerned about the fate of the Jewish venture in Palestine. Only a few months after riots had brought murder, pillage, and destruction to the Holy Land and had seriously strained relations between the three concerned parties of Arabs, Jews, and the British mandatory government, the fate of the *yishuv* hung in the balance. The year 1929 was a watershed in the history of Zionism. The riots refueled support among Jews all over the world for the creation of a Jewish state. It was also a watershed in relations between Zionists and the British government, representing a low point in their collaboration on Palestine and signaling a changed and redefined relationship for years to come.¹

The letter of Max Warburg, a leading figure in the German branch of the prominent Jewish banking family, to his brother Felix in the United States is of particular significance because it reveals how this time of crisis affected a non-Zionist's view of Eretz Israel. Max, a leading member of German Jewry who is best known for the undying patriotism to his fatherland that almost prevented him from escaping the brutal terror of Nazism, is commonly portrayed as someone who opposed Zionism.² Yet, Max's letter to Felix shows a more complex picture of his attitude toward Zionism, Palestine, Arab-Jewish relations, and the relationship between Zionists and non-Zionists. A British commission was investigating the causes of the Palestine disturbances—an investigation that would have serious consequences for the *yishuv*—and the Warburgs, like other non-Zionists, looked to Chaim Weizmann for political and moral leadership on Palestine.³

Even before the creation of the Enlarged Jewish Agency in August 1929, the "pact of glory" between Zionists and non-Zionists for joint cooperation in the up-building of Palestine, Weizmann had openly courted the non-Zionist Jews as potentially valuable financial contributors.⁴ The Warburgs, in particular, were wealthy and well

connected and proved of significant importance in preserving the fragile unity of the Zionist/non-Zionist joint venture in Palestine. Max Warburg owned a prestigious banking house in Hamburg, Germany, and Felix had married the daughter of Jacob Schiff, partner of the highly successful investment banking firm Kuhn, Loeb and Company in New York City. Felix was admitted to the firm's partnership in 1897 and became the richest and most generous Warburg. Both brothers were successful bankers, dedicated philanthropists, and committed to the social and economic development of Palestine as a cultural and religious center of world Jewry. As non-Zionists, both Warburgs took a universalist approach to Jewish problems. Their financial contributions and relief efforts extended from Europe to Palestine, but their part in the economic and social development of Eretz Israel was never a means to a political end in the form of a Jewish state.⁵ To both Warburgs, Palestine was to serve as another safe haven for Europe's persecuted Jews.⁶ Yet, when the riots of August 1929 and their aftermath seemed to threaten all of that, Max supported the Zionist Weizmann as spokesman for the Jewish venture in Palestine.

The Palestine riots of 1929 undermined the coexistence that had been developing between Arabs and Jews during the first decade of the Mandate, and they set religious and nationalist passions ablaze. Centered on a dispute over religious observances at the Western (Wailing) Wall in Jerusalem, the riots also laid bare contradictory pledges by the British government to both Arabs and Jews. The former were armed with the Hussein-McMahon correspondence and the promise of an independent Arab state, the latter with the Balfour Declaration and its endorsement of a Jewish national home.

The riots' aftermath brought to light considerable carnage among both Arabs and Jews. The total number of Jews killed in the riots was 133, and several hundred were wounded. There were only a few hundred British police in Palestine and their response seemed slow and half-hearted. The belated crackdown by British troops imported from Egypt proved bloody, leaving over 100 Arabs dead and over 200 wounded. Amin al-Husayni, the mufti of Jerusalem and the Palestinians' most popular leader, emerged from the political violence as the most famous, or infamous, spokesman for the Arab side. Most Arabs believed that he had taken an active stand against Jewish claims to Muslim holy places and against Zionist designs on Palestine. Most Jews held the mufti as head of the Muslim community responsible for turning a minor dispute into a political struggle and for inciting

Muslim fanatics to attack Jews, resulting in the worst case of violence between Jews and Arabs in Palestine in modern times. Max Warburg was horrified by the violence of the riots and held the mufti responsible for inciting the Arab masses to attack Jews. He even compared al-Husayni's behavior and agitations in Palestine to Hitler's rabble-rousing in Germany.⁷

Far from discouraging Jews, the Palestinian riots prompted a huge outpouring of support from all sections of Jewish society. Felix Warburg together with Lord Melchett⁸ headed a worldwide call for help and appealed to the British prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald. Felix also organized the Palestine Emergency Fund that raised more than five million dollars to repair riot damage. To disburse the money, Felix drafted a Harvard instructor named Maurice Hexter as his personal emissary to Palestine.⁹

The atmosphere in Palestine remained tense and reinforced a Warburg preference for a cultural homeland instead of a Jewish state. The British colonial secretary, Lord Passfield, announced the formation of a Commission of Inquiry, which began its investigation of the "immediate causes" of the riots in September 1929. When the

report was published at the end of March 1930 it provided satisfaction to the Mandate administration and to the Arab leaders, but it was a source of consternation to the Jewish side. The report stated that the basic causes of Arab antagonism were Jewish immigration and land settlement. In effect, the Arab population was hostile to the policy of the Jewish national home, and the commission recommended restrictive



Mr. & Mrs. Felix M. Warburg and Dr. & Mrs. Chaim Weizmann at the United Palestine Appeal Conference, Boston, 1928.
(American Jewish Archives)

measures on both to prevent the recurrence of such events.¹⁰

When Max Warburg wrote his letter, he felt apprehensive about a change in British policy toward the *yishuv* and hoped for a productive discussion in Parliament, where "all friends of the mandate and friends in favor of Palestine's protection" would speak up. He did not believe the creation of a Jewish state was the desirable solution, but he



Judah P. Magnes
(American Jewish Archives)

envisioned a compromise of sorts by proposing the idea of a Jewish commonwealth modeled after the Swiss cantonal form of government. Warburg, like his Western contemporaries, saw the need for a British mandatory government and did not deem Palestine ready for independence or a parliamentary system.¹¹

In the wake of the riots, Max considered security in Palestine of paramount importance, but he opposed the inclusion of Arabs into a Palestine police force. He did acknowledge that relations with the Arabs needed to be cultivated, but he was not in favor of the policy of Judah L. Magnes. Magnes, the former rabbi of New York's

Temple Emanu-El, was a long-standing Warburg intimate. After Magnes's wartime pacifism had forced him to leave Temple Emanu-El, he relocated to Palestine, where he joined the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus and became an exponent of Arab-Jewish reconciliation. In the aftermath of the riots he suggested that the solution to the Arab-Jewish dilemma was the creation of a binational state in Palestine. Magnes profoundly shaped the Warburg view about the future of Palestine, but his proposal came at a bad time and infuriated not only Zionists but also even some non-Zionists, including Max Warburg.¹²

According to Max, there was already enough infighting and division among the Jews. The relationship between Zionists and non-Zionists in particular was quite strained, and Magnes's initiative simply added fuel to an already fiery debate over the course of policy. This tension was of special concern to Max, inasmuch as his brother Felix was the head of the American Administrative Committee of the Jewish Agency and constantly put in the middle between Zionists and non-Zionists. Max advised his brother not to minister to too many different factions, because it would be impossible for him to control them all. He should rather concentrate on the non-Zionist concerns and thereby contribute to a better organization of the non-Zionist movement.

The issue of fund raising, in particular, remained a constant source

of tension between Zionists and non-Zionists. Zionists intended to collect and distribute all funds for projects in Palestine, while non-Zionists saw their financial responsibilities all over the world, including projects in Russia as well as in Palestine. Max suggested that, in the end, it should be up to the individual contributor how his money was to be spent. Max Warburg himself was unclear on which society's behalf he should invest his money. At the time, various institutions were representing Jewish interests in Palestine. While the Keren Hayesod collected money for an immigration and colonization fund, for instance, the Keren Kayemeth, the Jewish National Fund, saw its sole purpose in purchasing land. Menahem Ussishkin, head of the Keren Kayemeth, became a frequent target of criticism. Critics like Max Warburg charged that Ussishkin's single-minded commitment to land purchase, whether or not funds were sufficient to complete the transaction, was reckless and irresponsible.¹³

Nonetheless and in spite of major problems, Max, a patriotic German Jew and non-Zionist, believed in the necessity and responsibility to support the up-building of Palestine, considering it a worthy cause and an important matter of discussion.

**A personal letter to Felix M. Warburg, sent by his brother Max,
from Hamburg, Germany, December 26, 1929:**

Not to be sent through the secretary

Dear Felix:

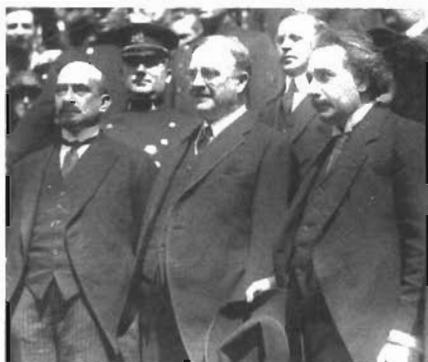
Yesterday Dr. Weizmann paid me a one-day visit. Your telegram and telephone call—which I unfortunately not only missed at the office but also had a hard time understanding—didn't give me enough material for our conversation.

I would like to tell you about the conversation I had with Weizmann, even though he intends to take the *Bremen* on 22 January to tell you about it in person.

I found Weizmann to be physically much stronger than in Paris, despite the fact that he works day and night.¹⁴

Internal and political situation:

The latest news from Palestine sounds very serious, but I have always found that if one's attention is called to the gravity of a



Chaim Weizmann(left) with Albert Einstein(right) in New York City, 1921
(American Jewish Archives)

situation on a timely basis, the catastrophe cannot be as bad as if it were to occur suddenly and to one's complete surprise. The English government has set its course, and I doubt that she will want to face the charges again of not having made the necessary preparations. The letter which General Smuts and others have sent to the government, left a deep impression.¹⁵ The feature article of *The Times* was very

serious, and I hope that it will provide the stimulus to send a second commission [to Palestine], again emphasizing the mandatory relationship, perhaps with one or two changes.¹⁶ Weizmann has laid good groundwork, and with the upcoming discussion in parliament, all the friends of the mandate and friends in favor of Palestine's protection will speak up.

The center for the development of Palestine lies in England. Weizmann is therefore of inestimable value, one will have to accept the fact that as long as the situation is unclear he [Weizmann] cannot stay away from England for too long. He will certainly be able to spend three months or longer in Palestine, but he must stay in touch with as many members of parliament and government officials as possible.

It is hard to tell now what the conclusions of the second commission will be. I believe that the Arabs should not receive a parliamentary system; first, our experiences with the parliamentary system are not great, and second, this land [Palestine] is not ready for a parliamentary system. I would much rather see a cantonal form of government that is nominally a mandatory state or (even an Arab state), but that allows each colony the greatest degree of autonomy, much like the Swiss cantons. Consequently, this Jewish cantonal commonwealth would be represented by the Executive to the English mandatory government, just like now, and the Arabs could have such representation as well; this would be an elegant way of solving matters of etiquette.¹⁷

The most important thing at this moment is the security in the land [Palestine]. I find a good police force to be more practical than a

strong permanent military occupation. This police force cannot be comprised of Arabs, though, maybe to a small degree, but mostly of good English police officers and in greater numbers as it is the case today.

The immigration policy must be nonpartisan and favorable to the Jews, as long as it is compatible with the country's economic capacity.

The relationship with the Arabs has to be cultivated. The Mufti behaves like Hitler in Germany. The big mistake of the English government was not to confront the rabble-rousing in time. One has abandoned control for too long, but once the sentencing is completed and its severity has been demonstrated, one must negotiate with the Arabs systematically. I believe that Magnes made a big mistake—which was my opinion even before my conversation with Weizmann—by addressing the relationship between Arabs and Jews at this particular time. The Arabs probably saw it as a form of weakness, and all, not just the radical Jews, should be concerned about preserving their integrity.

Regarding the internal political situation, particularly the relationship between Zionists and non-Zionists, I agree with Moses in that the Jewish people like to disagree. The Zionists are already fighting enough among themselves,¹⁸ and the Zionists and non-Zionists are fighting even more.¹⁹ A separation between the Zionists and the non-Zionists would be for the best. This also might be necessary considering that 50% of the Zionists and 50% of the non-Zionists will be able to vote. The non-Zionists have to organize themselves just like the Zionists, with the clear distinction that the Zionists only see their future in Palestine and hope that Palestine, which can be only a colony for now, will develop into a greater state formation. The non-Zionists, however, see the mission of the Jews to help out in various countries, and at the same time they wish to cooperate with the Jews of Palestine. The two interpretations [of Zionism] cannot be naturally reconciled, but the representatives of both views should be able to work together in Palestine.²⁰

I recommend, therefore, the unification of the non-Zionists, which is, as I hear, being attempted in various countries. This approach, to march separately but fight united, could also be applied to the collection of money. I don't think that the collection of money would be very successful unless it is done separately.²¹ The Zionists wouldn't give as much as they could, if they knew that part of the money went

to Russia and other causes. The non-Zionists won't give any money if it is only meant to go to Palestine and not to any other causes. I think it would be a good idea to leave it up to the giver whether his money should go only to Palestine, only to Russia or to other causes, or whether the distribution of funds should be left to the Joint Distribution Committee. One could push the fact that the JDC should have decision-making power to do both Palestine and Russia, thereby leaving it up to the contributors how to spend their money.²²

Concerning the cooperation of the Congress, the Agency, the Administration and the Executive, is going to be difficult to direct work in Palestine from London, New York, or Berlin.²³ The center of work has to lie in Palestine. I would suggest that the following people should be added to the Executive Committee in Palestine: you [Felix M. Warburg] as president of the Administrative Committee, Weizmann, who already belongs to the Executive, and maybe Wassermann²⁴ as head of the Keren Hayesod.²⁵ I believe it is imperative that the non-Zionists are strongly represented in the Executive: Senator²⁶ is a fine individual, so is Hexter,²⁷ but both, in my opinion, are not towering personalities capable of handling this difficult situation. I am still convinced that a man like Dr. Bernhard Kahn²⁸ would be perfect, with his experience, his tact and his common sense, he would be able to get things done. I just mention him as an example since I am convinced that a lot is dependent upon the Executive Committee.

I consider it very important that good old Magnes, whom I adore and love, is kept away from politics. We have experienced it in Germany too many times that professors and those connected with the university can cause great havoc if they get involved in other than scientific endeavors. I am almost afraid for Magnes unless he keeps quiet. The university can be a useful place for scientific inquiry that could become significant someday. If Magnes pursues his studies and research he will still be able to work for the cooperation between Jews and Arabs, without necessarily making it public. But I absolutely advise against his meddling in practical politics. I sometimes get the feeling that Magnes has this inclination to dedicate himself to this or that cause. This inclination of his derives from the purest motives but is extremely dangerous, not just for him but for the development of Palestine.²⁹

I don't know what plan Rutenberg³⁰ has in mind, since whatever he does will be important for the economic development of Palestine. I told Weizmann that I can only imagine a satisfying solution if he and

Rutenberg work together, whereby Rutenberg would be responsible for the economy and Weizmann for politics. The center for this work will lie in London but also in Palestine. It is not going to be easy to have these two cooperate and pull in the same direction. I hope that the upcoming talks between Rutenberg and Weizmann on 1 January [1930] will be productive.

I haven't heard anything from Rutenberg. He doesn't like to write and he once told me that he prefers to tell me everything in person. I hope to see him in early January.

My opinion is still the same and I am now more convinced than ever that the most important thing is that we keep acquiring land. One will have to deal with insurrections, pogroms, and various setbacks, but if we give up on the land and it falls into the hands of others, the whole experiment in Palestine will be futile.³¹

I am still awaiting word from you on which society's behalf my friends and I should invest our money and acquire land. I posed the same question to Lord Melchett,³² Rutenberg, and Wassermann, but there is still no unified policy on that matter. (I don't regret this too much, since the time for such ventures is rather bad.)

I consider additional acquisitions by Ussishkin³³ for the Keren Kayemeth [Jewish National Fund]³⁴ a bad idea. The new society trying to secure land could give the Keren Kayemeth the option or the first chance [to buy land]. I am, however, totally opposed to Ussishkin buying more land since the Keren Kayemeth cannot really secure the land. The Keren Kayemeth is incapable of acting effectively where it is required, and that would prove disastrous from an economic point of view.

I can imagine that you are having a pretty tough time with the Zionists. I heard that the Zionists are already concentrating on securing as great a percentage as possible of the money that was collected through the recent drive, for Palestine. I don't know if you have someone you can trust to influence the Zionists. Weizmann is accompanied on his travels by a certain Dr. Rosenblueth³⁵ who visited me in Hamburg a couple weeks ago. I was quite impressed with him. He is a convinced Zionist but sensible and he understands the situation completely. We will never achieve complete unity among all Jews. As head of the Administrative Committee, you, much like a king, have to get used to the fact that there are many different parties in your country, who all want to serve their country but everyone according to his own way. Your Royal Highness has Zionist and non-

Zionist subjects and wants to collect taxes for Palestine. It is impossible to demand that all of them should either be conservative or liberal, that is, Zionist or non-Zionist. I already discussed this in the beginning and the more you agree with me the better off you'll be. You cannot be responsible for all the escapades of your subjects.³⁶

I know that is easier said than done, but if I were you I would proceed in that manner. Otherwise you will be dissatisfied because you are taking on too big of a load.

I believe in a solution of the very difficult Palestine question despite political complications, lack of money, internal disunity, disturbances (and other possible scenarios), and I consider it a worthy cause. One cannot abandon the work [in Palestine], and I believe that one shouldn't because of problems we are facing now, since they don't seem insurmountable.

Weizmann only briefly discussed the money question with me and to what extent the charity money should be incorporated into the regular budget. He reserved this topic for Wassermann, since that is where my interests lie. After all, Weizmann only graced me with a visit since I am your brother and your wife's brother-in-law.

I wrote you a rather detailed letter without really telling you anything new. But the Palestine question does fascinate me and I would like to contribute to its solution.

I am as always at your service. If you think that I can help you with the burden you so bravely assumed, just let me know.

With kind regards to the both of you
Your loyal brother Max

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NOTES:

1. Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: The Mandatory Government and the Arab-Jewish Conflict 1917-1929* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). Martin Kolinsky, *Law, Order and Riots in Mandatory Palestine, 1928-35* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1993). Naomi W. Cohen, *The Year After the Riots: American Responses to the Palestine Crisis of 1929-30*

(Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988).

2. Ron Chernow in his epic story of the Warburg family calls Max an anti-Zionist. *Ron Chernow, The Warburgs: The 20th Century Odyssey of a Remarkable Jewish Family* (New York: Random House, 1993). The letter, in German, from Max Warburg to his brother Felix is located in the Warburg Collection, Box 247, Folder 5, in The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

3. Max Warburg made a careful distinction between Weizmann the politician and Weizmann the person. He was not too happy about his eldest daughter's attraction to the seasoned leader of the world Zionist movement. Weizmann, who was known for his marital indiscretions, had started a passionate affair with Lola Hahn-Warburg in the late 1920s. Max suspected that Weizmann's interest in Lola had more to do with Warburg money than sincere intentions toward his daughter. Weizmann, on the other hand, hoped that with Lola under his influence, Max Warburg could be drawn closer to the goals and objectives of the Zionist movement. It is unclear whether Lola or Max's other daughter Gisela, who became a fervent Zionist and founded an aliyah group in Germany to train young teenagers as prospective settlers of Palestine, had any influence on their father. However, it is important to note that close members of his family, including his daughters and his brother Felix, who served as the chairman of the American Administrative Committee of the Jewish Agency, kept Max exposed to and involved in Palestine matters. See Chernow, *Warburgs*, 297–303. There is a growing literature on the complex nature of the Zionist movement and the nuanced relationship between Zionism and Jewish identity. Recent studies have probed into the influence of minority factions such as the Labor Zionists, the Revisionists, the supporters of Judah Magnes and binationalism, the anti-Zionists, and the non-Zionists. Ilan Kaiser, "Labor Zionism in the United States: Poale Zion- Zeire Zion 1931–1947" (Hebrew) (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1994). Mark A. Raider, "From the Margins to the Mainstream: Labor Zionism and American Jews, 1919–45" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1996). Thomas A. Kolsky, *Jews Against Zionism: The American Council for Judaism, 1942–1948* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990). Menahem Kaufman, *An Ambiguous Partnership: Non-Zionists and Zionists in America, 1939–48* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991); Naomi W. Cohen, *Not Free to Desist: The American Jewish Committee 1906–66* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1972). William Brinner and Moses Rischin, eds., *Like All the Nations? The Life and Legacy of Judah L. Magnes* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987). Rafael Medoff, *Zionism and the Arabs: An American Jewish Dilemma, 1898–1948* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997). Naomi W. Cohen, "An Uneasy Alliance: The First Days of the Jewish Agency," in *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus*, ed. Bertram Wallace Korn (New York: KTAV, 1976), 107–20. Jerome M. Kutnick, "Non-Zionist Leadership: Felix M. Warburg, 1929–37" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1983). For a more complete discussion of the recent trends in the historiography of American Zionism, see Rafael Medoff, "Recent Trends in the Historiography of American Zionism," *American Jewish History* 86, no. 1 (1998): 117–34.

4. Melvin Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1975), 323–33.

5. It needs to be pointed out that the Warburg approach to Palestine was not a minority view. Even American Zionists themselves were divided over the implementation of Zionism and had split into two camps, the Brandeis-Mack group and the Weizmann supporters under his lieutenant Louis Lipsky. Brandeisian Zionism

called for the practical up-building of Palestine, emphasizing economic and social reconstruction, but Weizmann saw this task as only one aspect of his Zionist program. Weizmann stressed the need to create and maintain the political ramifications for the creation of a Jewish state. However, Brandeis's motto of "Money, Men, and Discipline" proved to be useful. Again the Brandeisian vision could only be realized with the help of funds, and because the Zionists were always in desperate need of money, non-Zionists became irreplaceable as generous givers.

6. Chernow, *Warburgs*, 248–54.

7. Max Warburg's comparison is interesting inasmuch as the mufti of Jerusalem and the fuhrer would enter an alliance during World War II to advance mutual interests in the abolition of the Jewish national home and the destruction of the British Empire. Historians have offered different interpretations concerning the Nazi years of al-Husayni. While Zionists, at times, were eager to prove him guilty of collaboration and war crimes with the Nazis, Arabs were busy justifying his statements and actions in the Axis countries, thereby blatantly ignoring the fact that the mufti had cooperated with one of the most barbaric regimes in history. See Joseph B. Schechtmann, *The Mufti and the Fuehrer: The Rise and Fall of Haj Amin al-Husseini* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965); Philipp Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem: Al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Palestinian National Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Zvi Elpeleg, *The Grand Mufti: Haj Amin al-Husseini, Founder of the Palestinian National Movement* (London: Frank Cass, 1993); Yehuda Taggar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine Arab Politics, 1930–37* (New York: Garland, 1986).

8. Formerly Sir Alfred Mond, a leader of British industry and elected associate chairman of the Council of the Enlarged Jewish Agency.

9. Hexter hesitated at first and consulted Harvard President Lowell in the matter. Lowell explained that because the Warburgs had been immensely generous to the university over the years, Felix could not be refused. Hexter was provided with a generous letter of credit and became Warburg's "ear phone and mouthpiece" in Palestine. He carried a gun and had a guard/chauffeur. Hexter typed weekly reports and for security reasons traveled all the way to Cairo to telephone Felix. Chernow, *Warburgs*, 302.

10. Kolinsky, *Law, Order and Riots*. Cohen, *Year after the Riots*. Wasserstein, *British in Palestine*.

11. It appears that the non-Zionist Max shared the "delayed democracy" concept advanced by Zionist leaders at the Paris Peace Conference. He was also convinced that economic progress, jobs, and an increased standard of living for Arabs would ease tensions between Arabs and Jews. However, he failed to see, like many American Zionists, that Arab hostility toward the Jews was rooted in religious and political sentiments that economic progress and prosperity could not easily change. See Medoff, *Zionism and the Arabs*.

12. Chernow, *Warburgs*, 251–54. See also Medoff, *Zionism and the Arabs*.

13. Walter Lehn, *The Jewish National Fund* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1988).

14. The year 1929 had started badly for Weizmann. He was in ill health, physically exhausted, and bedridden at Ruthin Castle sanatorium in North Wales for more than a month. Norman Rose, *Chaim Weizmann: A Biography* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989), 242.

15. Together with Lloyd George and Lord Balfour, General Jan Smuts, an old

friend of Zionism, signed a letter to the *Times* (London), published December 20, 1929, regretting Britain's failure to carry out the Mandate adequately and suggesting a second authoritative commission to hold a more general inquiry into the major questions of policy and administration. The government decision to make this a one-man commission was taken April 2, 1930, and Sir John Hope Simpson was chosen to head it. Weizmann was disappointed at this choice because the prime minister had failed to act in accordance with intentions verbally expressed to him. See "Reaction to Shaw Report, 28 March 1930," in *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, vol. 1, series B, August 1898–July 1931, ed. Barnet Litvinoff (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1983), 594–98. The Hope Simpson Report and the Passfield White Paper on Palestine were received by Weizmann on October 17, 1930, and confirmed the latter's worst fears. Hope Simpson concluded that there was no remaining land available for Jewish colonization. The White Paper condemned unrestricted Jewish immigration as disruptive and detrimental to the interests of the population as a whole. Weizmann felt betrayed by the British government and, convinced that he had failed as statesman and arbiter of the interests of world Jewry, he resigned as head of the Jewish Agency and as president of the World Zionist Organization. This dramatic gesture on Weizmann's part produced conciliatory moves on the part of the prime minister. Also, Weizmann's continued talks with a cabinet committee eventually culminated in the MacDonald letter of February 13, 1931, which was formally communicated as an official document to the League of Nations and dispatched as an instruction to the High Commissioner in Jerusalem. In essence, the letter nullified the White Paper's charges against Zionist immigration and settlement policy in Palestine. See "Challenging the Passfield White Paper, 1 November 1930," "MacDonald Relents, 6 November 1930," and "After the MacDonald Letter, 22 March 1931," in Litvinoff, *Letters and Papers of Weizman*, 604–13. Weizmann felt vindicated, yet some expressed skepticism that the White Paper was of superior status to the MacDonald letter.

16. The Shaw Commission was specifically charged to look into the immediate causes of the riots in September. Yet even by December 1929 the investigation had not drawn to a close and statesmen like Lloyd George, Lord Balfour, and General Smuts became concerned that this tardy process could seriously endanger the Mandate system and its commitment to the Balfour Declaration. As a result, they wrote an open letter to the British government urging the appointment of an authoritative commission to investigate the whole working of the Mandate by probing into major questions of policy and administration. The *Times* (London) and *New York Times* editorials remarked that the letter reflected a general deep dissatisfaction with conditions in Palestine.

17. Judah Magnes's proposal of a binational state sent shock waves throughout the American Jewish community and generated fears about the shifting tides of U.S. public opinion. Yet Magnes's stand also won him support in American non-Zionist circles. Among his new supporters was Julian Morgenstern, a non-Zionist member of the Jewish Agency and president of Reform Judaism's Hebrew Union College. Morgenstern announced his agreement with Magnes and said that the Arabs had as much claim to Palestine as the Jews. American Zionists responded to Magnes and the parliament issue by proposing alternative forms of government for Palestine. Some even revived the idea of resettling Palestinian Arabs in Transjordan. The Arab emigration idea also appealed to Felix Warburg, who was concerned about fading support for a Jewish Palestine among American liberals. Medoff finds that in the end few of the American Zionists made concessions on Zionism in order to preserve their

loyalty to America and ensure non-Jewish support. In this context it is interesting that the non-Zionist Max like the Zionists saw Magnes's binationalism as unacceptable and detrimental to the survival of the *yishuv*. See Medoff, *Zionism and the Arabs*, 51–165.

18. Tensions among the Zionists affected the relationship between the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), whereby American Zionists were split ever since the Cleveland convention of 1921. There were disputes between Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization, the ZOA, and the WZO. And the Zionist movement had its left wing and right wing, both of which did not support the WZO. Founded in 1925, the right-wing Revisionist Party under Vladimir Jabotinsky accused Weizmann of having sold out Zionism. Jabotinsky made it his mission to fight for a revision of the Zionist Executive's conciliatory attitude toward Great Britain's whittling down of the Balfour promise. Yosef Gorny distinguishes four different approaches to Zionism: the liberals, led by Weizmann; the integrationists who sought cooperation with the Arabs; the labor movement; and the separatist approach (almost synonymous with revisionism in the twenties), motivated by fear of the growth of the Arab national movement in Palestine. Yosef Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs 1882–1948: A Study of Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

19. Differences between the Zionists and non-Zionists were not only ideological but also operative/methodical in nature. Whereas Zionists elected their representatives, non-Zionists appointed theirs. Naomi W. Cohen argues that the first few months of the agency's existence revealed a deep gap between Zionists and non-Zionists and that only a major crisis like the 1929 riots could unite the two factions. "In day to day operations each side steered a separate course, following its own self-interest, its own style, its own design for Jewish communal control, and its own interpretation of the meaning of Palestine for the Jews." Cohen, "Uneasy Alliance," 118.

20. The different philosophical arguments between Zionists and non-Zionists were also rooted in their perceptions of the Jewish community. Zionists viewed the Jewish community as an organic community, whereas non-Zionists saw it as a voluntary association. Both Warburgs were concerned over the relationship between Jews and non-Jews, and both were convinced that Jews alone could not solve the Jewish problem.

21. Max's comments seem to imply that he wanted a better organization of the non-Zionist movement and more representation by non-Zionists on the Executive Committee. The idea of separation between Zionist and non-Zionist responsibilities was not a new one. The notion that the non-Zionists' function would be confined strictly to budgetary and financial matters was unrealistic, to the dismay of the Zionists. Louis Marshall, the chief non-Zionist architect behind the Enlarged Jewish Agency, had admitted even before the Zurich meeting that economic involvement meant political involvement. The question then arises, what kind of separation between Zionists and non-Zionists did Max have in mind? Max considered non-Zionist participation crucial to the success of the Palestine project. However, according to Max, non-Zionist responsibilities went far beyond Palestine, including the needs and concerns of world Jewry. Zionists and non-Zionists, despite their different philosophies, should be able to work together in the practical up-building of Palestine but should also steer their separate courses independent from each other. Non-

Zionists should be organized like their Zionist counterparts and wield their influence. Differences between Zionists and non-Zionists were to be expected, but the 1929 crisis proved that both factions could unite in times of crisis. If the survival of the yishuv was at stake, all of Jewry, whether Zionist or non-Zionist, could pull together and secure the Jewish presence in Palestine.

22.The distribution of funds had always been a contentious issue between Zionists and non-Zionists. The non-Zionist leadership of the Joint Distribution Committee objected to any notion of a Jewish state and focused their attention on relief to Russia and the idea of creating large-scale Jewish settlements in the Soviet Union. Given the scarcity of Zionist resources, particularly in the 1920s, Zionists clamored for the JDC to divert funds from the Soviet projects to Palestine.

23.The collaboration between Zionists and non-Zionists and their cooperation with the British government proved difficult in the light of an elaborate apparatus of organizations, such as the American Jewish Congress, the Jewish Agency, the Palestine Zionist Executive.

24.Oscar Wassermann, non-Zionist, past president of the Keren Hayesod in Germany.

25.The Keren Hayesod, founded in 1921, was a world financial institution, seeking participation of all Zionist and non-Zionist Jews.

26.D. Werner Senator, a German non-Zionist, later elected to the Jewish Agency Council. He had migrated to Palestine but returned to Germany in 1933 in order to participate in the work of the ZA (Zentralausschuss fuer Hilfe und Aufbau = Central Committee for Help and Reconstruction), an umbrella organization that included welfare, educational, emigration, and vocational organizations that had existed in Germany prior to 1933. See Yehuda Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee 1929–39* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1974), 109, passim.

27.Maurice B. Hexter, non-Zionist member of the Executive, Felix Warburg's eyes and ears in Palestine.

28.European Director of the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (1924–38) and a non-Zionist elected representative of the Jewish Agency Council. He was most known for his work of economic reconstruction in Poland. Kahn believed that the industrialization of Polish Jewry and the integration of Jews into the Polish economy would solve the problem of anti-Semitism in Poland and make emigration unnecessary. Kahn's industrialization plan, though imaginative, never got off the ground because at the end of 1929 the Great Depression set in and stopped the plan in its tracks. However, it is doubtful whether the plan ever had a realistic chance to succeed, because Kahn naively assumed that anti-Semitism was a mere economic phenomenon. Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper*, 19–56.

29 Judah Magnes was an intellectual and pacifist who believed in the significance of Palestine to Judaism, but he was also convinced that Palestine belonged to no one in particular in the spiritual sense: "Palestine belongs in a very real sense to all the nations that have come under the influence of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. One of the inferences from this exceptional status is, therefore, the internationalism of Palestine." See "Excerpt from Magnes's Journal on the Arab Questions, 4 July 1928," in *Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes*, ed. Arthur A. Goren (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 271–72. Felix Warburg hoped that Magnes would serve as associate chairman of the agency until the final negotiations

leading up to the formation of the enlarged Jewish Agency in August 1929. However, as evident in a letter drafted but never sent to Warburg, Magnes had serious problems with Weizmann's style of leadership and his claims to authority over the Hebrew University. Magnes fervently opposed any interference by the Zionist political machinery into academic matters and his own meddling as head of the university in politics. See "Magnes to Felix Warburg, 28 April 1929," in *ibid.*, 273–75. After the riots of August 1929, Magnes could no longer keep quiet about politics. In a letter to Warburg, September 13, 1929, Magnes wrote: "I shall say what I believe, that the University is the place where Arab-Jewish relations can and must be worked out" (*ibid.*, 281). Magnes eventually made his views public and on November 24, 1929, the *New York Times* published his article wherein he proposed a binational instead of a national government for Palestine in order to fulfill its great international function.

30. Pinhas Rutenberg was a Russian-born electrical engineer in charge of the electrification of Palestine and responsible for creating job opportunities for many Jewish workers. See Urofsky, *American Zionism*, 338–39.

31. To both Arabs and Jews, land was crucial to either the retention or attainment of their respective national existence. The conception of the inalienable nature of land purchased by the Jewish National Fund became central to Zionist policy. Until 1948, however, private Jewish capital played the major role in land purchase, development, and industry. Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

32. Formerly Sir Alfred Mond, a leader of British industry and elected associate chairman of the Council of the Enlarged Jewish Agency.

33. Menahem Ussishkin, the "iron man" of Russian Zionism, an old-line ideologue who was worried about the influence of non-Zionists in the work for Palestine.

34. In Hebrew the name is *qeren qayemet le-yisrael*, which means "perpetual fund/capital for Israel." Founded in 1901 at the Fifth Zionist Congress, the Jewish National Fund remained without legal status until its incorporation in England in 1907, with the primary purpose to purchase land in Palestine in order to effect the ultimate objective, the establishment of a Jewish nation-state. See Lehn, *Jewish National Fund*.

35. Martin Rosenblueth (later Pinhas Rosen), was a German Zionist whose later reports on Hitler as posing a real menace to peace, Europe, Jews and non-Jews would fall on deaf ears. Cofounder of *Blau-Weiss* (German-Jewish youth movement), chairman of Zionist Organization in Germany 1920–23. In Palestine 1923–25, then in London as member of the Zionist Executive, 1926–31, later Israel political leader. He was close to Weizmann in his approach to Zionism.

36. Warburg's leadership style in agency affairs came under attack not only by American Zionists. The Hebrew newspaper in Palestine, *Ha-Aretz*, called the Jewish Agency a "dictatorship" of the non-Zionists. Ironically, while the Zionists objected to Warburg's monarchical tendencies, Max recommended that Felix should see himself as a sort of nonpartisan king called to preside over a versatile group of people. Naomi Cohen states that Warburg's preference for centralization and administrative expertise reflected his style of leadership in the United States on behalf of the Joint Distribution Committee, the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, and ultimately the German-Jewish establishment, the *shtadlanim* (Cohen, "Uneasy Alliance," 107–20).

A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery, Consistently with the Interests of All Parties Concerned (London, 1828)

By Moses Elias Levy

Edited and Annotated by Chris Monaco

INTRODUCTION

Published anonymously during the turbulent antislavery crusade in Britain, Moses Elias Levy's *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery* stands without parallel. The appearance of this pamphlet in 1828 establishes Levy—a Jewish plantation owner and utopian colonizer from Florida—as the first among his coreligionists in the United States to call for the elimination of slavery. Additionally, the scope and magnitude of his ideas exceed the more modest achievements of other Jewish American abolitionists. The appearance of the treatise in London—the world center of the antislavery movement—and its influence on abolitionist thought place Levy in the front ranks of social activists on both sides of the Atlantic.¹

Historians have long held that Jewish antislavery activities during the antebellum period were fairly limited. In *United States Jewry: 1776–1985*, Jacob Rader Marcus emphasized antebellum Jewry's disengagement from Protestant-dominated social reform movements.² On the other hand, Bertram Wallace Korn's seminal work, *American Jewry and the Civil War*, demonstrated that Jews often took positions on both sides of the slavery debate shortly before the Civil War.³ Prominent among Jewish abolitionists were Michael Heilprin and Rabbi David Einhorn.⁴ Both these men expressed their deeply held beliefs in newspaper articles or sermons and fixed much of their attention on rebutting the well-publicized proslavery views of Rabbi Morris Raphall of New York City. Unlike Heilprin and Einhorn, Levy did not dwell on scriptural interpretation or moral debate. Instead, he devised a remarkably detailed and highly ambitious scheme for the total elimination of slavery.⁵ Unfortunately, the pamphlet's past anonymity resulted in its omission from the body of Jewish antislavery literature.