

## AN APPROACH TO THE ARAB QUESTION IN PALESTINE

But the natural increase in the Arab population could not be stopped thus by fiat. Between 1920 and 1939 the increase of the Jewish population by immigration was less than the natural increase of the Arab population (p. 21 of P.P.C. Report)

(b) that Arab immigration into Palestine, which under the terms of the Palestine Mandate need not be permitted, be stopped completely and for ever

(c) that the provisions of the present "Protection of Cultivators Ordinance" with regard to tenants be not applied to the land purchased under this plan

(d) that land transfers be registered instantaneously, which they are not at present

(e) that for every Arab emigrating from Palestine under this scheme the company be issued an immigration permit for a Jew, in excess of the permits being issued in the usual way to the Jewish Agency.

7. This is extremely questionable. it. The Arabs, on the other hand, would have no such interest, and in fact always would be anxious to sever their connection with Great Britain, as they were in Egypt and Iraq. They have again in Syria, in their relations with France, of late demonstrated their attitude toward European rule.

Are there unknown factors and voluntary migration of entire communities?

11. This plan does not contemplate the sudden and immediate moving of many thousands of Palestinian Arabs. It is certain that at first no large number could be persuaded to move. Probably, the plan would have to be initiated by first finding a very few villages that might be interested in improving their economic position by migration to Iraq where they could have larger and more productive property in a developing country, where they would be part of the dominant element without fear of restriction of any kind by a foreign population (such as the Jews, who are settling in Palestine), and where those who

15. This procedure, if all went well, could be kept up for some twenty-five or thirty years, or until there was no more desire on the part of Arabs in Palestine to go to Iraq.

But in the meantime there would probably take place a progressive increase in the Arab population remaining in Palestine which has shown a remarkable increase during the last few years. This would tend to neutralize the increase in the Jewish population by immigration.

Extract from letter of E.A.N. to H.T.M.B.  
November 4, 1938;

The purpose of your long stay in Iraq this winter is to accomplish something very definite. The method you are to use is to gather material for the writing of a real book on present day Iraq, as the first and only mandated territory to achieve its independence, and which therefore is of considerable interest to the world. In order to gather the material for this book, which you must actually write, and which must be published without much delay, you must ~~ask a great many questions of the leading people in Iraq,~~ which questions must lead to very profound and lengthy discussions of the most serious problems facing the statesmen of the country. Through these conversations you will ~~attempt to more and more arouse these statesmen to feeling~~ that the need for an increase in their population is a pressing one, from three main angles,

ref 1:551

Letter. Norman to Bell

Extract from letter of H.T.M.B. to E.A.N.  
January 18, 1939.

~~In view of the scheme I outlined to Nuri, mentioned in my last letter, it might not be a bad idea to have it~~ followed up by the suggestion, to be made by Lord Glenconner privately and personally to Nuri, that Iraq should take advantage of the Conference to hold out to the Palestinian Arabs the ultimate best solution for the Arab States that the Palestinians should migrate to Iraq, which, with the amalgamation with Syria, would thus become a State of some importance, with some 7-8 million inhabitants.

Only Nuri, I feel, will be in a position to know whether the moment is a propitious one to put the idea tentatively before the Palestinian delegation. So much depends on the Palestinian frame of mind in London, which in turn will depend on how the Conference pans out. It would not do, I think, to submit the idea while the Palestinians are feeling cock-a-hoop of achieving all they expect. On the other hand, if they find from the course of the discussions that they have no chance of realising their aspirations, they may welcome the alternative of building up a big Arab State which will be able to profit in the economic sphere by the presence of a wealthy Jewish State ready to provide them with a useful market across its frontiers.

ref 1:558

Letter. Bell to Norman

## A Fair Solution of the Arab-Jewish Conflict

By MEIR GROSSMAN

I was astonished to see a press-report quoting Rabbi Israel Goldstein, the Z.O.A. president, condemning the project—as publicized by the American Resettlement Committee—as “dangerous and adventurous.” Apparently Rabbi Goldstein has given little time to studying the scheme and is unaware of the support lent by Dr. Weizmann to a very similar project expounded by Edward Norman of New York City in 1937-38. True, the scheme visualized as a private understanding between an American Jewish group and the Iraqi government, but the two plans have many features in common. Mr. Norman’s scheme, I understand, had the ear of the State Department and of some leading Iraqi statesmen. Too, the learned Rabbi seems to have forgotten that an Arab-Jewish population exchange had once been proposed by the late Israel Zangwill, one of the most inspired and courageous Jewish leaders, a political Zionist, true to Herzl’s traditions.

ref 1:575

### MEMORANDUM

August 7, 1939

*Confidential*

Conferences with L.D.B. and R.S. on Sunday,  
August 6th, 1939, at Chatham

11. L.D.B. suggested that Norman give priority to and concentrate on the Iraq plan. He did not know where the funds for the Rutenberg ten million pound corporation could be raised.

ref 1:581 Conference with Louis Brandeis [L.D.B.] and Robert Szold [R.S.]



Extract from letter of E.A.N. to H.T.M.B.  
December 15, 1938.

I am very glad to learn that the Latafiyah matter may develop into something tangible. It would be a fine accomplishment on your part if you could bring it into realization, and I feel sure it would hasten the development of our larger scheme. I wonder how you feel about the time element in connection with our larger scheme. Do you feel that by the end of the winter you can induce the leading Iraqis to come out, at least to you, and say that they want increased immigration of population. It is not necessary that at that time they be prepared to make the matter known to the world in general. In fact, it is preferable that at that time the thing should still be on a very quiet basis, but it seems to me necessary to have as an objective the open desire for serious negotiations concerning immigration by the end of this winter.

ref 1:585

Letter. Norman to Bell

<p>Registry Number } E 2880/49/65</p> <p>FROM Foreign Office Minute (Sir Maurice Peterson).</p> <p>Dated 4th May, 1942. Received } 5th May, 1942. in Registry }</p> <p>E: General.</p>	<p>Arab Federation.</p> <p>Records conversation with Mr. Montague Bell, former editor of "Near East" who gave his views on Arab Federation. He also asked Foreign Office assistance in securing a passage for him to Iraq next Autumn. His idea is based on an offer of assistance from an American millionaire to buy up Arabs in Palestine, promoting an exodus into other countries, chiefly Iraq and leaving Palestine to the Jews. Mr. Bell claimed that the object of his visits to Bagdad in 1938 and 1939 was to induce Arab population in Palestinian villages to move to Latafia Estates outside Bagdad. He was advised to consult Foreign Office again nearer Autumn.</p>
<p>* not have not had any recent departures, but I understand there is no reason to think its position has improved!</p> <p>42815</p>	<p>When I was in Bagdad in 1938-1939, the Latafia Estates were so much in the debt of the Iraqi Government that I had considerable difficulty in persuading the latter not to liquidate the whole concern. I do not know anything about the present position.</p> <p>I told Mr. Bell that naturally a lot of people were thinking about the apparently insoluble problem of Palestine. Beyond that I could not go, except to tell him that it was not under active discussion between the Americans and ourselves. I advised him to consult us again nearer the Autumn in order to see whether we would be prepared actively to support his application for a passage to Iraq.</p> <p>Mr./</p>

ref 1:587

Minutes. Foreign Office London

In itself Mr Norman's scheme is fantastically impracticable and his veiled attempts to "jump" the Iraqi authorities into unconscious concurrence are not only foolish but reprehensible.

Draft C.D.

J. Z. Mackenzie

22/11

ref 1:594 Foreign Office London. Internal departmental comments. February 1939

SECOND REPORT ON IRAQI SCHEME - MAY 15, 1939

BY EDWARD A. NORMAN

17. At this lunch, these Arab gentlemen spoke of the vast and unutilized economic potentialities of Iraq. I evidenced interest in this conversation and as a result I spent the balance of the day with them at their hotel. They undertook to impress on me that Iraq could support a much greater population than it now contains, that it needed the increase at once, that the Palestinian Arab peasants constituted the most desirable immigrants, and that the Jews had an opportunity to decrease the Arab element in Palestine by cooperating in financing the migration. I was aware that they were quoting the ideas that had been implanted in their minds without their perceiving it by Mr. Bell, whose reports to me had mentioned these men as among those with whom he had had frequent and long talks. They said also that there was much room for economic development in the Arab countries, and that if the Jews would assist the Arabs in utilizing these opportunities they would be welcomed and a friendship and spirit of cooperation should arise that might make it possible for a very large number of Jews to live in the Arab countries and thus get away from persecution in Europe. I, of course, said that I was much impressed by all that they said, and that I would be interested in exploring the possibilities of cooperating with them.

ref 1:595

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

June 13, 1939

A-B  
Mr. Berle:

Attached are certain memoranda and reports regarding the proposal of Mr. Edward A. Norman for the settlement of Palestinian Arabs in Iraq. This is the matter which I discussed with you briefly last evening. I think that you would be interested in meeting and talking to Mr. Norman in the event he comes to Washington again, and if you approve I shall suggest that he see you on the occasion of his next visit. Personally I was very much impressed with Mr. Norman's reasonable views on the Palestine problem and his sincere desire to effect a settlement which would be fair to both the Jews and the Arabs.

Wallace Murray

ref 1:600

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

I shall be interested  
to see Mr. Norman  
when he comes  
again

C. C. C.

ref 1:601

Note from Berle. Department of State U.S.A.



July 27, 1939

Dear Mr. Welles:

I am venturing to trouble you on account of something I was told recently. From a fairly reliable source, I heard that the President somehow has learned of the possibilities of Iraq, concerning which I spoke to you last November. I was told further that he has in his mind the idea of proposing to the British and French Governments, and to the Jews of the world, that if they will each provide a large sum of money, probably as much as \$100,000,000, he will endeavor to obtain a similar amount from the United States Government, the whole to be used for a mass transference of the Palestine Arabs to Iraq, thus at one stroke solving the Palestine problem and providing the possibility of finding new homes in Palestine for a large number of European Jews.

Of course, I believe that in essence the idea is splendid. However, having studied the matter closely over a period of years, and having had the benefit of the advice of many recognized experts on Arabian affairs, I am convinced that were the President actually to undertake to carry out the idea in the manner described above, not only would he be completely unsuccessful, but what is more serious, he would forever destroy the possibility of the scheme being carried out by other methods.

ref 1:606

*Edward A. Norman*  
Edward A. Norman

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
THE UNDER SECRETARY

JUL 28 1939

NE - Mr. Murray:

I attach a letter received this afternoon from Mr. Edward A. Norman. If the President has any such ideas as those referred to in this letter, he has not spoken of them to me. Please let me have your opinion with regard to the matters taken up in the letter and your advice as to whether this inquiry deserves my taking it up personally with the President.

ref 1:607

Letter from Welles

19th September, 1939

As regards your enquiry whether it would be correct to say that Mr. MacDonald had expressed his approval of Mr. E.A. Norman's project for Arab emigration from Palestine to Iraq, Mr. MacDonald asks me to make it clear that the position in regard to this project is that it is one which should not be regarded as having either the acquiescence or the encouragement of His Majesty's Government, and that the responsibility for it must rest solely with its sponsors.

Yours sincerely,  
(sgd.) J.J. Paskin.  
Private Secretary.

ref 1:613

Letter. Paskin of Colonial Office London to Bell

I went over to the F.O. <sup>and</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>discussed</sup> with Mr. Eyles (Eastern Dept). His <sup>first</sup> ~~first~~ <sup>feeling</sup> ~~feeling~~ reaction was that our suggested reply was a little too forthcoming, but he did not object strongly to it.

I wd. be inclined to accept the F.O. amendment, which says the same thing in more direct language.

*[Signature]*  
12/1/40

ref 1:635

Colonial Office London. Internal note from Bennett



Desire of Mr. Montague Bell to travel abroad.

Mr. Bell then said that he did not understand why the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office had both said they had no objection to his going to Iraq, the Passport and Permit Office (which was, he knew, under the control of the Home Secretary) should have declined to give him an exit visa. He would have thought that the fact that these two Departments knew about his work and saw no objection to it would have been sufficient warrant for the Passport and Permit Office to give him permission to travel.

10th April, 1940.

(Signed) L. BAGGALLAY.

ref 1:640

Minute. Foreign Office London

Sir C. Parkinson.

You should know that Mr. Montague Bell rang me up yesterday in a great state of indignation over our letter at No. 2. He said that he was not prepared to accept our decision and that if we did not modify it he would go direct to the Prime Minister. I replied that I was not very fond of listening to threats and that so far as I was concerned he was welcome to take his story wherever he chose. After that the conversation was not very cordial on either side. He repeated over and over again the argument that no question could be of greater national interest than the settlement of the Palestine problem, that his own project was the only one offering the least chance of success and that consequently we ought to do everything in our power to help him. I could only reply, I hope without discourtesy, that we did not share his view of the importance of his plans. After a long argument he rang off and will now presumably pull such other strings as may be available to him.

I should perhaps record that when I saw him on the 27th January he let out at the end of our conversation that his income depended upon his continuing his work for Mr. Norman and that for financial reasons it was essential to him that he should be enabled to proceed with the project. It is perhaps not too cynical to suggest that this is the primary motive underlying his persistency.

ref 1:642

11.2.41.

Colonial Office London. Internal note

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS:  
c/o DETINUESQUARE.  
TELEPHONE:  
CENTRAL 4152.

at 62 London Road  
Reading

UNITED UNIVERSITY CLUB, Berke

1, SUFFOLK STREET, S.W.1

(Tel: Reading 3766)

28. 1. 41

6

Dear Sir John.

There is a non-political  
reason for my wishing to go to  
Iraq, which, perhaps, may simplify  
matters.

I am to be entrusted with  
negotiations for a project to  
use Iraqi dates for war

① purposes (chemical): it is a  
serious scheme, but it may not  
be necessary to say more than  
this at the moment.

Copy to

H. S. Montague Bell



FOREIGN OFFICE, O.W.1.

3rd February, 1941.

p. 17/1/41?

this for M.B.  
if anybody

If you can convince the departments concerned that his date project is of importance from the point of view of our war effort, they might be able to help him.

Letter. Foreign Office London with added marginal comment

ref 1:645

I am only agree. It is known to me that Mr. Bell's plan for encouraging the transfer of Palestinian Arabs to Iraq to make room for Jews, so far from being a serious & practical, is likely to embarrass us.

Mr. Downie

6.2.41

ref 1:648

Colonial Office London. Internal note

Dear Prime Minister,

21st February, 1941.

My task is to put the idea into the Iraq mind without allowing it to appear as a suggestion from outside, because any scheme coming from a foreign source is bound to be suspect to the Arabs; thereafter, when the idea has been accepted, I shall be at hand for the working out of details.

Into these details, I need not enter here. They are known to the Colonial Office and to the Foreign Office, as well as to Mr. L.S. Amery, who has tried to help me. My trouble is that the Foreign Office and Colonial Office refuse to consider this scheme involving the future of Palestine and the Middle East as coming under the category of "national importance", so as to qualify me for a priority passage, whether by air or by sea, to Egypt, without which I cannot follow up the work already done on two previous visits to Iraq.

I would, therefore, ask you for a ruling that the scheme is worth my being allowed to carry it as far as I can. That there are difficulties in the way of its adoption is obvious; but difficulties have held up a Palestine settlement for twenty years, and I must get closer to grips with those looming ahead before they need be pronounced insuperable.

ref 1:652

Yours very truly,

(Sgd.) H.T. MONTAGUE BELL.



## NOTE ON MR. MONTAGUE BELL'S PROJECT.

The essence of the scheme is that the Arab population of Palestine should be transferred to Iraq for settlement there, and that the vacant space left in Palestine should be filled by large-scale Jewish immigration. The means suggested is to persuade the Iraq Government to request the transfer of the Palestinian Arabs, to meet certain alleged Iraqi requirements in the way of shortage of population, and as part of a programme of Arab federation.

There is no evidence that the Iraqi Government would be willing to make such a request, and it is indeed incredible that they would do so, since the whole purpose of the transfer would be to facilitate a new large Jewish immigration into Palestine. For the same reason it is certain that the Palestinian Arabs would reject any such proposal outright, and therefore that the transfer, if carried out at all, would have to be done forcibly.

Downing Street,  
28th February, 1941.

ref 1:657

*Don* *Eden* *Smith*

I expect  
that by now he has been given  
his answer — presumably  
"no", though I am sorry because  
I liked him and think there may  
be something in his scheme.

ref 1:662 Internal note between Private Secretaries of Winston Churchill

*Civil Disengagement*

ref 1:664 Note from Churchill — "say 'no' politely"

May 13, 1942

My dear Dr. Weizmann,

The group that I mention above, who heard Israel Sieff make the statement, had been called together by me, as a result of Dr. Vellikovský urging me to further the Iraq project. I said that I had reached the stage in this matter where I no longer was willing to proceed entirely on my own initiative, without any other Jewish leaders being willing to share with me in the responsibilities of thinking through the practical plan of action to be pursued. Following the meeting of the above group, I went to the State Department in Washington, to suggest that I be sent to Iraq in some capacity or other for the United States Government, so that I could pursue this scheme. The State Department considered the matter, and then wrote me that while they consider the plan still essentially as sound as ever, they felt that the present Government of Iraq was too unstable to be worth negotiating with. You will understand my saying that my reaction to that attitude on the part of the State Department was not exactly sympathetic, but until now I have been unable to think of any other way of accomplishing anything, unless I can obtain a berth in the Army that would take me to Iraq. I am now feeling out my way in this direction.

ref 1:668

Edward A. Norman

## THE JEWS AND THE POST-WAR WORLD

By

Edward A. Norman

6. It would appear, consequently, that it would be helpful in overcoming these political considerations, if a large proportion of the Arabs of Palestine could be induced to leave the country and to settle elsewhere.

It might be a distinct help to the anti-Axis cause if the attention of the Palestinian Arabs could be diverted to a scheme whereby they might be able to better themselves, particularly as they are now known to be desirous to sell their land in Palestine at almost any price, in fear of an Axis invasion.

1. It is conceivable that if the matter were to be taken in hand very soon, it might be possible at the very least to cause the government of Iraq publicly to offer the necessary land to Arab settlers from Palestine.

ref 1:669

March 6, 1942

## Zionism Today

### *A Clarification*

BY OSCAR I. JANOWSKY

*Associate Professor of History in the City College of New York*

As a general proposition, this claim to Jewish statehood is entirely legitimate. If Palestine were not inhabited by a large non-Jewish population, a Jewish State would be a logical result of Jewish immigration. There is no reasonable ground for opposing it other than the fact that Palestine contains a large Arab population. If considerable numbers of Arabs could be transferred from Palestine to neighboring countries, a Jewish State would likewise be feasible.

The lure of good land plus other incentives might then induce large numbers of Palestine Arabs to move eastward. This would quicken the pace of Jewish immigration and facilitate the establishment of a Jewish State.

ref 1:678

## A People Without A Country

*Jewish Homelessness, Once an Academic  
Question, Is Now an Acute  
Problem*

By WALTER DURANTY

As far as Palestine is concerned, I do not think this is true. The rights of the Arabs no doubt should be protected. But they will be a minority as Jewish immigration into Palestine increases, which it must do after the war, and as the Jewish population grows by the natural preponderance of births over deaths. I say again that Palestine should be an independent state. British "rights," if such exist, might be secured by a treaty of alliance which the Jewish state would probably be willing to contract. In such a treaty provision would be made for the fair treatment of the Arab minority, and such Arabs as were unwilling to accept the change could retire to Arabia or anywhere else they liked.

ref 1:681



-19

2. 9. 12. 41

[illegible]

Ben-Gurion. Diary entry

ref 1:692

We may wait till  
Mr. Bell moves again.

12.5.

SUPPLEMENTARY MEMORANDUM ON THE IRAQ SCHEME - OCTOBER, 1942

BY EDWARD A. NORMAN

23. It is not probable that any insuperable difficulties would be encountered in inducing Palestinian Arab peasants to proceed to Iraq to cultivate the land. Apart from the economic advantages that it would be obvious in all probability would accrue to the migrants, a spiritual attraction could be created for them, on the basis of the building up again of the country that once saw the greatest flowering of Arab culture, power and glory. No doubt, intelligent and careful propaganda methods would have to be used. Perhaps at first people would be asked to go to Iraq merely as paid agricultural laborers. After some of them had been there, and seen the country and its possibilities, they might feel reluctant to return to the harder conditions of life in the hills of Palestine, and might desire to become permanent settlers. This would be a repetition of what a number of Palestinian Arab peasants did in Transjordan after the last war.

ref 1:696

2. Lieutenant Edward Norman of the U. S. Navy and President of the American Economic Committee for Palestine has widely distributed a memorandum in which he urges that the United Nations forcibly expatriate and transplant all Arabs, whether Moslems or Christians out of Palestine and settle them in Iraq.

ref 1:697

Memorandum. Kattenah to British Foreign Secretary. April 1943

UNITED STATES FLEET

UNITED STATES NAVAL FORCES IN EUROPE  
20 GROSVENOR SQUARE  
LONDON, W.1

Please refer  
to file:

Dec. 28/1943

My dear Mr. Weizmann,

A few days ago Montague Bell wrote me to say that he has been having discussions with someone from the F.O. about his going out to resume his work, and that satisfactory arrangements had been agreed upon as to his pay and expenses.


ref 1:698

Letter from Norman

14th January, 1941

Dear Mr. Bell,

Dr. Weizmann has asked me to let you know that he hopes it will shortly be possible to make definite arrangements for your journey. Dr. Brodetsky is now convalescent, and is expected back in London next week, and Dr. Weizmann trusts that it will be possible for him to arrange an early appointment with you in order to discuss the final arrangements.

 Acting Political Secretary.

ref 1:713

Letter from Linton, Jewish Agency London

Dear Miss May.

26. 9. 41

Dr. Kaigmann assures me that he wants me to go. If you think that this is his real feeling on the subject, can you log his memory on his return?

ref 1:720

H. T. Montague Bell.

21.11.41.

NLT EDWARD NORMAN 80 BEAVER STREET NEWYORKCITY

MONTAGUE ASKING URGENTLY FOR PAYMENT STOP IS PREPARED LEAVE  
IMMEDIATELY STOP PLEASE SETTLE MATTER REGARDS

WEIZMANN.

ref 1:723