

Jews in Palestine, from the improvement of methods of work, the increase in their income, and the help of the Jews to the Arabs [in the quest] for independence and unity.

Here I told him fervently and in a severe tone: You speak, Mr Ben-Gurion, about money, and about helping us with our independence and unity, in exchange for the Arabs conceding Palestine to the Jews on both West and East Banks [of the Jordan]. I am talking about the homeland and its sanctity. The homeland is not sold for a price, and therefore it is not possible, Mr Ben-Gurion, for us to come together.

*Sources:*

- (a) D. Ben-Gurion, *My Talks*, 18–21. Cf. Heb. version, with very slight additions, in *Memoirs* II, 165–7.  
 (b) *An-Nahar*, 31 January 1968, and A. Abd al-Hadi, *Private Papers*, 68–70. My translation from the Arabic. Sequence rearranged slightly.

*Notes*

1. This is perhaps the most sharply disputed aspect of Ben-Gurion's account. Is it possible that Ben-Gurion mistook what might have been Awni's loud sarcasm for enthusiasm? On the other hand, Awni's daughter told me that her father, recalling the event to her, said he had been so furious that he had almost thrown Ben-Gurion out of the house. (Interview, Arab Abd al-Hadi, Cairo, February 1983.)
2. Awni was responding to *An-Nahar's* publication (10 January 1968) of a letter from Ben-Gurion to French President Charles de Gaulle, in which the Israeli leader gave his account of the meeting. In presenting his own account, Awni commented: "I saw it my duty to make known the truth which Ben-Gurion wished to falsify in his letter to President de Gaulle. [...] The aim of Ben-Gurion was to twist what was said in order to portray the Arabs to the world as a people who sold their homeland for material [...] benefit. [...] I want to declare the whole truth so that these lies would not be used against the Arab nation."

## DOCUMENT 7

*A.S. al-Khalidi, Proposals for the Solution of the Arab–Jewish Question of Palestine on the Basis of the Cantonization of the Country and the Formation of an Arab and Jewish State, July 1934*

The proposals outlined in this memorandum are by no means new. Various attempts have been made in the past to solve the Palestine question on the basis of cantonization and have for some reason or another failed. The proposals however came from the Jewish camps. The present scheme is based on a broad and just consideration of the present situation, and on a clear understanding and sympathy with just and moderate claims of the two conflicting camps. It is believed that after serious deliberation, the present proposals should prove beneficial and satisfactory to both sides, Arab and Jewish. [...]

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The present situation in Palestine could by no means be taken as normal. The position is potentially dangerous. The reason for this we need not enter into. Whether we like it or not we have to admit that disturbances are bound to occur now and then of a much [more?] serious nature [than October 1933?]. Peace is a thing which Palestine cannot claim to enjoy. The proposals here submitted will put an end to this hesitant and unsettled state, and Jews and Arabs will enjoy for ever the element of security which we cannot admit they now enjoy. Once the political questions are solved the country though divided will reap the seeds of peace and security. The present proposals should not be taken as a temporary settlement, but as a final solution. The Balfour Declaration will have to be cancelled when the present arrangement comes into force. International ratification of the powers will have to be obtained together with the consent of world Jewry.

[Proposed boundaries of the cantons described.] The Jews now possess about 1,500,000 dunums. The [Jewish] canton will include more land to the extent of 1,000,000 dunums, thus making it 2,500,000.

The following towns will be declared neutral and Holy[:] they are Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem, Nazareth and Safad. Bethlehem and Nazareth being totally Arab will be attached to the Arab canton and the status quo [sic] will be preserved.

It is noteworthy that the Jewish canton will comprise the best lands of Palestine and as such the Jews will be able to take into their canton as many immigrants as their capacity can take.

The Jewish existence in Palestine will depend on the economic success and this in turn depends on

- (1) Industry
- (2) Intensive cultivation.

The Jewish canton therefore should satisfy Jewish ideals in having established in Palestine a Jewish national Home.

The Jews will further be able to settle in Jerusalem, Safad and Hebron towns.

It is understood that some transfer of property and population is bound to take place, but meanwhile Arabs residing in the Jewish canton will have to abide by the laws and regulations of the Jewish canton and vice versa, it being understood that their civil and religious rights will be protected. They can appeal at any time to the Supreme Court which shall be preserved in Jerusalem.

Subsequent to that, two independent and widely autonomous local governments will be set [up,] one Arab and the other Jewish. These two governments will be entirely run by Jews and Arabs with limited British advice.

The cantons will then enter into agreement with the Mandatory Power for a period of some years, preparatory to their becoming members of the League of Nations.

Steps will be taken to join Trans-Jordan to the Arab canton under Emir 'Abdullah and this should satisfy the Arabs and compensate their loss of what was lately in their hands.

A central Council will then be formed in Jerusalem with Arabs, Jews and British on it which will be responsible for Religious sites, the Supreme and

Mixed Courts, Posts and Telegraphs, Customs, Railways, Currency and Defence in both cantons.

All other government activities will be deputed to the local government:

- (1) Law Courts up [?] District Court
- (2) Education
- (3) Agriculture
- (4) Local Police
- (5) Public Works etc.

The Arabic language and the Hebrew language will be declared official in the Arab and Hebrew cantons respectively. The Emir 'Abdullah will act as head of the Executive Council of the two cantons.

Independent and separate Legislative Councils in both cantons will be formed which will have jurisdiction to enact [laws] within the terms of agreement. Jews and Arabs willing to migrate to the other canton will have to abide by the rules and regulations of the canton, and the same thing applies to ownership of land. Immigration and ownership of land in both cantons will be completely in the hands of the Legislative Council subject to agreement.

It is the candid and firm opinion of the proposer that these proposals are feasible and practicable. They should ultimately lead to the co-operation and better understanding between the two kindred races. Add to this that the expenses of Police, transportation and duplication of work etc. will be diminished and directed towards productive concerns.

As to Great Britain she will have attained the following aims:

- (1) Fulfilment of promises both to Jews and Arabs.
- (2) Ensuring British interests in Palestine by creating a free port of Haifa.
- (3) The Palestine troubles and disturbances etc. will cease.
- (4) The prestige of Great Britain will be immensely enhanced.

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P.S. The extreme Arab and Jewish camps will probably refuse these proposals[,] so might some of those who are now influencing more or less the trend of politics in the land[. B]ut this should not matter[,] for if the Jews will re-consider the situation and take into consideration that the friendship of the Arabs[,] who should ultimately see the advantages of the proposal, is far better than relying on force.

Once separated the two races will come to realize how much they have in common. Many will discover that they must have been working under an illusion.

*Source*

Enclosure in Khalidi to Magnes, 23 July 1934, CAHJP, P3/2436.